

Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board

Chief Officers Group

Present: Minutes of Meeting of the Chief Officers Group held in Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, on Tuesday, 26 November 2013, at 11.00 a.m.

The Highland Council:

Mr S Barron
Ms M Morris
Mr B Alexander

Mr S Black
Mr W Gilfillan
Ms C McDiarmid

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Mr R Kirk

Police Scotland:

Supt A Macpherson

NHS Highland:

Ms E Mead
Mrs J Baird
Dr M Somerville
Ms M Paton

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Mr S Hay

Scottish Natural Heritage:

Mr G Hogg

In Attendance:

Mrs R Moir, Principal Committee Administrator, Highland Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms C Wright and Mr M Johnson, Highlands and Islands Enterprise; Chief Superintendent J Innes, Police Scotland; Mr J Fraser, University of the Highlands and Islands; and Ms M Wylie, the Highland Third Sector Interface.

2. The Purpose and Membership of the Chief Officers Group and how it will Operate

There had been circulated Report No. COG/1/13 by the Head of Policy and Performance dated 21 November 2013 confirming the remit agreed for the Group to date and inviting facilitated discussion on the systems and behaviours needed to achieve the remit. The circulated agenda had also flagged planned discussion on local community planning and partnership models to achieve local outcomes; and also on the partnership effort required to reduce inequalities.

Remit

Group members were reminded that their remit covered:

- Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) delivery plans
 - ~ leadership and management of who was doing what – and where
 - ~ performance reporting
 - ~ sharper priorities and outcomes definition

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- ~ moving the reform agenda forward
- reducing inequalities – focus and pace
- shifting to prevention
- better and joined up community engagement
- removing barriers to reform – joint resourcing, behaviours, working arrangements
- how to work together better – supportive, trusting, challenging, demanding, reflection, external scrutiny

Group members were invited to consider in smaller groupings a number of propositions designed to facilitate discussion on the systems and behaviours needed to achieve this remit, and to feed their thoughts back to the wider group.

- “Thinking about the partnership journey we have been on so far: what has changed for the better?”

Feedback included:

- The SOA had become a reality rather than just a document
- The focus was now on a joined-up approach to identifying and delivering on a common strategic vision and shared local priorities for the greater good of Highland communities, with the SOA becoming a mechanism to assist in this, rather than an end in itself.
- The partner bodies were now working together more, rather than in isolation; each was more likely to consider how the partnership approach could be used in any given circumstances and to work things through rather than withdraw to isolationism when things became difficult.
- There was greater recognition of each other’s different organisational cultures and values; relationships were improving; greater trust was developing; and partners felt more able to challenge each other without threatening the robustness of the partnership.
- Planning for Integration had been a useful model.

- “It’s 2020 and the Highlands are seen as a shining example of public service reform. What excites you most about this?”

Feedback included:

- “Team Highland” would be recognised as successful, with a “can-do”, inventive attitude and “a heap of shared things”.
- Working together would be seen as normal rather than reformative.
- Communities would be at the centre of service delivery; communications would be improved; the focus would be on outcomes.
- The Highland approach to Integration of Care would be seen as an exemplar that others would seek to follow.
- Highland would have driven forward the preventative agenda and succeeded in narrowing the inequalities gap.

iii. “What is concerning you or what is worrying you about achieving the public service reform agenda?”

Feedback included:

- It was important that the cultural change towards partnership working for a common goal become firmly embedded; this would need strong leadership and political agreement.
- Limited resources would continue to be a challenge; it would be vital to secure the most efficient and effective use of those available; effective preventative spend might generate reactive savings.
- A shift away from institutional paternalistic attitudes to the preventative approach and a greater focus on building community resilience would be required.
- Community and individual demands and expectations might rise, particularly with an ageing population profile, with at the same time a greater risk of volunteer fatigue, given the similarly rising average age of volunteers.
- Reductions in human resources could mean less capacity to develop innovative solutions, support community groups, measure performance or analyse outcomes.
- Central prescription and onerous inspection regimes could inhibit effective local progress; it would be important to maintain local control and flexibility through developing a robust and respected local model that central Government could acknowledge and trust to deliver effectively.
- Changes in Government or the Government policy framework would be a risk factor, particularly with reference to the forthcoming Scottish Referendum.

The Head of Policy and Performance reminded the Group of the need for a performance report to the HPSP Board on progress on SOA delivery – with particular reference to the previously identified thematic headings – and also the undertaking in the Partnership’s Development Plan to report similarly to the Scottish Government by March 2014. She sought reassurances from the thematic leads that they were content with progress on the ground and in a position to report to the HPSP Board at its December meeting; however, she was not at this stage seeking reporting against formal Performance Indicators as these were still under development and due for completion by end March 2014.

The need to measure and evidence performance and to satisfy SOA reporting requirements was acknowledged, with comment made as to the value of developing some degree of consistency in reporting, together with establishing greater clarity on this Group’s role as a monitoring as well as delivery body in its own right. There was also, however, concern that aspects of the wider vision emerging from discussion at this meeting should not be lost through having a primary focus on the mechanics of delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement as an end in itself. It was important to keep sight of the inherent value in a still broader strategic goal of developing a genuinely robust and meaningful partnership, with a focus on values, vision, behaviours and successful outcomes. The Group should seek to ensure that partnership working became how the various partner organisations carried out their day to day core business, with the

Group's remit reflecting this aspiration, whose realisation would at the same time include delivery of the HPSP's SOA commitments.

Reference was made to the broader statement of vision as set out at paragraph 2.2 of the report:

"We are here to serve the Highland people and we will do this with honesty, openness and commitment. We will challenge each other constructively when necessary to ensure we deliver beyond expectations for the Highlands."

It was suggested that this introduce the Group's remit, with the current seven specific bullet points then reading as "we will" and constituting statements of intent towards achieving the overarching principles. It was considered that such an approach should more readily encourage positive staff buy-in than referring to the more remote concept of a Single Outcome Agreement. It was also important to recognise the Group's role in not only "serving the Highland people" but in facilitating and enabling individuals in Highland to do more for themselves.

Local Community Planning

The Council's Corporate Manager tabled a schematic representation and briefing note on the membership and structure of the Lochaber Partnership, which was recognised as a strong and effective example of a local community planning partnership. He acknowledged that its success was built on particular local circumstances and a significant history of local inter-agency cooperation and accordingly it could not be assumed that the same model could simply be translated directly to other areas. However, there could be lessons to be taken from its operation.

He also advised the Group that he was examining the potential for building on the existing structure of District Partnerships to provide a model for delivering at least some partnership/SOA themes and for reinforcing links to those other agencies whose remit might not sit readily within the District Partnership envelope. Following further discussion with relevant interests, more detail would be brought to the Group as to how such a model might look and function, taking into account existing local good practices.

Attention was also drawn to the need to consider the role and operation of various other partnership bodies, such as within the business/economic sector, some of which might previously have been seen as community planning vehicles. Many of these were in practice primarily networking rather than delivery bodies; however, whilst it might not be desirable to dissipate resources over a cluttered landscape, which could prove difficult to change, such bodies could prove to be valuable information resources.

During discussion, it was acknowledged that local models had to suit local circumstances, and often local personalities / leadership potential / commitment. Current local resources were not necessarily replicated throughout all areas. While one size would not fit all and flexibility would be needed, it was nevertheless important that there be a recognised structure for local partnerships offering a degree of consistency whereby delivery of community development, the SOA and the wider partnership vision could be realised and evidenced.

Inequalities

Due to time constraints, full discussion on this theme was held over to the next meeting of the Group.

After discussion, the Group **AGREED** that:

- i. its remit be amended to reflect the points made during discussion;
- ii. the Corporate Manager prepare a report for the next meeting of the Group on potential local community planning models, this to be circulated to Group members in advance to allow maximum time for reflection and comment;
- iii. a main theme for the next meeting of the Group be that of addressing inequalities; and
- iv. an update on the various themes, including inequalities, be presented to the next meeting of the HPSP Board.

3. Statement on Joint Resourcing

The circulated Report No. COG/2/13 by the Head of Policy and Performance set out a draft response for submission to the Scottish Government following the latter's request for an update from all Community Planning Partnerships on joint resourcing, with particular reference to the expectations set out in the Government's Agreement on Joint Working on Community Planning and Resourcing, published in September 2013.

The Head of Policy and Performance tabled a further request from the Scottish Government, received since the report had been drafted, seeking still more detailed evidence on issues such as the sharing of information within community planning partnerships on resource use; totality of local assets held; budget planning; preventative spend, etc.; and the role of communities as a resource within the process. Whilst she acknowledged that to date such detailed partnership arrangements within Highland could largely be evidenced only in relation to the Integration process for Health and Social Care, there was a general feeling within the Group that, in light of this and also the wider progress acknowledged during discussion under the preceding item, Highland was probably significantly more advanced than other areas of the country and would still be in a position to submit a more positive response than most.

It was acknowledged that work had still to be done on mapping figures such as the total public sector spend in Highland on the delivery of Partnership services, and in particular the total spend on funding delivery via the Third Sector. It was suggested that an equally, if not more, valuable exercise might be to take a more "bottom-up" approach, i.e. identify shared Partnership goals/desired outcomes and analyse the actions and spend required to deliver these, particularly with reference to the importance of a shared strategic vision, as discussed under the preceding item.

The Council Chief Executive emphasised the importance of honesty and transparency in the response and evidence submitted to Government, and also invited partners to participate in forward financial planning discussions.

The Group **AGREED** that a response acknowledging the reality of the current position be submitted by 29 November, based on the circulated draft, amended as appropriate to take account of any further comments received from partners by 28 November; the response to be accompanied by an assurance to the Scottish Government that further work was well advanced within the Partnership towards achieving the shared vision being developed and articulated.

4. Developing the Agenda for the Highland Public Services Partnership Performance (HPSP) Board Meeting 12 December 2013

The Group was advised that, in the run-up to this meeting, the draft agenda for the next HPSP Board meeting had included the following items:

- progress with the Single Outcome Agreement delivery plans
- progress with the Single Outcome Agreement development (including the structure review) plan
- a presentation from Audit Scotland on the new Community Planning Audit process
- a potential item on partner approaches to identifying and delivering improvement in their organisations, with a view to identifying if these might be of use in a partnership context (e.g. NHS Highland use of improvement science, Council's approaches).

It was suggested that there also be a specific agenda item for the next Board meeting on the possible new role for District Partnerships in locality planning.

In discussion there was a general view that further work was needed on refining the role and membership of the Chief Officers Group, together with clarification of its relationship to the HPSP. It was important that the Group work together to assist the HPSP Board in identifying its strategic priorities and obligations and also reassure it that officers were driving forward delivery of the Partnership's shared common outcomes.

The view was taken that the potential agenda item examining how the example of the NHS approach to Quality Assurance might assist Partnership members more widely in delivering improvement in their organisations should be discussed further within the Chief Officers Group prior to discussion at the HPSP. Further discussion within the Group was also needed on issues not covered at this meeting due to time constraints:

- Community Development and Inequalities and how the other partnership themes fitted with and contributed to developing a common strategic approach
- Membership of this Group, in particular the role of the wider senior management teams within each partner organisation

The Group **AGREED** that the agendas for the next meeting of the HPSP and this Group respectively reflect the points made during discussion and **NOTED** that Mrs J Baird had been appointed as a member of the Audit Scotland Scrutiny Panel for the Community Planning Audit process.

5. Future Meeting Dates

The Group **AGREED** to meet on a six weekly basis, initially at least, and **NOTED** that details of future meeting dates would be circulated to all Group members in early course.

The meeting ended at 1.10 p.m.