

## The Highland Community Planning Partnership

### Board 6.03.14

Agenda Item	6
Report No	

### Partnership Supported Self-Assessment

Report by Head of Policy and Reform, Highland Council

#### Summary

It is proposed that, facilitated by the Improvement Service, the Partnership Board and Chief Officers Group undertake a robust self-assessment using the Partnership Checklist (attached at appendix 1). This self-assessment tool will support the Board to critically review its fitness for purpose in achieving shared outcomes. The process will also strengthen team working and support the development of the Partnership Board.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 In April 2013, the National Group on Community Planning agreed that a workstream within the CPP capacity building programme be developed to provide targeted support for self-assessment and improvement planning for CPP Boards.

The objectives of this workstream are twofold:

- To facilitate self-assessment and improvement planning with individual CPP Boards and the executive structures that support the Boards; and
  - To develop the capacity of colleagues within individual CPPs to facilitate self-assessments across the different levels of the CPP, so that self-assessment becomes self-sustaining.
- 1.2 This workstream is building on a successful project undertaken by the Improvement Service and Scottish Government to support self-assessment in 16 CPPs at Board, thematic and neighbourhood level. Highland Employability Partnership took part in the pilot. The evaluation of this project found that:
- The self-assessment tools helped CPPs to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, to define their challenges and to drive change forward.
  - Self-assessment enabled the CPPs to have open and challenging discussions within a supportive environment about issues facing them following on from the Community Planning reform agenda. CPPs confronted the tough and demanding issues and operating context they are facing by developing comprehensive improvement plans. These focused on the actions required to be undertaken by the CPP to help it achieve its priority outcomes, and the support required by individual Community Planning partners to enable these actions to happen.

## 2. Improvement Service Offer of Support

- 2.1 To help address CPP's needs, the Improvement Service and its partners are committed to offering targeted support with self-assessment and improvement planning to all CPP Boards. This involves the Improvement Service working with the CPP Board to facilitate a robust self-assessment using the appended Partnership Checklist. This

self-assessment tool will support the Board to critically review its fitness for purpose in achieving shared outcomes.

2.2 The areas that the Checklist focuses on are derived from research evidence and good practice concerning characteristics which demonstrate effective, outcome-focused partnership working. This includes the Scottish Government and COSLA Statement of Ambition for Community Planning and SOAs and the key lines of enquiry used in the CPP audits which will be rolled out by Audit Scotland in autumn. The Checklist involves the CPP Board exploring the following areas: Use of evidence, focus on outcomes, governance and accountability, use of resources and impact, performance management and reporting.

2.3 The three key steps involved in undertaking the Partnership Checklist are as follows:

#### **Stage 1**

Following a brief awareness session at the Community Planning Partnership Board on 5 June 2014 (TBC) which includes the Chief Officers Group (COG), a checklist will be issued as an online survey to each individual member of the CPP Board and COG. Respondents will be asked to rate the extent to which they agree/disagree with each of the statements in the Checklist. For each of the five areas identified above, respondents are asked to provide evidence that supports their views of how the Board is working and how the Board can improve. The Checklist takes approximately 30 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous.

#### **Stage 2**

A detailed analysis of the responses is undertaken by the Improvement Service and a short report is compiled summarising the feedback and key points for discussion. The analysis will differentiate between members of the Board, COG or members of both views. The Improvement Service together with colleagues from the organisations leading this work stream will then facilitate a half-day workshop with the Board and COG at the 9 September 2014 Board meeting. This will explore the results and agree initial areas with opportunity for improvement.

#### **Stage 3**

The final stage of the process focuses on the improvement opportunities and this session provides the opportunity to agree and prioritise an improvement plan to support the CPP Board and COG (date to be agreed). This will be presented to the Community Planning Partnership Board at the next available opportunity.

2.4 To ensure self-assessment becomes self-sustaining at all levels within the CPP, the Improvement Service will work with colleagues within CPPs to develop their capacity to facilitate self-assessment and improvement planning across the different levels of the CPP. This could be colleagues who already facilitate self-assessment within individual CP partner organisations. This presents a development opportunity for them to further enhance their skills and apply them within the context of a CPP. Partners are requested to identify and nominate the appropriate staff who can support and participate in this process.

### **3. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Board:

- 3.1 Consider and approve the proposed approach and dates to undertaking a Community Planning Partnership supported self-assessment with Board and COG members.
- 3.2 Agree that partners will nominate the appropriate officers to facilitate self-assessment and improvement planning to build capacity in Highland to take forward in the future.

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# Partnership Checklist

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## Purpose of the Checklist

The Statement of Ambition published by the Scottish Government and COSLA, sets out high expectations for community planning and puts the process at the core of public service reform.

The Partnership Checklist has been developed to support Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) to critically review their 'fitness for purpose' in achieving shared outcomes.

The checklist is aimed specifically at CPPs. It can be used by CPP Boards, CPP thematic groups (e.g. groups focused on a specific theme such as Community Safety, Health Improvement, Lifelong Learning) and also by neighbourhood or local level partnership groups.

The purpose of the Checklist is to:

- Assess views on the effectiveness of current partnership arrangements and how well the partnership meets the challenges of the 'outcomes approach'; and
- Identify areas where there may be scope for improving the operation of the partnership and the impact it has.

The checklist acts as a 'can opener' for identifying potential areas for improvement in the partnership, which are identified through a follow-up workshop.

## Focus of the Checklist

The areas that the checklist focuses on are derived from research evidence and good practice concerning what makes for effective, outcome-focused partnership working. This includes the Statement of Ambition and the Accounts Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry in their CPP audit framework.

The checklist leads partnerships to explore the following areas:

1. Community Engagement
2. Use of Evidence
3. Focus on Outcomes
4. Leadership
5. Governance
6. Accountability
7. Use of Resources
8. Performance Management and Reporting
9. Impact

## Practical Use of the Checklist

### Stage 1

Normally following a brief awareness session, the checklist is issued by the Improvement Service as an electronic survey to all members of the partnership undertaking the self assessment. The survey will be completed by each individual.

The checklist contains 55 statements and should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The checklist leads respondents through a sequence of statements relating to partnership working. Respondents are asked to rate the extent to which they agree/disagree with each statement.

Each statement in the checklist should be scored against the undernoted scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5		

The 'Not Applicable' option should be used when the respondent feels the particular statement does not apply to the partnership.

The 'Don't Know' option should be used when the respondent feels they do not have sufficient information about the particular statement to enable them to make a judgment.

At the end of each section there are two comments boxes – one requires you to provide details of evidence that supports your views on how the partnership is performing in relation to the issues covered by the section and the other requires you to provide further details of how you think the partnership can improve in relation to the areas covered by the section. You will not be able to proceed through the Checklist without providing input to the comment boxes.

**All checklist responses are anonymous and non attributable.**

### Stage 2

The checklist findings are analysed by the Improvement Service and a short report is compiled summarising the responses and key points for discussion.

The report will be used as the basis for facilitating a structured workshop with the partnership. The workshop should typically take a half-day. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the strengths and issues emerging from the checklist and agreeing appropriate improvement actions to further strengthen the partnership.

### Stage 3

The workshop will focus on the development of an Improvement Plan, which will cover the following areas:

- The issues that can be improved upon
- The actions that will be undertaken to address these issues

- Lead responsibilities for driving the actions
- Timescales for implementing the actions
- Resources required to drive the improvement

## **Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF)**

In addition to the Partnership Checklist, we have also developed a PSIF CPP Thematic Framework. This is a more operationally focused self-assessment framework. For further information please contact [psif@improvementservice.org.uk](mailto:psif@improvementservice.org.uk)



## 1. Community Engagement

1. The partnership has effective engagement mechanisms for understanding the needs of individuals and communities
2. Feedback from individuals and communities influences the SOA outcomes, the activities undertaken and the way that activities are delivered
3. The partnership has effective mechanisms for communicating with key stakeholders / individuals/communities

*Thinking about the issues covered in this section:*

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership is performing in relation to Community Engagement*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its approach to Community Engagement*

## 2. Use of Evidence

4. The partnership has made full use of different partners' data sources and expertise in data analysis
5. Agreed priorities and outcomes in the SOA reflect the key challenges of the area identified through the CPP's data analysis and community engagement activity
6. The partnership has a good understanding of the distribution of positive and negative outcomes across its area, including information relating both to inequalities (e.g. education, income, health) and the range of equalities groupings (e.g. age, race, gender)
7. The partnership draws upon research and evaluation evidence to inform its understanding of which activities represent good value for money and make a tangible difference to achieving SOA outcomes



*Thinking about the issues covered in this section:*

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership is performing in relation to the use of evidence*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its use of evidence*

### **3. Focus on Outcomes**

8. The partnership has a clear statement in the SOA of the outcomes that it is focusing upon (i.e. the difference that it ultimately aims to make in the community) and individual partners understand their respective responsibilities for achieving these outcomes
9. Using the agreed SOA outcomes as a starting point, partners have prioritised the key activities that will make the greatest contribution to improving outcomes, particularly in relation to addressing inequalities in outcomes for specific areas and across the local authority area
10. The partnership actively encourages innovation and discussion concerning the best ways to achieve SOA outcomes

*Thinking about the issues covered in this section*

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership is performing in relation to the focus on outcomes*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its focus on outcomes*

### **4. Leadership**

11. The partnership has strong and effective collective leadership
12. The overall culture of the partnership and the behaviours typically displayed by individual members demonstrate a commitment to work together effectively

13. Partnership meetings take place within a positive spirit of transparency, openness and trust
14. The key organisations that can contribute to achieving the partnership's SOA outcomes are involved and contribute appropriately and there is no obvious partner missing
15. Elected members of the local authority are engaged in the leadership of the partnership and scrutinising performance

*Thinking about the issues covered in this section*

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership is performing in relation to Leadership*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its approach to Leadership*

## **5. Governance**

16. The partnership has appropriate structures and processes to support effective decision making
17. The partnership has a vision and strategic direction which partners are committed to
18. Partners have discussed and formally agreed their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the partnership and delivery of the SOA
19. All partners have agreed to a conflict resolution mechanism
20. The partnership is an effective mechanism for addressing issues that cut across different thematic areas and for avoiding 'siloes' or duplicated working by thematic groups
21. Each partner organisation regularly attends partnership meetings, ensuring continuity as much as possible
22. The individuals involved in the partnership are sufficiently empowered and influential to significantly advance the key issues

23. The partnership has an effective mechanism in place for managing collective risks, which is regularly reviewed

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to the partnership's governance.*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its governance.*

## **6. Accountability**

24. The partnership's SOA outcomes are reflected clearly in the strategic and operational plans of my own organisation

25. The partnership's SOA outcomes are reflected clearly in the strategic and operational plans of the other key partners

26. The partnership 'adds value' to the partners' individual contributions to the SOA outcomes

27. Partners effectively communicate decisions of the partnership within their own organisation

28. Partners play an active role in agreeing, monitoring and taking action to improve local outcomes

29. The individuals involved in the partnership offer constructive criticism and regularly challenge each other and the partnership as a whole to 'do more' in achieving SOA outcomes and to improve

30. The partnership's accountability arrangements are clear, understood and implemented by all partners

31. The partnership holds individual partners to account for their performance and contribution to the SOA

*Thinking about the issues covered in both these sections*

*C. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to the partnership's accountability.*

*D. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its accountability*

## **7. Use of Resources**

- 32. The partnership knows what resources (financial, staff, assets) are deployed locally
- 33. The partnership understands the costs of local services and activities that are contributing towards agreed local outcomes, for example through Total Place type work
- 34. Partners realign resources, if necessary to other partners, in order to better deliver early intervention and prevention approaches
- 35. The partnership's SOA outcomes are reflected clearly in the resource allocation processes/ decisions made by my organisation (including decision making about resource reductions)
- 36. The partnership's SOA outcomes are reflected clearly in the resource allocation processes/ decisions made by other partners' organisations (including decision making about resource reductions)
- 37. Partners have pooled or integrated budgets to deliver SOA outcomes
- 38. Partners have identified and prioritised the skills required for effective partnership working within their senior and middle management
- 39. Partners have identified opportunities to develop their workforces jointly

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership uses its resources.*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its use of resources.*



## **8. Performance Management and Reporting**

40. There is a clear performance reporting linkage between individual partner organisations, thematic partnership groups and the CPP Board
41. The partnership has effective arrangements to evaluate its own performance
42. The targets set for the partnership are ambitious and stretching, whilst being realistic
43. The long term improvements in outcomes that the partnership is seeking to achieve over the next decade (as set out in the SOA) are supported by intermediate outcomes, indicators and targets against which progress can be measured in the short and medium term
44. There is an efficient and robust system in place for recording progress made towards the achievement of outcome targets
45. The performance information considered by the partnership is timely, relevant and provides a good measure of progress towards the desired outcomes and key time specific targets
46. Where appropriate, performance information is segmented - for example by population groups, older/ younger people, and different local areas
47. The partnership actively uses performance information to facilitate constructive strategic discussion and, where required, to instigate corrective action in order to address under-performance against key targets
48. Performance management arrangements of the partnership are aligned with partners' performance management arrangements
49. The partnership benchmarks information with other partnerships
50. There is a publicly available, easy to understand performance report, which demonstrates progress (including successes and failures) against SOA outcomes, and is clear about the difference the CPP is making to improving the lives of local people

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership manages and reports performance.*



*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its performance management and reporting*

## **9. Impact**

- 51. By working together, the partnership has delivered improvements which could not have been delivered by individual organisations
- 52. The partnership has made demonstrable progress against the targets and objectives contained within the SOA
- 53. The partnership is making progress in closing the gap around inequalities in outcomes within its own area
- 54. The key focus of the partnership's activities is upon addressing the root causes of the issues that it has prioritised
- 55. There is evidence that the partnership's actions around early intervention and prevention are having an impact

*A. Please provide details of evidence that supports your views in relation to how the partnership understands the impact it is making*

*B. Please provide further details of how the partnership can improve its impact*

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