

## The Highland Community Planning Partnership

### Chief Officers' Group - 02.02.15

Agenda Item	5i.
Report No	COG 01/16

## Pioneer Enabling Collaborative Leadership programme

### Report by Nick Wilding & Chris Bruce, Pioneer Facilitators

#### Summary

An extended COG session held in November 2015 was facilitated by members of the Pioneer team. This was a stimulating and challenging session which might begin a learning journey for COG as the group seek to further develop collaborative working and strategic leadership. This paper reflects on that session and asks COG to commit to continuing the work.

#### 1 Background

1.1 The [Pioneer Programme](#) is supported by the Scottish Leaders Forum through Workforce Scotland. It is an offer of support for teams who, in the course of their everyday work, are seeking to deliver better outcomes through collaboration. The underpinning methodology is Collaborative Inquiry.

1.2 2015/16 has been an experimental year for Pioneer, learning with participants what kinds of approaches work best for different kinds of collaborations. Only a small number of teams have been able to access support during 2015. Their experience will inform a wider offer from 2016 onwards.

1.3 The Highland COG made an approach to Pioneer in early 2015 and initial discussions took place around a climate leadership themed piece of work. During a short session supported by Nick Wilding on 27.5.2015, those present considered whether this was the most compelling focus to begin an inquiry together into the quality of COG collaborative leadership. At that meeting, several alternative proposals were voiced, including localising community planning – where COG has an opportunity to collaborate more effectively in anticipation of (and in response to) the Community Empowerment & Renewal Act.

1.4 Nick Wilding and Chris Bruce were invited to the COG in November 2015 to begin work on behalf of Pioneer Programme.

#### 2 Highland COG Session held in November 2015

2.1 The broad structure of the afternoon session was formed of the following elements;

- Personal introductory story – Carron McDiarmid  
*Response from the floor saying it would be good to know each other beyond role - 'We need to move beyond trust and into being friends'*
- Triads exercise – developing individual inquiry questions; "What can I do to bring our collaborative working to life?"

*'I said things that I didn't know I thought but I'm glad that I said them'*

- Context – Management and Leadership, levels of listening, action and inquiry cycles, prompted by slides (a copy of the slides used is attached as appendix to this paper). Starting to develop a collaborative inquiry question, framed by one group as:  
*'do we trust other people to spend our money?'*

### **3 Reflections on the day**

3.1 Informal feedback from members of COG suggests that the session was appropriately challenging, 'took people to the brink' (in a good way) – around strong challenges to shift from good shared management into more genuinely collaborative working.

3.2 The facilitators are keen to build on this first session, and will want to contract with COG around expectations, including timescale – as this work is formally still part of a time-limited pilot. We understand that this work takes time and is one of many potentially competing priorities – though it should also feel like a good fit with COG's most pressing common challenges.

### **4 Pioneer Peer Learning event**

4.1 Pioneer will host a peer learning event, likely to take place in Edinburgh in April 2016, where active participants from pioneer sites will have an opportunity to meet and learn from one another. A contribution from Highland COG reflecting on learning to date would be welcome, and other partnerships will be sharing their experiences in a safe environment on the day. Any volunteers for taking part in the event should put themselves forward as this paper is discussed.

### **5 Next steps for Highland COG**

5.1 The Pioneer Facilitators suggest that a next session with COG should aim to agree compelling collaborative inquiry question(s) that the COG will pursue – through time limited cycles of action and reflection – during 2016. The facilitators also propose to agree with COG how to 'track' these questions at personal, group and wider system level, and can offer input on approaches CoG members might like to experiment with to this end.

### **6 Conclusion**

6.1 Learning about collaboration whilst trying to improve it holds rich potential rewards for the COG. The group is in a strong position to build from and reflect on a sustained period of working together to date. Committing to make time for a regular focus on a collaboration, supported by Pioneer, would be a worthwhile investment – and particularly relevant to the new powers and duties associated with the Community Empowerment and Renewal legislation.

## **Recommendations**

The Chief Officers Group is asked to:

- Offer feedback on the November 2015 session from members' personal and collective perspective
- Support two members to attend the national Pioneer Peer Learning session
- Invite the Pioneer Facilitators to the April 2016 COG meeting to progress the development of a collaborative inquiry