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To: Chairs of Community Planning Partnerships

Copy: Members of the National Community Planning Group
Local authority and NHS Chief Executives
CPP Leads

Dear Colleagues

As we enter 2014 I thought it would be helpful to take stock of our collective progress on community planning over the last year and to update you on the most recent meeting of the National Community Planning Group.

I am sure you will agree that 2013 was an extremely busy and productive year on the community planning front. I know that all CPPs and their partner organisations have put considerable time and effort into making progress on the Statement of Ambition and would like to thank you for that work. I believe it is beginning to pay dividends in terms of partners' commitment to joint working; the development and delivery of new Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) and associated Development Plans; lessons from the Accounts Commission's audit of CPPs; and progress on the Agreement on Joint Working on Community Planning and Resourcing.

At our meeting on 11 December 2013 the National Group discussed joint resourcing and the 3rd sector's role in community planning. The papers for that meeting can be found [here](#) and a note of the meeting will be put on the website over the next few weeks.

The Group was grateful for the updates on joint resourcing provided by each CPP and encouraged by the examples of progress they provided. Nonetheless, the Group expects CPPs to make substantial further progress for 2015-16 and emphasised that even once budgets for 2014-15 have been set there is further work that CPPs and their partners should do in-year to align resources towards SOA priorities. In terms of action, the Group therefore agreed that:

- Officials should examine the barriers to progress highlighted by some CPPs; and that
- A small number of senior officials from across partners/CPPs should help define some key practical milestones for implementation of the Agreement by CPPs in 2014-15 and future years.

The Group also discussed the challenge, highlighted by some CPPs, of disaggregating partner resources against particular outcomes, priorities and/or areas. It agreed that this kind of detailed technical work can add value but did not want CPPs to get tied up or slowed down in an overly technical approach which seeks to identify and attribute every pound, shilling and pence.

On the role of the third sector, the Group agreed that there were three broad areas where Government, CPPs, individual partners and the Third Sector should focus national and local improvement efforts:

- enhancing the role of the Third Sector in helping to shape and influence community planning priorities and actions;
- enabling small community and voluntary groups to thrive and contribute – and connecting people and services with those groups; and
- improving approaches to commissioning and procurement.

I encourage you to consider these issues from your own CPP's perspective. For its part, the National Group has asked officials to look in detail at the current state of play across those three areas and the key characteristics of good practice with a view to identifying how the Group, Government, CPPs and individual partners can help maximise the potential of the third sector to improve people's lives.

I trust this update is useful and look forward to working with you over the coming year.

I would be grateful if you could circulate this letter to members of your CPP.

Yours sincerely

Pat Watters, CBE
Chair, National Community Planning Group