

The Highland Council
Lochaber Committee 23.8.16

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| Agenda Item | 4 |
| Report No | LA/15/16 |

Taking Forward Community Partnerships

Report by Acting Head of Policy

Summary

This report provides Members with an update on the next steps for taking forward Community Partnerships across Highland and considers how this can be implemented within the existing Lochaber arrangements.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board agreed at its meeting on 30 June 2016 to establish 9 local partnerships across the Highland area to support local planning arrangements as set out in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act and the Community Learning and Development Regulations. This was also the position agreed by the Council at its meeting on 29 June 2016.
- 1.2 It is recognised that partnership arrangements have been long established in Lochaber and so this report provides an update on the next steps for taking forward local community partnerships across Highland and considers how this can be implemented within the existing Lochaber arrangements.

2. Taking Forward Community Partnerships

- 2.1 Partnership arrangements in Lochaber are well established dating back to 1996. Currently there is an over-arching community planning partnership known as the 'Lochaber Partnership'. This partnership meets twice yearly using a 'market place' format which directly engages in conversation with communities around priorities and service delivery. The meetings are rotated around Lochaber communities. The day to day business of the Partnership is dealt with by two operating structures - the current District Partnership (LDP) focusing on health, social care and community safety arrangements and the Economic Development and Employability Forum (LEDEF), focussing on economy and employment matters. Both have identified priorities which collectively form the 'Lochaber Community Plan'. Recently a separate Business Partnership has also been established to provide a formal channel of communication and partnership between the local business community and other agencies with responsibility for economic development. This business partnership will assist in the identification of indigenous and inward investment opportunities.
- 2.2 Across Highland, community planning arrangements are not as well established; however the Community Empowerment Act has refocused the purpose and direction of community planning and placed new duties on partnerships to fulfil. There has been a need therefore to establish a structure across the Highland area to support the delivery of these new duties. It is

however recognised that within Lochaber existing community partnership arrangements are in place and there will be a need for a discussion with partners locally to consider the current local structures and how they are utilised, or amended where appropriate, to deliver on the new functions.

2.3 *Geography*

The Community Planning Partnership Board agreed to establish 9 Community Partnerships across Highland based on the district partnership geographies. Some amendments are proposed to the existing geography for district partnerships and this includes the Kilchuimen Associated School Group being included within the Inverness Community Partnership.

2.4 *Membership*

Under the terms of the Community Empowerment Act, community planning is the responsibility of 5 named partners – Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Highland and Highland Council. Therefore the core membership of each partnership will be each of these 5 named partners along with representation from the Third Sector arranged through the Third Sector Interface. In addition, there are a further 10¹ named partners in the Community Empowerment Act who would attend on a thematic basis. It will be for each community partnership to determine what other representation would be appropriate, particularly in relation to community representation. Lochaber already has well established partnership arrangements, including representation from third sector groups, but the partnership may wish to take this opportunity to review membership and it will be important to ensure that all 5 named partners are members of the partnership.

2.5 In relation to Council representation, it is anticipated that all Councillors for each community partnership will be members of that partnership. Council officers will attend when required, although it is expected that Care and Learning staff and Ward Managers will be in attendance at each meeting given the role around developing local children's plans and their local community role respectively.

2.6 *Partnership Priorities*

In addition to the commitment to a localism approach, the drivers for establishing the new partnerships across Highland relate to the requirements contained within the Community Empowerment and Public Bodies Acts. Under these Acts, there is a need to develop plans at a local level – combined locality and community learning and development plans (focusing on communities facing greatest inequality), children's plans and adult plans. These are the initial priorities for each of these partnerships. In addition to these, each community partnership is likely to want to develop their own priorities as the partnership develops, as has already happened within Lochaber. The experience here is likely to be helpful to other areas as they progress. A framework to support the development of these plans is currently in progress which enables a link between strategic priorities but allows for local

¹ For the Highland area the listed bodies are; Police Scotland; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS); NHS Highland; HIE; SNH; the Cairngorm National Park Authority; UHI; Historic Environment Scotland; regional college Boards; SEPA; the Scottish Sports Council; Skills Development Scotland; HITRANS; and Visit Scotland. Community planning is a shared duty to be facilitated by 5 of the listed bodies, for Highland they are the Council, NHSH, HIE, Police Scotland and SFRS.

flexibility.

2.7 *Partnership Support*

Currently the District Partnership in each area of Highland is supported by the Council. The Council also provides the secretariat support for the 'Lochaber Partnership' and its' associated working fora. In the future, each community partnership across Highland will be supported by one of the 5 statutory partners. This reflects the change in responsibility for leading on Community Planning. This means that this partner will Chair the meeting, provide the secretariat for the meeting and be responsible for driving the agenda. For the Lochaber area, it is proposed that the NHS will take responsibility for providing the secretariat support for the Partnership. The NHS would also Chair the Community Partnership however there has been a suggestion that the current joint-chair arrangement in place should continue. The NHS will support the Lochaber Community Partnership for the next 3 years at which time a different partner will take on the responsibility. There will be a place on the CPP Board for a member of each Community Partnership – likely the Chair but this should be decided locally – to ensure that there is a link between local and strategic planning across the area.

3. **Next Steps**

- 3.1 Across Highland, it is recognised that the coming months will be a period of transition between the former District Partnership arrangements and the new Community Partnerships. It is anticipated that this may be less of a change in Lochaber than in other areas given the maturity of the partnership arrangements locally however there will be a need for the existing partnership to review its arrangements in light of the new commitments and priorities.
- 3.2 There are a number of the current District Partnership meetings already scheduled during August and September and it is proposed that these go ahead but that all core partners are included in these meetings. This will provide an opportunity to discuss how each community partnership could go forward, however the formal new arrangements will not begin until October. A development day is planned for the end of September to bring officers from the different partner organisations together to ensure that there is joint understanding about the roles and responsibilities, aims and priorities of the new partnerships going forward. Local Chairs and current District Partnership Chairs will be invited to attend this day with separate sessions being held for Highland Council Members.
- 3.3 As discussions between partners develop over the coming weeks, the framework to support community partnerships will also develop. Members are asked to note the developments to date and that regular updates will be provided to the Communities and Partnerships Committee.

4. **Implications**

- 4.1 Resource: Partners have agreed to jointly resource supporting community partnerships across Highland.

Legal: The new arrangements will help the Council and its partners deliver on new duties contained within the Community Empowerment Act as well as the Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act and the Community Learning and Development Regulations.

Equalities: The new legal duty on CPPs to reduce inequality arising from socio-economic disadvantage should enable better partnership action for groups in the community with protected characteristics. Inequality and disadvantage are often associated with protected characteristics e.g. gender, age, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever: None identified.

Risk: There is a risk that the Highland CPP does not comply with the new legislation. This is being mitigated by taking early action with partners in advance of the new duties coming into place.

Gaelic: None identified.

Rural implications: Arrangements for taking forward community planning are proceeding in rural areas of Highland.

4. Recommendation

Members are asked to note the update on the next steps for taking forward Community Partnerships across Highland and how this can be implemented within the existing Lochaber arrangements.

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Date: 11-8-16