

The Highland Community Planning Partnership

Chief Officers' Group – 23.2.15

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	COG 03/15

Audit Scotland report: Community Planning – turning ambition into action

Report by Head of Policy and Reform, Highland Council

Summary

This report summarises the key findings from the national Audit Scotland report into community planning. It identifies the implications for the Highland CPP and considers how the CPP can take forward the recommendations in the audit report. The COG's view on the report will inform the recommendations to the CPP Board meeting in March. A report will also be provided to the Council's Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee and its Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1 Audit Scotland published its report '[Community planning – turning ambition into action](#)' in November 2014. It provides a national update from its report in March 2013. It assesses progress made nationally and locally, with local progress based on five Community Planning Partnership (CPP) audits in 2014 (Glasgow, Falkirk, Moray, West Lothian and Orkney Islands) and three follow up audits (Aberdeen, North Ayrshire and Scottish Borders).
- 1.2 The audit report explores four themes:
 1. How CPPs are led and run;
 2. How CPPs are planning for communities;
 3. How CPPs are using resources; and
 4. Monitoring performance and helping CPPs improve.
- 1.3 The recommendations made in the audit report are listed in Appendix 1. A summary of the findings, their implications and proposed next steps for community planning in Highland are set out below for each theme.

2. How CPPs are led and run

- 2.1 On the positive side Audit Scotland finds that CPPs are demonstrating that:
 - partners are sharing the ownership of priorities and the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA);
 - partners are beginning to make CPP priorities part of their organisations' work; and
 - non-Council partners are taking a greater leadership role.
- 2.2 Audit Scotland also highlights issues to consider /watch out for as:
 - Councils striking the right balance between their community leadership role (so that community interest are represented) and the requirements for other partners to contribute equally to the community planning

process (given the proposed legislative change to shift responsibility for initiating, facilitating and maintaining community planning from Councils to sharing responsibility across five partners¹);

- Currently council staff do most of the day to day management of CPPs. If the new legislation shares the duty to facilitate community planning, partners need to agree how to resource the process.
- Partners need to agree how to use their collective resources (money, skills and equipment) to meet shared and agreed community planning priorities.
- Some Councillors and non-Executive Board members find it hard to adapt to working in partnership as opposed to chairing or serving on a council committee or Board

2.3 The report finds that:

- Local level leadership, scrutiny and challenge are inconsistent.
- Although there is no statutory basis for partners to be accountable to the CPP Board, Boards should enable more trust between partners, share a culture of change and welcome challenge.
- CPP Boards are not fulfilling their role effectively by setting ambitious targets, holding partners to account for their SOA delivery, setting clear and jointly agreed priorities for improvement, aligning resources and establishing effective performance management arrangements.
- CPPs need to refine performance measured and clarify what contributions partners will make to the SOA as building blocks of effective governance and necessary for effective scrutiny and challenge.
- CPPs should streamline their local partnership working arrangements to align them with priorities.

2.4 In considering the links between national and local community planning the Audit report highlights:

- There is ambiguity in the extent to which community planning should meet specific local concerns and the weight that CPPs should give to national priorities.
- There are different views about the extent to which community planning should focus on prevention and inequalities or whether it should have a broader role in improving and reforming mainstream public services.

Both of the above are seen as affecting the scope of CPP activity and resources. The report concludes that a programme of change nationally and locally is required and with strong leadership.

- The Scottish Government should be clearer about its expectations of CPPs in the national public service reforms (single police and fire services, integrating adult health and social care services, restructuring the college sector, welfare reform, early years collaborative, change funds).

2.5 Implications for the Highland CPP

¹ The five partners identified in the Community Empowerment Bill are Councils, Health Boards, SFRS, Police Scotland and (for Highland) HIE.

Compared to the findings in the audit, the Highland CPP can demonstrate:

1. shared priorities in the SOA and in CPP process improvements;
2. different partners leading on different themes and delivery plans within the SOA;
3. a culture of challenge and accountability, with this a formal part of the agenda for all Board meetings in scrutinising progress made for each SOA delivery plan and an explicit part of the remits for the Board, Chief Officers' Group and all theme groups;
4. weaving national public service reforms into the CPP structure for joint planning and accountability, i.e. the integration of health and social care is reflected in the SOA and outcomes for older people and children are reported to the Board; police and fire service local plans are drawn from engagement with local communities and a partnership assessment of risks with progress reported to the Board; and welfare reform is a standing item in the health inequalities group.

2.6 The CPP has either agreed to, or has work in progress on:

1. making CPP priorities part of their organisations' work – with a focus to be on staff understanding how they contribute to community planning by telling the story of the CPP better;
2. officers recommending how to maximise the use of collective resources to achieve best outcomes, demonstrating a shift to prevention and the re-allocation of resources between CPP members where this represents best value (as a new process improvement);
3. improving our partnership performance management and reporting (as detailed in a separate report to this meeting).

2.7 Proposed next steps

Further action for the CPP to consider based on the audit report is suggested below.

1. In reviewing local community planning in localities, to be mindful of:
 - a. the Council's role in community leadership/representing community views;
 - b. the support that local members and non-Executive Board members may need to support local community planning;
 - c. the need to streamline local partnership working arrangements and align them with SOA partnership priorities.
2. to review the partnership resourcing of the day to day management of the CPP.

3. How CPPs are planning for communities

3.1 In reviewing SOAs and CPPs in the 8 local areas listed in paragraph 1.1, the following shortcomings were identified:

- many SOAs did not provide a true plan for the areas and communities they serve;
- many SOAs do not focus on specific improvements that community planning is trying to achieve;
- few SOAs are clear about how community planning will improve outcomes for specific communities and reduce the gap in outcomes between the most and least deprived groups;

- CPPs need to make better use of data to improve their understanding of differing needs of their communities and identify improvement actions, and especially at more local and neighbourhood levels;
- While CPPs continue to improve how they consult with local people, they are not yet routinely working with communities to influence CPP priorities;
- Where partners work closely with communities they tend to do this as an organisation rather than with partners;
- There can be a lack of understanding about the Third Sector Interface role.

3.2 Good practice was found too where the area for community planning was at the local neighbourhood geography, with partners sharing data, creating neighbourhood profiles, identifying potential priorities and discussing this information with local people to agree service priorities with them. Some produce local community plans.

3.3 Audit Scotland also highlights issues to consider /watch out for as:

- Elected members considering how they carry out their democratic community leadership role where there is increased community participation;
- Being clear for the CPP about how community participation, including in local services, affects the CPP role.

3.4 On the links between national and local community planning:

- the Scottish Government needs to clarify the role it expects community planning to play in supporting the delivery of national outcomes and ensure all parts of government support national outcomes.

3.5 Implications for the Highland CPP

The CPP has agreed a priority to engage in dialogue with communities in order to empower them to participate in service planning and delivery. Key actions are around:

- reviewing how District Partnerships might be forums for local community planning and improve alignment between SOA priorities and local needs and intervention (with a report to the March Board meeting);
- the work of the new Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership of the CPP (reporting to each Board);
- Exploring the use of participatory budgeting as a new way of empowering communities (for the March meeting); and
- Preparing for the implementation of the new Community Empowerment Legislation (with the Board agreeing to develop a partnership response on asset transfer and participation requests).

3.6 Other developments worth noting around localising community planning include:

- Local community planning is formalised in Lochaber, but not in other areas, but we can learn from that approach;
- Work is underway in areas of multiple deprivation to develop asset-

based approaches and changes to public services that local people seek;

- HIE account management in rural communities is being explored as another approach to local community planning in rural areas;
- The development of the new LEADER programme;
- Developing a CPP approach to identifying fragile areas and agreeing partner interventions as part of the approach to tackling rural poverty;
- Discussions in some District Partnerships on responding to local inequalities.

3.7 Proposed next steps

Based on the Audit report the areas where more needs to be done are:

- Finding ways to localise the SOA. Options might be for local community plans to be developed that not only link to the SOA but inform it. Given the community involvement supported in areas of multiple deprivation and in account managed rural areas, these may be good places to start, but there may be others e.g. the CNPA area within Highland or areas identified by District Partnerships as relatively disadvantaged.
- Locality/ neighbourhood profiling using partnership data, rather than single agency data to start to understand local characteristics better and to use for working with communities on local interventions/service changes.
- Focusing further on communities (of place and interest) that are experiencing disadvantage and inequalities – and supporting the role of local health co-ordinators developing the asset based approaches in the areas of multiple deprivation.
- Identifying further local democratic experiments, as recommended by the Strengthening Local Democracy Commission – with an opportunity for the June Board to consider this further when key external speakers are invited.
- Ensuring readiness to implement new legal requirements for communities to be involved in community planning – this will mean formalising local community planning arrangements (including through asset transfers and the right to participate).

4. **How CPPs are using resources**

4.1 The audit finds that:

- CPPs are in the early stages of sharing and pooling financial and other resources to achieve joint priorities, e.g. jointly funded roles, co-located teams. Scaling this up to meet the public funding challenges is required. The current pace of change is seen to be too slow to deal with demand pressures and budget reductions.
- Some CPPs are looking to identify the total public resource deployed in prioritised localities.
- There are barriers to sharing resources are recognised: CPPs do not have formal power to control the CPP budget and not all partners are willing to commit resources; national and regional partners have boundaries that extend beyond the CPP area so identifying CPP spend

can be more challenging and often they are held to account nationally for national targets with little or no discretion for area targets; much expenditure is fixed e.g. specific NHS services; some partners have to apply for annual funding; as pressures on budget and staff tighten there is a risk that partners may protect their own resources.

- Shifting resources to prevention is difficult because it means moving away from short term targets to longer term prevention and the gains may not be for the organisation that has invested the resource. This requires strong shared leadership locally and nationally.

4.2 Implications for the Highland CPP

The CPP has recognised the need to maximise the use of collective resources to achieve best outcomes, demonstrating a shift to prevention and the re-allocation of resources between CPP members where this represents best value. This is one of the CPP priorities agreed in 2014 that chief officers are working on. Other notable developments for the Highland CPP are:

- The lead agency model for integration health and social care for older people and children – this has transferred financial and other assets for service delivery and increasingly means co-located teams;
- The Council's prevention (around £3m per annum) funding which is mostly transferred to other organisations to deliver;
- The establishment of a partnership asset management group;
- The strategic partnership on community learning and development where partners are to share their community development resource to ensure it is targeted for best effect.
- A commitment to collaborate on workforce planning and skills development to meet Highland needs, in the context of the Highlands and Islands Skills Investment Plan given partners' roles as major employers. This is another priority chief officers are working on as agreed by the CPP in 2014.

4.3 Proposed next steps

Some of the work above is fairly advanced and other aspects are at an early stage. The CPP should press on with the work it has agreed.

5. Monitoring performance and helping CPPs improve

5.1 The audit highlights:

- The importance of the CPP having a performance framework in place for monitoring and challenging partners' performance.
- Most CPPs are revising their performance frameworks and few have frameworks that show the added value of the partnership, how performance relates to improving local outcomes, how each partner is contributing to shared goals, using quantitative and qualitative data and data that drills below CPP wide performance information.
- The difficulties in getting this right include - attributing partner action to achieving long term outcomes, balancing short term inputs and outcome focused measures, some partners having to measure performance against national rather than local targets.
- The need for stronger links between individual partner performance

- management arrangements and CPP performance arrangements.
- The need for the Scottish Government to streamline national performance frameworks.
- The challenge of assessing partnership working at neighbourhood, theme and whole area without creating an industry in monitoring and reporting.
- The Scottish Government should review the role of their location directors who participate in CPP Boards. A coherent framework is lacking for the Government and Cosla to assess, support and challenge CPPs and no national picture of how CPPs are performing is available.
- There are national supports in place for CPPs to improve – self assessment supported by the Improvement Service and regulatory bodies, developing a core set of measures to help benchmark performance across CPPs. However the audit finds that there is no national programme for helping CPPs to improve in a well-targeted way.

5.2 Implications for the Highland CPP

The Board has agreed that partnership performance management and reporting is an area for improvement. Current arrangements involve:

- There is a performance framework for the SOA and work is in progress, although overdue, to improve it as described in a separate paper to this COG meeting.
- Progress reports for each delivery plan are provided to each Board meeting for scrutiny, but until the performance framework is improved and embedded they are more narrative in content than based on achievement against performance targets set.
- The CPP Board has agreed a programme of self-assessment with that undertaken in the Board and in some thematic groups with others planned by the end of this year.
- The benchmarking indicators being developed nationally are expected this year. These will be reported when known.
- There is alignment with the Council's performance framework and partners can comment on alignment with their organisation's performance frameworks.

5.3 Proposed next steps

The challenge of assessing partnership working at a more local or neighbourhood level is found too in Highland although the District Partnership model could help to develop this further. This should be considered as part of the approach to improving community planning arrangements at a local level.

5.4 The COG will also have to ensuring readiness to implement new legal requirements for performance reporting internally and with the public arising from the Community Empowerment legislation, as noted in the separate report to the COG.

6. **Conclusion**

6.1 The issues raised in the audit report are helpful. While the Highland CPP has progressed many of them and has work in progress in other areas, the report highlights the need to increase the pace of some of that work, especially

around joint resourcing and performance management. The COG is invited to consider whether there are capacity issues that need to be addressed. The area which needs more and new attention is around local community planning. The Community Empowerment legislation will place new duties on the CPP and the work of the Strengthening Local Democracy Commission encourages new local democratic experiments.

- 6.2 Recommendations need to be made to the Board on how the audit findings should be addressed by the Highland CPP. The Council will also scrutinise the report and our response to it at two committees, the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee in March 2015 and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in March or June. Partners may also plan to report the audit and its implications to their respective Boards.

7. Recommendation

The COG is asked to consider the audit findings and the implications for Highland as set out in the report. The COG is asked to agree the action arising from the audit, with proposed next steps set out in the report, for that to be recommended to the CPP Board.

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Audit report recommendations

How CPPs are led and run

The National Community Planning Group should:

- set out what its refocused approach to community planning means for the Statement of Ambition and its performance expectations of CPPs.

The Scottish Government and COSLA should:

- clarify their performance expectations for CPPs in the context of the National Community Planning Group's refocused approach to community planning.

The Scottish Government should:

- ensure that future guidance on the implementation of public service reform programmes is clear about the specific role that CPPs should play and the contribution they are expected to make in supporting improved outcomes.

CPPs should:

- strengthen the effectiveness of the leadership, challenge and scrutiny role at CPP board level
- streamline local partnership working arrangements and ensure they are aligned with local improvement priorities
- ensure that local community planning arrangements are clear about who is responsible for: agreeing the priorities of the CPP and SOA; allocating resources and coordinating activity; implementing activity; scrutinising performance and holding partners and others to account for their performance
- work with the new health and social care integration joint boards to develop services that meet the needs of local people and support SOA priorities.

How CPPs are planning for communities

The Scottish Government should:

- implement its outcomes approach more systematically across all policy areas
- ensure that its review of national performance measurement arrangements streamlines approaches and creates a stronger prevention and outcome focus.

CPPs should:

- set clearer improvement priorities focused on how they will add most value as a partnership, when updating their SOA
- use local data on the differing needs of their communities to set relevant, targeted priorities for improvement.

How CPPs are using resources

CPPs should:

- start to align and shift partners' resources toward agreed prevention and improvement priorities.

Monitoring performance and helping CPPs improve

The Scottish Government and COSLA should:

- develop a national framework for assessing and reporting progress in improving community planning and implementing the Statement of Ambition
- work with the Improvement Service and other national improvement agencies to establish and coordinate a programme of well-targeted practical support that will help CPPs to implement the Statement of Ambition effectively.

The Scottish Government should:

- hold central government bodies and the NHS to account more consistently for their performance within CPPs
- review the role of location directors.