HIGHLAND COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Date: 28th June 2017

Report Title: **Supporting more community action and community-run services: acting on feedback**

Report By: **COG Sub Group**

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report informs the Board of the engagement with community bodies and support providers on how to support more community action and community-run services in Highland. This engagement has taken place over the past 10 months, instigated by the Council's redesign process.

1.2 Options are presented for the Board to agree how best to respond to this engagement and the ideas generated. These include: a marketing or promotional role for support services; an improvement agenda; and/or a reform agenda. These could all be taken forward by the CPP to some extent.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Board Members are asked to:

i. Note the engagement events to date and the role the HTSI has had in organising and facilitating them.

ii. Note the feedback and ideas from community bodies, and that the idea of a Community Gateway is the most favoured. Note that a sub group of the COG has worked to develop this idea and engaged with providers as well. Note that there appears to be considerable overlap and duplication across providers of the services sought of a Gateway.

iii. Agree that the HTSI, given its unique role, is supported to develop a web-based 'Gateway' with local and sectoral information and to explore a Highland App linking volunteers to volunteering opportunities. This would promote support services available to community bodies, providers, individuals and support community partnerships. The Council can offer up to 100 hours of web design time and support from its Smart Cities Team. Other partners may be able to offer support as well. Prototypes can be developed with further engagement and brought back to the Board in October 2017 for consideration.

iv. Consider the options described in paragraphs 4.6 to 5.4 and provide a steer to the sub group on what else needs to happen, in addition to action at paragraph 5.5.

v. Agree that not responding to the feedback creates risks for the CPP strategically and locally. Whichever options are chosen the Board should ensure that those providing views are advised of the difference their engagement has made and that there are opportunities for ongoing engagement and co-creation of new products and services.

3.   Feedback from community bodies

3.1   At the CPP Board meeting in October 2016, the Board agreed to support an engagement event with up to 100 community bodies and partners held on 11th November 2016. The event arose from earlier engagement the Council had as part of its redesign process with a smaller group of community bodies. Those community bodies generated ideas on how to support more community action and more community-run services. These ideas were shared at the bigger event in November and other ideas were sought.

3.2   The November event, which was organised and facilitated by the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) received positive feedback with participants finding the event: well planned; thought provoking; informative; interesting; and thoughtful. Board members and elected Members played key roles at it and the COG facilitated table discussions. The output from the event is available. The analysis of the output highlighted that for community action to thrive it needs:
- The right supports in place;
- Motivated, caring, skilled and willing people in communities;
- Trusting relationships and helpful behaviours across public bodies and community bodies;
- Shifting the balance of power to enable communities to have real influence over the range of public services and being more involved in decisions affecting them.

3.3   In addition the top 5 ideas identified at the event to support more community action were:
1. A support or brokerage service in the Highlands for community bodies, described as 'A Community Gateway' (with 10 things identified for it to do);
2. Changing attitudes (in public bodies) to be more positive and inclusive of community organisations;
3. Getting the new local partnerships off to the right start with community bodies and Access to expertise in the Council to help community groups with more complicated business (Joint 3rd place);
4. Easy access to small grants to allow groups to move more quickly;
5. A new look at Community Councils.

4   Action between November 2016 and April 2017 to follow up the feedback

4.1   The feedback from the event was welcomed by the Council's Redesign Board on 29th November 2016 and reported to the Council at its meeting in December 2016, noting that further discussion was planned with community planning partners on how best to respond. Following discussion with partners the Council agreed in March to develop the Community Gateway idea, noting it could not only support community bodies directly but also help to support the attitudinal change sought. The Council also noted the other work streams underway on the other ideas generated.

4.2   The event feedback was shared with the Chief Officers Group (COG) in early February 2017. The COG accepted the feedback and tasked a sub-group to take forward the ideas, particularly the most popular idea of a Community Gateway. The sub group agreed to explore the idea of a Community Gateway initially with a range of organisations providing support to community bodies. In total it has met twice and once with other providers.

4.3   The HTSI organised and facilitated an event on 24.4.17 which 12 public and third sector bodies attended. The event involved mapping current support provided and deliberating the 10 aspects sought of a Community Gateway as well as views about it overall. The output from the provider event is available. The themes and insights arising from the output are written in the report attached at Annex 1. This includes a summary and lists the 10 services sought of a Community Gateway.

4.4   The event shows that many organisations in the public and third sectors provide the 10 services sought of a Community Gateway. Indeed even from those present on the day it is clear that there are multiple points of contact for community bodies to receive support and signposting. High levels of overlap or duplication are found also for social enterprise support, funding support, volunteer training, community ownership support, assessing community needs, governance and business planning. In addition to those present on the day over 30 other organisations were identified as having a role of supporting community bodies in some way. Given this map of provision it is perhaps not surprising that help to navigate the support available was requested by community bodies. New information from the event showed that a lack of knowledge about who does what is not confined to community bodies but that it exists also for providers.

4.5   It is worth noting that only the HTSI currently has a comprehensive 'Gateway' role, providing all of the 10 services, for all groups and across the region. The HTSI has a local service delivery model working with eight local partners[1] as well as a regional co-ordinating and strategic role. Out with the HTSI, other service providers have a sectoral or more localised 'Gateway' role, or a partial role, focussing only on some of the services sought.

4.6   The summary in Annex 1 suggests three possible courses of action for the CPP in developing the 'Gateway' idea: a promotional role; an improvement role; and/or a reform agenda. They are not mutually exclusive and all three could be done to some degree or sequentially. They are:

1. Develop a single point of access to information to support community bodies. This would be a single door to many pathways promoting and marketing what is currently available better and making navigation simpler. It would be of use not only to community bodies, but also to providers and individuals. Scope for extending this to encourage more volunteering by improving ways of matching volunteers to volunteering opportunities could be included.

2. Service providers identify where improvement is needed when they are better informed about the type and extent of current provision, made known through the promotion / marketing approach above. Issues of consistency and quality in current community support services provided were raised at both the November and April events but these have not been explored in any depth at this time.

3. Given that most support services identified use public funding, the extent of overlap and duplication can be challenged given public funding constraints and best value requirements. A case can be made for de-cluttering the

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[1] The eight partners are: Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations; Voluntary Action Lochaber; Signpost; Caithness Voluntary Group; CVS North; Voluntary Groups East Sutherland; Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey; and Ross-shire Voluntary Action.

landscape, taking a community-focused approach to service delivery and making the systems as simple as possible to understand. Taking this approach would lead to streamlining provision and re-directing any resources to new priorities. The CPP has legal duties to reduce socio-economic inequality and through place-based approaches. Targeting partnership effort and building community capacity in local priority areas may be supported by shifting resources from duplicated service delivery.

5   New action proposed for Board consideration June to October 2017

5.1   The Board is asked for a steer on each of these options on how to make best use of the feedback from community bodies as well as those supporting them. This will enable further work to be done over the summer with progress reported to the Board in October 2017. Some ideas are presented below.

5.2   The first option on better promotion of what is currently available could be taken forward by the HTSI, as it has a unique role to provide all of the 10 services community bodies sought from a Community Gateway. To support the HTSI the Council can offer up to 100 hours of web design time for the information to be web-based and local in nature. In addition the Council's Smart Cities Team can offer support to explore the development of a Highland App to match volunteers with volunteering opportunities locally. Other partners may be able to offer in-kind or other support to HTSI as well. The HTSI could prototype options, engage with partners and community bodies and present them to the Board in October. The advantage of supporting improved web access is that groups and individuals able to self-serve should be able to do so and more intensive and face to face support could be targeted where it is needed most and to support the new community partnerships.

5.3   The options around improving and reforming current support provided to community bodies depend on the extent to which:
- the current duplication/over provision is seen to be a problem; and
- the scope for the CPP alone to change it.

5.4   Issues for the Board to consider around these options include:
- Whether the Board can encourage individual partners engaged in activity that others also provide to take stock of their role, refocus and redesign it.
- Requesting that the Scottish Government re-considers its support of different regional and national bodies providing the same or similar services in Highland. The current Government review of the TSI network nationally provides an opportunity for that review to be broadened to include other relevant organisations it funds to do the same things.
- Whether the Board can identify any resource that could be freed up from current activity to support the new requirements of the CPP to enable targeted community development.
- How to ensure the action the CPP Board seeks will support the development of local community partnerships, bearing in mind the 3rd most popular idea was making sure the local community partnerships get off to the right start. For example:
  o ensuring any new web-based information improves local knowledge of the supports in place and encourages more people and groups to do more in their communities. There could be 9 Community Gateways for example, entered through a Highland portal that allows people to

search by area and by sector;
- o supporting local conversations with local support providers to agree how to work together on priority areas agreed through the community partnership;
- o making this an explicit work stream within the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan so that it has Board and COG support as well as community partnership support, linking to the work being done on Community Learning and Development Plans;
- o identifying whether the proposed national review of local governance could be helpful to this work stream (more information is expected from the Government in September).

5.5   The sub group of COG plans to continue to meet to consider two remaining areas of work identified from the engagement: easy access to small grants to allow groups to move more quickly and changing attitudes (in public bodies) to be more positive and inclusive of community organisations, for example through training delivered by community bodies. Further information on these will be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

6   Implications

6.1   Resource: this report highlights that public funding is used to support community action but not in a co-ordinated way and not in a way that can demonstrate best value. Options for reviewing this are proposed. The Council is able to offer support in kind to the HTSI to improve web based information for community bodies and providers on the range of supports available. Other partners may identify resource to support this as well.

6.2   Legal: The Community Empowerment Act enables community bodies to participate in community planning and for CPPs to share resources to reduce socio-economic inequality. The engagement to date and options developed help the CPP to comply with its legal duties.

6.3   Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): this report is derived from significant engagement with community bodies and public bodies over the past 10 months. The Board's views should be fed back to those involved so far to show the difference that engagement has made. This report highlights there is scope to at least improve access to information for new and established community bodies on where to get support and that will include community bodies with a focus on reducing inequality and in rural communities. Depending on the options available to and chosen by the Board there could be scope to shift generic support services on-line for capable groups to self-serve enabling specialist, face to face or intensive support to groups and places that need it most.

6.4   Climate Change: limited implications although providing better web access to services could reduce carbon footprints.

6.5   Risk: there are risks that if nothing changes as a result of the engagement the credibility of partners is affected and as budget challenges persist a lack of co-ordination of community support means resources are not targeted where they are needed most and opportunities to increase community action and support community partnerships are lost.

6.6   Gaelic: none.

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Highland Gateway Stakeholder Event 24.4.17: Themes and Insights

A Community Gateway: marketing, improving and/or reforming services to support community action?

Summary of the themes emerging and recommendations

The feedback from the event indicates that a broad range of activities and many providers are involved in supporting community action. A Community Gateway as a single point of access to information about their services could help promote what is currently available better. This would help existing and new community bodies <u>and</u> public bodies know what is available and how to get it. If it includes information on matching volunteers to volunteering opportunities it could help individuals as well as community bodies seeking volunteers. As such it could be described as a single door to many pathways.

Some felt the purpose of a Community Gateway could be more than simply marketing or promoting current services. By knowing what is currently provided this could lead to an improvement agenda that included: knowing where the gaps were; improving consistency across the region; and building on what is already in place.

However the feedback also points to a reform agenda. It highlights overlap and a need to consider reconfiguring who does what regionally to avoid duplication and get better impact from public investment. This affects national organisations operating regionally as well as regional organisations. This could help re-direct resources to support the CPP fulfil its new duties under the Community Empowerment Act. This should identify the opportunities for reconfiguring services so that:

- They are more than the sum of their parts (strategic benefit);
- They support the new local community partnerships (local, coordinated and connected to communities and the local community partnerships);
- New supports /products can be designed (innovation);
- Different levels of support can be offered for different levels of need (segmenting supports i.e. those more able to, to access support using self-serve and on-line tools and those with less capacity or in greater need to have more intensive and face to face support).

To take this forward the CPP should be aware of the different positions organisations may take. A better understanding of the unique offerings of organisations would help. The potential for organisational barriers to change has been raised. Fears around a centralising, bureaucratic and disempowering agenda need to be allayed. Issues of responsibility, accountability, resourcing and knowing what impact a gateway it is expected to have and how it will be measured are all pertinent.

The review of TSIs could be timely; currently only the HTSI has a regional and generic role across all of the activities community bodies want to see in a Community Gateway, but many others receive public funding to carry out similar and duplicated activity. This indicates the review of TSIs should be done alongside a review of the related activity that other bodies provide.

The feedback from the stakeholder event should be considered by the CPP alongside the feedback from community bodies. Any proposals from the CPP should be sense checked and/or co-created with community bodies.

The event and participants
Twelve organisations took part in the stakeholder event to explore the idea proposed by community bodies to have a single point of contact, a Community Gateway, to support community action better. The event was facilitated by the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) on behalf of the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP).
The participants were: Care and Learning Alliance (CALA); Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA); Community Ownership Support Service (COSS); Highland Hospice; Highlife Highland (HLH); Highland Home Carers; Highland Council; Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE); Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI); Scottish Care; and Youth Highland.

Mapping who does what to support community action
Each participant listed the types of activities their organisation offers to support community action, totalling around 125 activities. This should be seen as a snapshot provided on the day. Their activities were mapped against the 10 features identified for a Community Gateway by community bodies. A further nine current activities were identified in addition to those identified for a Community Gateway. The mapping is described in Appendix 1.

They also identified over 30 additional organisations that appear to have a role but were not present at the event. They are listed at Appendix 2. We need to confirm with some of these organisations the type of support they offer. This cannot be seen as an exhaustive list of all organisations involved in supporting community action in Highland.

The mapping is likely to show an underestimate of support activity given the range of providers present and the time available for the mapping.

Insights from the mapping
1. There is a broad range of organisations with involvement in supporting community action. Some are public bodies. Many, if not all, receive public funding or support.

2. Nine organisations appear to have a role that is described or seen as a single point of contact for support and signposting. If this is accurate then there are multiple points of contact for community bodies. From the perspective of community bodies a way of channelling them to the right place to get the right support easily should be considered. This highlights the need for marketing, promoting and navigating the range of services better. **The CPP should consider how to support this.**

3. From the mapping against the 10 features requested of a Community Gateway there are no gaps in the type of provision; although issues of reach, breadth and quality of service were not explored in the event.

4. Each of the activities requested of a Community Gateway are provided to some extent by more than one organisation attending the event and most are provided by several organisations to different degrees. High levels of overlap or duplication is found in being seen as a single point of contact, social enterprise support, funding support, volunteer training, assessing community needs, governance and business planning and community ownership support.

5. The HTSI <u>uniquely has a regional and generic role across all of the activities</u> sought of a Community Gateway.   Others have a role that is sector/client /outcome specific or operate in specific areas of Highland.

6. The area of greatest overlap and potential duplication appears to be in those organisations operating regionally, including national organisations with a regional presence. From the mapping done on the day these are: the Council, HTSI, HIE (Strengthening Communities Division), HISEZ, Social Enterprise Academy, COSS and DTAS.   All receive public funding. It is not clear what the overlap may be with the CNPA.

7. Given the range of providers, the range of activities on offer and the total public resource in use, **the CPP and its individual members should explore issues of best value for the public purse and how the total current resource could be deployed differently for maximum impact.** This is especially important given its legal duties to engage community bodies in community planning, its requirement to reduce inequalities and target resource appropriately and its ambition to support more community action and community-run services. This should identify the opportunities for reconfiguring services so that:
    *   They are more than the sum of their parts (strategic benefit);
    *   They support the new local community partnerships (local, coordinated and connected to communities and the local community partnerships);
    *   New supports /products can be designed (innovation);
    *   Different levels of support can be offered for different levels of need (segmenting supports with those more able to use self-serve while more intensive and face to face support is targeted where needed)

The views of support organisations on the activities community bodies requested
Participants at the event worked in four groups to discuss the 10 features of a Community Gateway requested by community bodies. They were asked to assess how much priority (from 0-100%) they would place on each of the 10 features and to say why.

The event report shows the views graphically as a spider diagram. Appendix 3 provides the feedback in table format. There is no consensus in how features were prioritised; different groups had different and often polarised views. This is summarised below. **Among support organisations there appears to be mixed awareness of the range of services and providers available**. A Community Gateway could be helpful to improve their understanding as well as to community bodies and individuals.

Opinion was divided on how much priority to give to a single point of contact for communities even although community bodies had asked for it and the mapping showed a cluttered and potentially confusing landscape. Two groups gave this very high priority (saying it could be one front door with referrals and that it would be useful to many audiences). Two groups scored it far lower (saying it already existed although not consistently through CVSs and that current arrangements should be strengthened with public bodies knowing more about it). This feedback may **indicate some organisational resistance and barriers to change.**

Opinion was equally divided on help with acquiring and accessing buildings and other assets, some seeing it as essential and others saying it was already in place. Mixed views were found on the priority to be given to growing social enterprise and enabling training, indicating different awareness of what is currently provided and different views on what needs to change.
On balance more groups agreed than disagreed that higher priority should be placed on:
- helping groups to <u>secure</u> (rather than just access) funding;
- assisting with gathering views on community needs and different perspectives, including conflict resolution (no group saw this as core function and all recognised it is needed);
- Sharing what other communities are doing and learning from it; and
- Provide HR support for community bodies, including succession planning and employing people on behalf of community bodies.

On balance more groups agreed than disagreed that lower priority should be placed on:
- offering advice on legal issues, good governance, business planning etc. and
- connecting volunteers and volunteering opportunities.

Individual views on the Gateway idea
Individually participants were asked to identify what they liked about a single point of access, where it's missing the mark or unlikely to work and potential weaknesses. The themes arising are listed below. The full list of comments made is available in the event report.

Plus points
Participants provided around 25 comments. The key plus points were seen as improving knowledge of the various support services available. Some saw this knowledge as enabling further benefits, namely: improving consistency in service

across the region and improving provision itself by knowing where it needs to improve or where gaps exist and knowing which new products to create without duplicating others.

Some envisaged it as a door to various pathways, promoting the current services available and specialist expertise better, so as a marketing function. Others highlighted the scope for it to have a role coordinating provision.

Others highlighted the usefulness of the Gateway to current providers, linking them, streamlining provision and cutting out duplication.

Openness to the Gateway idea was shown with others willing to share and develop the service.

Minus points

Around 30 comments were received. The concerns about a Community Gateway idea focused on whether it would add value to current arrangements, how it might operate in practice and be resourced and the organisational barriers that are likely to hamper any change.

The main concern about not adding value was also about the scope for a Gateway to make things worse by duplicating current arrangements even further, adding an extra layer and cost.

Fears were expressed that a Gateway might be about centralising services, operating hierarchically and bureaucratically with services distant from communities and disempowering them and their innovation. Some doubted whether it was feasible to know about all of the support services available and keeping that up to date would be unsustainable. Other fears related to how the Gateway might be resourced, who would own it and whether it was take resources away from current provision, especially locally.

Others expressed concerns about the threat a Gateway could pose to some organisations and how it might be undermined by other providers.

Other points

Other points were expressed as questions. Recurring questions were about:
1. How can we be sure a Community Gateway would add value to what currently exists and not just duplicate even more?
2. How would we know if it made a difference? Would we measure community action, support for localism, shift in public sector attitudes, service improvement?
3. How would it be resourced?
4. Who would own it, be responsible and accountable for it?
5. What would its scope be?
6. Where can the community voice be in it?

All of these are pertinent for the CPP to consider.

Mapping activities against the 10 features of a Community Gateway

1. A single point of contact; a Community Gateway

Community bodies in Highland told us they would benefit from a single point of contact offering help, advice and know-how; a Community Gateway to make accessing support easier. At the event seven organisations identified themselves as having this role already and a further two were perceived as providing a single point of contact. For some this was sector specific, especially where they operated to support a network of members i.e. Youth Highland, CALA, Scottish Care, DTAS and the Community Transport Association. For the CNPA it is an area specific role. For HTSI, HIE and Highland Council the role is Highland-wide. For HTSI, as an organisation supporting the third sector, this was seen as core business including signposting to other organisations. For HIE it was expressed as their Strengthening Communities Division. For Highland Council it was about providing advice and services directly as well as signposting to others.

Other Community Gateway Services

Community bodies also told us about the particular activities they would like to see of a Community Gateway. These are listed below along with the mapping from the event to show who currently provides what. They are listed in the order of most to least organisations appearing to be involved in each activity.

2. Grow social enterprise, offering local employment as well as volunteering opportunities

Eight organisations present at the event and a further four were identified with roles to support social enterprise, jobs and volunteering. Some were sector specific: Youth Highland (social enterprise development); CALA (Opening doors project, working with 16 to 24 year olds to develop career opportunities); Highland Home Carers (noted as the largest employee owned company in Scotland and supporting community enterprise by developing community teams to deliver care at home in remote and rural areas); and Scottish Care (with a business resource pack for community enterprise). Those present thought this role was also provided by Connecting Young Carers and New Start Highland for their clients, although those organisations were not present.

Highland wide support was identified from HIE (Strengthening Communities Division), Highland Council (Business Gateway, community enterprise loan fund, levering community benefit from procurement and commissioning 3rd sector services) and the HTSI (providing business / social enterprise advice and guidance and partnership working with Job Centre). HISEZ, DTAS and the Social Enterprise Academy were identified as other organisations supporting social enterprise.

3. Help with accessing funding

Three public bodies present identified themselves as funders: HIE (start-up costs, professional fees and other funding); Highland Council (commissioning services, ward and other small grants, Highland Charities Trust, Common Good Funds, Community Enterprise Loan Fund, LEADER and ESF support); and the CNPA (LEADER and other grants).

Others present identified their role in helping community bodies access funding from others: Youth Highland (Cashback funding and national initiatives) and HTSI (general advice and in some places community accounting advice).

Others identified, but not present, with a role nationally were the Scottish Government, Community Shares Scotland and the Big Lottery. Regionally SSE was identified with its resilience fund and along with other energy producers their community benefit agreements were identified. Locally Development Trusts and the Dounreay Decommissioning Trust were identified as funders.

Funders identified were all assumed to have supports and processes in place for communities to access their funding. Alongside HTSI and other member associations the Council and HIE also assist with accessing funding from others.

4. **Enabling training in a wide range of skills from business planning to community participation**

Six organisations present said they enabled training. Youth Highland offered a range of accredited qualifications, awards and informal learning. CALA offers training in different formats. The Council's programmes included LEADER and Business Gateway training. HIE was listed but the training provided was not described. HLH identified sports development and coaching. HTSI provides a range of training including digital skills.

Others identified with a training role but not present were: SCDC, Connecting Young Carers, the Social Enterprise Academy, LGBT Youth Scotland and New Start Highland.

5. **Assisting with gathering views on community needs and different perspectives, including conflict resolution**

Three public bodies identified with this role: Highland Council (including the role of elected members); HIE (strengthening Communities Division); and the CNPA. HTSI gathers community voices, identifies needs and supports conflict resolution including through mediation. Scottish Care identified their representation at strategic level in Highland via development officers and sector meetings to raising local issues. Others not present but seen to have a role were SCDC through the promotion of the standards of community engagement and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust (HSCHT) for assessing local housing needs.

6. **Offering advice on legal issues, good governance and business planning**

Business planning advice and advice on governance for social enterprise was listed as services provided by HIE and by the Council (via Business Gateway and LEADER). HTSI also provides these services as well as advice on governance and structures for all community bodies. Youth Highland also identified its service of health checks and advice for community youth groups. HISEZ and the Social Enterprise Academy were identified with this role too, but were not present.

7. **Help with acquiring buildings and other assets**

A range of activities are provided to support communities owning or managing local assets with support before, during and after ownership. The services provided by COSS and HIE (Strengthening Communities Division) seem similar. HIE also supports this through management of the Scottish Land Fund. The Council provides support through the transfer of the asset, and in some cases business planning advice. It also provides support for specific assets e.g. providing salt bins for self help and support around maintaining war memorials. Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise were listed as having a role around community woodland but were not present.

8. **Connecting volunteers and volunteering opportunities local through local coordinators and connecting volunteers to assets held by others**

HTSI offers a volunteer matching service covering a range of volunteering opportunities. Others support volunteering into specific volunteering roles. CALA and Youth Highland recruit volunteers and offer access to the PVG Scheme. Others connect carers to needs (e.g. Boleskin, Strathdearn and Black Isle Cares) and the Befriending Service.

9. **Sharing what other communities are doing and learning from it**

The HTSI role is described as sharing information and experience including through events and meetings. Highland Council noted their role as more limited; maintaining its network of equality groups for sharing information. Youth Highland's sectoral interest is around developing collaborative practice within the voluntary youth sector and enabling access to national initiatives for its membership.

10. **Provide HR support for community bodies, including succession planning and employing people on behalf of community bodies.**

HTSI provides advice and guidance to third sector groups. Highland Home Carers also provides support for local recruitment for community based and run teams.

Additional activities currently performed

Those present at the stakeholder event also identified the other activities to support community action which were not listed as preferred activities of a Community Gateway. They were all identified as being provided by more than one organisation as listed below.

- Support for Community Learning and Development (CLD) - 8 organisations
- Targeting support to particular communities of interest – 4 orgs.
- Being a CPP partner – 4 orgs (more in practice)
- Providing venues for community use – 3 orgs
- Regulating charities, CLD – 3 orgs
- Supporting Community Councils – 2 orgs
- Providing planning guidance to community groups as the planning authority – 2 orgs
- Supporting community payback schemes – 2 orgs
- Providing advocacy for community groups/sector – 2 orgs.

Other organisations identified but not present at the stakeholder event seen to have a role in supporting community action

Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS)
HISEZ
Social Enterprise Academy
New Start Highland
NHS Highland
Connecting Young Carers
Scottish Natural Heritage
Historic environment Scotland
Cairngorms Business Partnership
HSCHT and RSLs
Community based care orgs: Boleskin, Strathdearn and Black Isle Cares, Befriending Service
Just Enterprise
SCVO
SCDC
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Scottish Canals
Forestry Commission / Forest Enterprise
Community Transport Association
YouthLink Scotland
LGBT Youth Scotland
Young Scot
Voluntary Action Scotland
Volunteer Scotland
Public Contracts Scotland
Community Woodlands Trust
Highlands Children's Forum
Dounreay Decommissioning Trust
CAB
Social Investment Scotland
Firstport
CLD Standards Council
YWCA / YMCA
Community Energy Scotland

How support organisations prioritised the 10 features of a Community Gateway

Features of a Community Gateway	Priority by table 0-100%	Rationale
A single point of contact; a Community Gateway	20, 30, 90,100	CVS do provide but lack of consistency across Highland & don't all provide the same service. Profile and awareness needs to be raised. Opportunities for sharing expertise. Strengthen what already there and raise awareness within Public Sector. We need to have more detail—is it a single point or a front door? The referral process needs to be strong & clear. Clear pathways. Could this be a directory? Hierarchy? Yes this is required, -needs to be face to face, well publicised and used by community, up to date. Many audiences to use this.
Grow social enterprise, offering local employment as well as volunteering opportunities	0, 40, 80, 100	It's about the early development. Lots of support for larger social enterprise. Future planning/service delivery. Is this the role of the single point of access? Signposting.
Help with accessing funding	10, 60, 70, 80	Fair amount of help out there. Staff out there need to think more creatively. Information about funding available. Fundraising training, proof reading. Not writing every org. funding. Talking to funders, referring on behalf of orgs. Providing references. Securing funding is much more about the process of application. Signposting to generic databases but more important to ensure learning and capacity building to complete a good valid application. Possible target on locality areas and a targeted approach.
Enabling training in a wide range of skills from business planning to community participation	10, 50, 80, 100	Lots of training available through various sources. Mixed depending on sector. Signposting to specialist training. Identify gaps and fill them—assessing needs of individual community groups. One to one support is required and it's time consuming. Core/generic. Gateway should identify gaps in training—as well as signposting This is linked very much with communities learning from other communities - not a training provider.
Assisting with gathering views on community needs and different perspectives, including conflict resolution	50, 60, 80, 100	A need to enable & facilitate communities to take forward. Prioritise as differing views. Is developing but needs more embedded/service delivery. Enabling meaningful community engagement needs doing properly and takes time. There needs to be a change in the culture to ensure participation, underpins everything. Training & resource required to enable this in Highland. There is scope here for a

		new service/product for mediation - we all do this however it is not a main role.
Offering advice on legal issues, good governance and business planning	20, 25, 30, 100	This is vital. More capacity required. Legal advice is the issue & isn't really available & where it is it is costly. This is low priority as the expertise and orgs doing it are there and this is just a signpost to them.
Connecting volunteers and volunteering opportunities local through local coordinators and connecting volunteers to assets held by others	20, 20, 30, 50	Problem about connecting volunteers—happening across Highland (between HTSI and other orgs). But issue about developing volunteers and their availability. We think we can attract volunteers but need to do more in promoting opportunities. Recognition of professional attitudes of volunteering. Is this the best way for volunteers to get best outcome personally? Perhaps we need to enable ownership of placements? Local knowledge enables good vol opps. Volunteers find their best placements. The remit for this is not to be a matching service for individual opportunities it should be a signposting and gathering of information.
Help with acquiring buildings and other assets	10, 20, 90, 90	There is the support but is there the capacity given the focus on asset? There is a lot of support there. This is important now with Community Empowerment Act. Orgs need support & advice before making the decision to take asset. Need to build bridges between comm. orgs & public bodies to ensure best outcomes for communities. This is low priority as the expertise and orgs doing it are there and this is just a signpost to them. Matching the support to the group and matching the support groups.
Sharing what other communities are doing and learning from it	0, 80, 80, 100	We do it, could do it better. Action Focus if the key. ALICE database is there but people not using it. Lots of info out there but not in one place. Visits need funding & access to funds needs to be well promoted to community groups. Important locally and nationally. How do we find out what is good practice? Standards needs recognised & celebrating. This is two way as support groups could share learning and peer review across sectors. 3rd Sector groups could connect across areas. Know where to access funds to do that—this is a very important aspect of learning.
Provide HR support for community bodies, including succession planning and employing people on behalf of community bodies.	40, 50, 60, 100	Signposting to specialists, advice available. Need support to be an employer. Focus on small orgs. An area for development as communities take on more. Some examples but we need more generic. This is about understanding—HR professional support possible new secure for gateway to offer—good practice see Highland Home Carers.