

**Highland Community Planning Partnership  
Chief Officers Group**

Note of Meeting of the Chief Officers Group held in Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness, on Tuesday, 29 April 2014, at 2.00 p.m.

**Present:**

**Highland Council:**

Ms M Morris  
Mr B Alexander  
Mr G Hamilton  
Mr D Haas  
Ms C McDiarmid

**NHS Highland:**

Ms E Mead  
Ms M Paton

**Highland Third Sector Interface:**

Ms M Wylie

**Police Scotland:**

Chief Supt J Innes

**Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:**

Mr S Hay

**University of the Highlands and Islands:**

Mr M Wright

**In Attendance:**

Mr P Mascarenhas, Principal Adult and Youth Services Officer, High Life Highland (item 3)

Mrs R Moir, Principal Committee Administrator, Highland Council

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence: Mr S Barron, Mr S Black, Mr W Gilfillan and Mr D Yule (the Highland Council), Mr M Johnson (Highlands and Islands Enterprise), Dr M Somerville and Mrs J Baird (NHS Highland), Mr G Hogg (Scottish Natural Heritage), Ms F Larg (University of the Highlands and Islands) and Mr J Pryce (The Scottish Government).

**2. Minutes**

- i. **Chief Officers Group:** The Notes of Meeting of the Chief Officers Group on 30 January 2014 and the Workshop on 18 February 2014 were **APPROVED**.
- ii. **Highland Public Services Partnership Performance (HPSPP) Board:** The Draft Minutes of Meeting of the Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board on 6 March 2014 were **NOTED**.

**3. Community Learning and Development (CLD)**

Following a presentation on 6 March 2014 from Education Scotland representatives on The Requirements of Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 1913, which had come into force on 1 September 2013, the HPSPP Board had agreed that a report come to this Group on the implications of the Regulations for the work of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP).

Mr P Mascarenhas gave a presentation on the new legislative requirements and their implications for the CPP. The circulated Report No. COG/4/14 dated 12 March 2014 by the Head of Community and Health Improvement Planning, NHS

Highland, on behalf of the CPP Community Development (CD) Task Group, considered the issues involved and suggested a way forward.

At its March meeting (item 2ii above refers) the Board had noted that the Regulations had been made by the Scottish Ministers in exercise of powers under section 2 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. Accordingly, the Regulations were couched in terms of – and therefore placed a range of obligations on – local Education Authorities, albeit in consultation with partners, learners and communities, and introduced a regime of inspection by HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) based on Associated School Groups (29 in Highland).

In summary, the legislation placed a new duty on the Local Authority to publish a three year CLD Plan by 1 September 2015, and to review this on a three yearly basis thereafter. This Plan was required to set out:

- what action the authority would take to provide CLD over the period of the Plan
- what action other providers intended to take to provide CLD in the area for the duration of the Plan
- how the local authority would coordinate its own provision of CLD in the area with other providers in its area
- a statement of any CLD needs that would not be met over the period of the Plan.

During discussion, concerns were expressed that:

- the approach set out in the Regulations, with the focus on the role of the Education Authority, was out-of-date and appeared to cut across current community planning partnership structures and relationships, risking distraction and/or dilution of effort
- at best, the obligations as set out risked duplication of effort and an increase in accountability and reporting requirements.

At the same time, however, the significant overlap in the language and objectives of CLD with those of wider community planning and community development was recognised. It was also noted that HMIE had indicated that they were not looking to be overly prescriptive as to how education authorities fulfilled their obligations, so long as compliance could be evidenced. It was therefore suggested that every effort should be made to integrate the respective work streams, so that CLD could in effect be regarded, so far as possible, as an important and positive element of delivering community planning, and seen as complementary to the work of the CPP, rather than an additional demand on resources.

Other comments made during discussion included:

- The network of 9 District Partnerships appeared an appropriate structure on which to build delivery of CLD, while recognising that some might subdivide into more natural communities for delivery on the ground.
- Communities – geographic and thematic – needed to be encouraged and supported to be more self-sufficient. It was recognised that some communities were inherently stronger than others; this was often due to a core of committed community activists.
- CLD effort should be focused, in the initial phase, on those deprived areas already identified as the CPP's priority areas.
- In many cases a range of resources already operated within communities, often lacking coordination and sometimes even unaware of each other.

Optimising the use of these resources and achieving best value would require agencies to re-evaluate their individual priorities. In practice this could be very difficult, particularly where it might appear that this could put existing jobs at risk. A senior officer should be identified within each district to lead and coordinate this work, and recognition given to the additional demands this would create for that individual on top of existing responsibilities.

- It was important to recognise, value and invest in the role and contribution of the voluntary sector, not to regard volunteers as a free resource, and to recognise the danger of volunteer fatigue.

After discussion, the Group **NOTED** the obligations set out in The Requirements of Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 1913 in respect of CLD Partnership, CLD Planning and the CLD inspection regime; and **AGREED**:

- i. the recommendations from the CPP CD Task Group for addressing these requirements, as set out in the circulated report, i.e. that:
  - a CLD Strategic Partnership be formed
  - the Director of Care and Learning promote collaboration in CLD across the CPP, lead the CLD Strategic Partnership, drawing on partner support, and be accountable to the CPP Board
  - the Partnership develop a CLD Plan by the deadline of September 2015, reflecting the strategic guidance and using a framework of the 9 District Partnership geographies
  - the Partnership map current CD and related posts and accountabilities for CD work nesting within the 9 Districts
  - a senior officer be identified from each district to be a member of the CLD Partnership, to be responsible for leading, promoting and supporting collaboration and partnership working in CLD activity in their District, and be accountable to the CPP for this through the CLD Partnership; this officer could be from any partner agency or network, and a mix of agency backgrounds across the whole CPP area should be sought
  - the CLD Partnership include a lead for CLD from each of the partner agencies, in addition to the 9 District leads, and identify dedicated resource to support the Partnership and the preparation for inspection
  - agencies commit to ensuring that future CLD developments, including the creation or continuation of posts, take place within the context and agreed framework of the strategic CLD Plan
  - the respective District Leads (as above) be responsible and accountable for preparing for Education Scotland inspections of CLD, with support and guidance given by the CLD Partnership
  - the work of the CPP CD Task Group be subsumed into the CLD Partnership;
- ii. that, as initial steps:
  - a role and remit be drawn up for the senior officer/District Lead function
  - each agency identify its own lead officer/candidate from among its current staff within each district and pass that information to the Director of Care and Learning; and
- iii. that an update be reported to the HPSPP Board at its next meeting on 5 June 2014.

#### 4. Progress with the Single Outcome Agreement Development Plan and New Actions from the HPSPP Board

##### i. Identifying Strategic Priorities - following up the discussion and action from the HPSPP Board

The circulated Report No. COG/5/14 dated 21 February 2014 by the Head of Policy and Performance, the Highland Council, previously considered by the HPSPP Board at its 3 March meeting (item 2ii above), sought Board approval for five strategic priorities, previously identified by this Group, on which the Community Planning Partnership would focus:

- a. Lead, inform and cross-reference workforce planning to meet Highland needs
- b. Talk with and listen to communities to put them at the centre of planning and service delivery
- c. Improve access and connectedness to mitigate rural deprivation and inequalities
- d. Maximise the use of our resources to achieve best outcomes
- e. Promote [or "Talk up"] the Highlands to attract people, jobs and investment.

At its March meeting, the Board had expressed concern that, while offering a valuable basis for effective partnership action, these recommended priorities were concerned primarily with process and working method rather than actual outcomes and would benefit from greater clarity of meaning. The Board needed to have confidence that the Partnership was still working towards the full range of Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) outcomes. The Board had agreed at its meeting that the strategic priorities identified be reviewed in light of its comments and a further report brought back to the Board.

During discussion it was suggested that greater clarity and reassurance could have been – and should now be – given to the Board that the suggested priorities were not in any way intended to substitute for or dilute focus on the SOA outcomes. Rather, identification of these five priorities represented the underpinning framework within which the chief officers would work in partnership to enable and ensure the delivery by their respective organisations and staff of the full range of SOA outcomes.

Other comments included:

- The Board had also been concerned that the reference to mitigating rural deprivation and inequalities suggested a failure to recognise the equal need to tackle the embedded issues underlying urban deprivation. Reassurance was needed that this was not the case; rather, that what was at issue was the relative invisibility of rural deprivation in relation to national strategies / criteria and the need to redress this in the Highland context, with equal recognition of rural concerns.
- The practice of brief performance updates by responsible officers / thematic leads at Board meetings would continue. In the case of the "safer and stronger communities" theme, however, the intention would be to report back on the outcomes of meetings of the Safer Highland group, whose quarterly meetings schedule might not always fit neatly with that of the Partnership Board.

Thereafter, the Group **AGREED** that the Head of Policy and Reform, the Highland Council (HC), work with the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate

Development, HC, and the Director of Marketing, Communications and Planning, University of the Highlands and Islands, to re-draft the original paper for circulation to the members of the Group in advance of the next Board meeting on 5 June; and **NOTED** the importance of each partner being represented at that Board meeting.

## ii. Progress Update

The circulated Report No. COG/6/14, previously tabled for the Board meeting on 6 March 2014, comprised a copy of the SOA Development Plan and provided an update on delivery on each of the improvement activities identified as a result of the Quality Assurance process for the Highland SOA 2013-2018.

The Group **AGREED** that all thematic delivery plans should be finalised by the end of June 2014; and **NOTED** the benefits of streamlining these, particularly with reference to future SOA reporting requirements.

## 5. Convention of the Highlands and Islands

A Scottish Government note of the outcomes of the 31 March 2014 meeting of the Convention of the Highlands and Islands, on the topic of community planning and joint resourcing, had been circulated.

Having confirmed that the Convention provided a useful forum for highlighting the work of the Partnership, the Group **NOTED** the position.

## 6. Highland Drugs and Alcohol Partnership – Chair

The Group **AGREED** that Chief Superintendent Julian Innes be appointed to succeed Dr Margaret Somerville as chair of the Highland Drugs and Alcohol Partnership.

## 7. Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board

The Group **AGREED**:

- i. a tabled list of agenda items proposed for the 5 June 2014 Board meeting, subject to deferral of a proposed update on local CP arrangements and redrafted guidance for District Partnerships, to allow prior consideration by the Chief Officers Group (COG);
- ii. that further discussion on potential partnership working with the Autism Rights Group Highland be referred in the first instance to the local employability partnership; and
- iii. that a background briefing on European funding programmes be provided to the next COG meeting.

## 8. Future Meeting Dates

The Group **NOTED** the following COG meeting dates for 2014, as previously notified: 18 June; 8 August; 22 September; 7 November.

The meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.