

## The Highland Council

### Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board

Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board held in Committee Room 1, Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, on Thursday, 6 June 2013, at 10.00 am.

#### Present:

#### Highland Council:

Dr D Alston (in the Chair)  
Mr J Gray  
Mr D Fallows

Mr A B Dodds  
Ms C McDiarmid  
Ms E Johnston

#### Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Mr R Muir

#### Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Mr S Hay

#### Police Scotland:

Mr J Innes

#### The Scottish Government:

Mr J Pryce

#### Scottish Natural Heritage:

Mr G Hogg

#### NHS Highland:

Mr G Coutts  
Ms M Paton  
Mrs C Steer

#### UHI:

Mr J Fraser  
Mr M Wright

#### Third Sector Interface:

Ms M Wylie

#### In Attendance:

Mrs R Moir, Principal Committee Administrator, the Highland Council

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Hendry, Mr I Ross, Dr M Somerville, Mr B Leyshon, Dr M Foxley and Ms E Mead.

### 2. Minutes of Meeting

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 23 April 2013, subject to:

- i. amendment to the second sentence in item 1 to read "Mr S Hay, who would attend future meetings of the Partnership Board as Local Senior Officer for the Highland Area, had submitted apologies on behalf of Mr S Edgar, who had now returned to his substantive post within the Scottish

- Fire and Rescue Service, his secondment to the Highlands and Islands having ended”; and
- ii. amendment at item 5, page 8, point ii, to read “agreed to remit the NHS Capital Plan, and those of the other partner agencies, to the Public Sector Property Group”.

### **3. Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for Highland: Next Steps**

There had been circulated Report dated 31 May 2013 by the Head of Policy and Performance, the Highland Council, which provided an up-date for Partnership Board Members on the final drafting of the SOA and the feedback process arranged by the Scottish Government. Some SOA content having still been outstanding at the time of circulation of the report, a further version was tabled at the meeting – having been circulated electronically the previous day - for consideration by the Panel and comment on where improvements might be required.

The report confirmed that the Government was keen to reach agreement on SOAs by the end of June 2013. The process for feedback on the Highland draft was being arranged and would involve a panel of three people providing comments on the basis of the guidance, drawn from senior managers in the Government and other public bodies. The Partnership Board was invited to identify some of its membership to assist with the feedback process at a meeting to be held in Inverness on 14 June.

During a summary of the report, it was confirmed that, at its April meeting, the Partnership Board had agreed to ask the officers responsible for drafting sections of the SOA to complete the drafting, with particular attention to a number of identified gaps. Further work on the current update appeared still to be required, especially on:

- completion of delivery plans, with particular reference to identifying a performance framework with clear commitments and targets
- embedding the tackling of health inequalities into delivery plans
- quantifying the total public sector resource available for implementation of delivery plans
- establishing a formal partnership agreement procedure and evidencing effective partnership dialogue and working
- specific work on editing the section on community safety and revising those on the economy and the environment prior to finalisation in June, with other sections acknowledged as a continuing work-in-progress for later review.

During discussion, views were expressed as to the appropriate balance of time/energy that should be expended on drafting of the SOA, as compared to its subsequent implementation. It was argued that, whilst the ultimate priority should be effective implementation, time invested in preliminary dialogue and considered drafting was essential to define objectives and provide a clear performance framework within which the partnership agreement could operate successfully. It was also important to recognise that, whilst a cut-off point for the current drafting exercise had to be set, overall the SOA would continue to be a live document requiring flexibility in order to react to changing circumstances as they arose.

A range of comments was made as to how straightforward or otherwise partners had found the drafting process to date, whether as leads or supporters, including:

- some had found it difficult to devote time and focus to the project, given conflicting pressures
- some had lacked clarity as to the process and its expectations
- some had felt reluctant to assign tasks/commitments to other agencies and regretted that more direct dialogue had not taken place
- some felt that considerable progress had already been made, not least in gaining a clearer understanding of partners' roles and concerns and laying the foundations for closer working.

Areas where it was considered that early practical progress on partnership working could be made included:

- Community Safety: - Chief Superintendent J Innes offered to lead on this issue and suggested that, as an example, he chair a multi-agency group on intervention on alcohol misuse, with a view to crime and harm reduction
- Health Inequalities: - Mr G Coutts suggested that NHS Highland lead on this issue, using the community planning approach, initially within communities where inequalities were particularly evident.

In commenting on progress to date, Mr J Pryce suggested that, while partnership relations were clearly positive, it would seem that many had found the SOA exercise challenging. It was important that the finalised SOA document evidence the good partnership working that was both ongoing and planned, and demonstrate the setting of common goals. He anticipated that the quality assurance feedback would identify a number of strengths, but also identify perhaps 4-6 areas for improvement.

In summing up, the Head of Policy and Performance suggested that:

- further work on the draft SOA be done over the following two weeks, to refine further the sections on the economy and the environment and to firm up on targets in relation to community safety (Mr R Muir, Mr G Hogg and Chief Superintendent Innes confirmed their commitment), and thereafter the document be submitted in its then form
- a broad representation attend the feedback session planned for 14 June (Ms M Paton and Mr M Wright confirmed their availability, while Mr Muir and Chief Superintendent Innes would check and advise)
- further consideration be given to longer-term planning on how to function effectively as a partnership (item 4 below refers)

Mr Muir drew attention to the meeting of the Economic Forum scheduled for the following week and invited further contributions/discussions at that time. Ms Paton drew attention to the importance of ensuring clarity for staff as to the SOA's status and meaning and its impact on their role and responsibilities, whether or not directly tasked with delivering on its commitments.

Thereafter, the Board **NOTED** the position and **AGREED** the further actions to be taken, as outlined.

#### **4. Reviewing Community Planning Partnership Arrangements – a discussion document**

At its meeting held on 23 April 2013, the Performance Board had agreed that a review of the Community Planning Partnership's joint working and governance arrangements be concluded in 2013, taking into account the key findings arising from the March 2013 Audit Scotland report "Improving Community Planning in Scotland" and the December 2012 guidance for delivery of the new style Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).

There had been circulated Report dated 31 May 2013 by the Head of Policy and Performance, the Highland Council, which aimed to stimulate discussion on the arrangements for community planning in Highland. The report included a proposed approach for developing the structure in a way that would meet the public service reform agenda, build on current arrangements and link to each partner's governance and accountability arrangements, envisaging a pan-Highland strategic structure for community planning and further work to scope out arrangements at operational and local levels.

The report suggested that the following principles be applied to the review:

- continuously learn from experience and ensure that the arrangements support public service reform in the Highlands, with particular reference to the four pillars of reform – prevention, performance, people and partnership
- support the delivery of the SOA and its future development
- acknowledge the accountability requirements placed on each partner individually
- address the improvement points identified in the national audit of community planning.

The draft structure for partnership working as proposed in the report envisaged the creation of a number of thematic/policy senior officer groups, whose responsibilities would include: planning and coordinating activity; setting targets and reporting performance; ensuring community and stakeholder engagement; undertaking self-evaluation, preparing for audits/inspections and implementing improvement points; inspiring innovative ways of working together; and ongoing development of the SOA. It was suggested that appropriate themes/policy areas would be: Public Sector Property; Safer, Stronger and Reducing Re-Offending; Environment; Economic Growth and Recovery; Employment; Early Years; and Older People. The further themes of Community Development and Health Inequalities could also be a further 2 thematic groups and treated as distinct policy areas, or be woven through the other themes.

Above these thematic groups would sit a Chief Officer Partnership Group, whose role would be to drive public service reform, including the delivery of the SOA and continuous improvement of partnership working, so as to achieve better and fairer outcomes for the Highland population. The lead officers from the thematic groups would attend Chief Officer Partnership Group meetings for scrutiny and challenge and to make any requests for partnership support. Above that in turn would sit a Members Partnership Board, whose role would be to provide political leadership and expertise, again to drive and enable public service reform and better and fairer outcomes. As with the current Performance Board, chief officers

would attend meetings of the Members Partnership Board for scrutiny and challenge and for leadership support.

The report also recognised that, in addition to this strategic framework, implementation of delivery plans would require partnership-based operational arrangements and local engagement. For some policy areas, such as older people and early years, such arrangements were already in place through the development of integrated services. The report started to map out what arrangements might be for other themes, setting out a draft community safety structure, for illustration purposes only. Efforts should be made wherever possible to draw in and build on the work of existing groups operating within each theme, together with the Third Sector, Ward Forums and Community Councils. It should be recognised that the exact arrangements put in place would vary to suit the requirements of each theme; it was important that the focus be on developing structures that would work and deliver results.

During discussion, general support was expressed for the overall structure being proposed, as a positive way forward for the Partnership to address more effectively delivery of the SOA. However, it was suggested that local community activists did not generally divide their concerns into distinct themed categories; it should be recognised that engagement with communities was rarely limited to a narrow agenda. It was also important, therefore, that operating in thematic groups did not lead to communities perceiving additional barriers when seeking to interact with public service agencies; there was a general preference among communities and individuals for a single contact/entry point into public sector services.

While a thematic structure might prove an effective way for the partnership to organise its own proceedings internally, further work would be required to develop, from the bottom up, effective processes for facilitating interaction with and participation by the public, and also interaction between existing groups operating within communities. These processes should seek to build on success, avoid duplication and also take account of geographical factors. Currently, not all partners/groups engaged to the same extent with Ward Forums and Community Councils and this should be considered. Greater awareness was also needed of the role of the Third Sector Interface. It was suggested that representatives of the Interface give a presentation on their role at the next meeting of the Performance Board.

Other comments included:

- Partnership activity and proposals should not lead to undermining of existing successful community initiatives; efforts should be made to build on these and offer them support.
- There was merit in exploring the concept of *de facto* localised community planning partnerships.
- It was important to engage other public sector agencies not represented on this Board in the proposed thematic groups; any reluctance on the part of others should be fed back to partners and ultimately, if necessary, to the Scottish Ministers.
- It was important that staff responsible for service delivery understood fully their role and responsibilities in relation to the SOA.

- It would be helpful for partners to share their thoughts when preparing responses to major consultations.

It was suggested that further refinement of the proposed Community Safety arrangements could serve as a model when developing the other themes. Lead Officers for each theme were identified:

- Safer, Stronger and Reducing Re-Offending – Chief Superintendent Innes, supported by Mr S Hay (Local Senior Officer for Fire and Rescue)
- Environment – Mr G Hogg
- Economic Growth and Recovery – Mr R Muir/ Mr M Johnson
- Employment – Director of Planning and Development, Highland Council
- Early Years – Director of Health and Social Care, Highland Council
- Older People – NHS
- Health Inequalities – Dr M Somerville
- Community Development – NHS / Third Sector

Following discussion, the Board **AGREED**:

- i. to establish a Members Partnership Board as proposed, to provide strategic political leadership and expertise;
- ii. to establish a Chief Officer Partnership Group as proposed, to ensure implementation of the strategy and delivery of the SOA, with this group also being part of the Members Partnership Board;
- iii. to establish thematic/policy groups as outlined, to progress partnership working on delivery of the SOA and to feed into the Chief Officer Partnership Group;
- iv. that further consideration be given to the development of structures for effective engagement with the public and communities, drawing on the experience of currently successful initiatives;
- v. that the Third Sector Interface be invited to make a presentation at the next meeting of the Board; and
- vi. that the identified Lead Officers for each agreed theme take forward the mapping out of appropriate arrangements for the organisation and functioning of that thematic group and report back to the next meeting.

## **5. Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Community Development – Update**

There had been circulated Report dated 31 May 2013 by Ms M Paton, Head of Community and Health Improvement Planning, NHS Highland, which provided an update on Community Development, following agreement at the Board's August 2012 meeting to the establishment of a short-life working group to develop a strategic framework and action plan to deliver a realigned approach and much stronger and more explicit co-operation and coordination of effort around community development, community learning and community capacity building activities.

The report confirmed that the working group had met four times and had agreed to take an action research approach to improving the alignment and co-ordination of resources, with a view to longer term rationalisation where appropriate. Three specific strands of work had been identified:

- testing out in practice how alignment and coordination could best work in the four areas of multiple deprivation already identified as the focus for developing an approach to addressing inequalities
- testing this out in practice in a further four sparsely populated fragile remote communities, not as yet identified
- the development of a suite of supportive resources, both to help guide this practical work and to reflect the learning from it in a way that could then be utilised in other areas.

The report also drew attention to a draft Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI) “The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013”, due to come into force in September 2013, whose purpose was to strengthen the legislative basis of Community Learning and Development (CLD) by building on the powers and duties conferred by the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. The SSI would impose requirements on education authorities in relation to the auditing of need for CLD, the co-ordination of provision, consultation with communities and other partners, and the development and publication of three-year plans, the first to be prepared by September 2015. Education Scotland would audit CLD planning, co-ordination and provision, based on the geography of Associated School Groups. The new audit process, linked to the inspection of secondary schools, would involve a self-evaluation, followed by an audit visit.

During discussion, there was recognition of the importance of CLD and the positive rationale underpinning this new regulation. However, concern was expressed as to the impact of the new auditing regime and its alignment with other audit and inspection regimes relating to community planning issues, particularly as indications were that, while the scope and reach of the proposed statutory guidance was not fully clear, the CLD audit process would include questions on wider community planning partnership performance and wellbeing outcomes. Concern was also expressed as to the time commitment that would be required, the potential for duplication, and the particular burden this would create within the Highland Council area, which had 29 Associated School Groups. It was important to seek greater clarity from Education Scotland as to what was to be required and for Mr J Pryce to convey the Partnership’s concerns to the Scottish Government.

Following discussion, the Board:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress to date with this workstream; and
- ii. **AGREED** to invite Education Scotland to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss the requirements of the Community Learning and Development SSI and the associated Statutory Guidance.

## 6. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next scheduled meeting would be held on Friday, 13 September 2013, at Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness.

The meeting ended at 12 noon.