

Highland Community Planning Partnership

Chief Officers' Group – 26 April 2018

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	COG 07/18

Third Sector Representation Pathway

Summary

The HTSI are asking COG to consider the attached proposal for formalising the process of Third Sector Representation in Highland. They are asked to consider proposing the paper to the CP Board with a recommendation to adopt.

1. Background

Effective representation of Third Sector work, achievements and interests are a critical part of empowering the sector to become a partner and participant in public planning and decision making processes.

Currently processes to identify representation vary and in some areas of activity there is limited transparency on who is speaking on behalf of the sector, particularly in thematic work. The Highland Third Sector Interface undertakes at the moment to support some of this work but it is complicated by historic practice and relationships which have resulted in individuals acting as 'representatives' without any form of visibility to the broader sector.

The quality of representation is also variable and wholly dependent on organisations releasing staff to undertake additional activities.

2. The purpose of a representative pathway

It is the ambition of HTSI that through the facilitation of a pathway we will collectively achieve as a sector:

- Strengthened outcomes for our communities
- Allow partnerships to develop which will support improved outcomes and allow development of new and creative approaches to do this
- Develop stronger Third Sector engagement processes, allowing for greater input, efficiency and a better consistency in engagement across Highland
- Influence change in a meaningful and representative manner, which is reflective of the needs and challenges specific to Highland.
- Provide feedback and intelligence from within the Sector to enhance the shape and nature of services in Highland
- Ensure a transparent Third Sector engagement process which is robust and evidenced
- Support the evidencing of involvement and engagement across different themes and localities

3. The Role of a Representative

The role of a Third Sector Representative is to represent the interests of the sector as a whole, considering the strategic implications for, needs and impact of the sector. Efforts should be made to draw on the experiences, feedback and intelligence available within the whole of the sector and not only through their own individual experiences.

It is critical that representatives are visible and identifiable by the Sector, rather than selected directly by the organisation or public sector partnership. That doesn't preclude an organisation or partnership seeking membership from any Third Sector organisation based on the experience/knowledge or skill set that Third Sector organisation has; but it must be understood that that individual cannot, in that capacity, represent the broader Third Sector in Highland.

Any representative is agreeing, by nominating themselves, to provide updates and information as appropriate for general circulation to the sector. They are also agreeing to members of the sector being able to contact them, when appropriate, in relation to the role they have undertaken.

4. Highland CPP Third Sector Representation

Community Planning within Highland has essentially three component parts;

- Community Partnerships, locally based and agreed sub-regional areas (x9)
- Thematic areas of activity, regional sub groups aligned to the delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP)
- The Community Planning Board, regional governing structure with ultimate oversight of community planning as a whole in Highland. They are supported by the CPP Chief Officers Group (COG)

Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships representation on behalf of the Third Sector will be provided by local Third Sector development and support organisations identified and supported to undertake that role by the HTSI. They will be required as part of their funding agreement with the HTSI to evidence how they are supporting a wider participation and engagement process from the Third Sector into their Community Partnership. Additionally they will also be asked to evidence their own accountability to the Third Sector within that area across their TSI funded activity, including their work with the Community Partnership.

Thematic Sub Groups

Thematic group representation on behalf of the Third sector will be elected at the annual Third Sector Assembly and each representative will be expected to feed into an identified Third Sector Forum. Each representative will stand for a period of 12 months before being eligible for re-election.

The Community Planning Board

As part of their ongoing role as a TSI, funded by the Scottish Government, the HTSI will represent the interests of the Third Sector at the Highland Board and COG. It will however be responsible for demonstrating its effectiveness in this role to its members through the annual Third Sector Assembly and HTSI AGM.

5. The Third Sector Assembly

Those representative roles requiring annual selection will ordinarily be subject to a vote at the Third Sector Assembly and HTSI AGM in the Autumn of any given year. Those selected will hold that role for the following twelve months.

In the event the individual's circumstances change and they are no longer able to undertake the role, a temporary nomination can be made through a relevant Third Sector forum. For example, if the role that has fallen vacant relates to Community Justice then the Third Sector Community Justice Forum will identify a temporary candidate until the next Assembly.

Candidates who wish to be considered will be asked to submit their nomination forms in advance of the Assembly so that information can be collated and circulated to participants prior to attending. A straight count of votes on the day will identify the representatives put forward.

To qualify as a nominee an individual must be able to demonstrate the following:

- A significant connection, either through a paid or voluntary role, or roles, currently being undertaken within the Third Sector here in Highland.
- Relevant skills or knowledge for the area of interest specific to the role for which they are seeking nomination.

In the event that no one is put forward the HTSI will endeavour to represent the interests of the sector directly until such a time as a representative can be identified through the process above.

The term for each nominee will be no more than one year, though they will be immediately eligible for re-election. There is no limit to the number of terms an individual can undertake.

To vote as part of a selection process an individual or organisation must hold membership to the HTSI and only one vote per registered member will be eligible.

6. The Role of HTSI

The HTSI will provide ongoing support and, where necessary, training for the representatives. They will also collate information coming in from representatives and ensure that is shared within the Sector more broadly.

HTSI will also have responsibility for co-ordinating the Third Sector Forums and ensuring that they continue to achieve identified purpose and outcomes as agreed by the members of those Forums, the HTSI Board and the Scottish Government.

The HTSI will also provide an assurance that the above process and outlined role of the representative is undertaken and fulfilled.

Recommendations

COG are asked to consider the outlined proposal and give specific consideration to the following points:

- Does the proposal create a productive structure for formalising the process of Third Sector Representation in Highland?
- Are the COG members supportive of the approach and would support a 'stand down' of representatives currently involved in, or would be involved in, the HOIP thematic structures in October 2018?
- Would COG Members help HTSI to identify the current 'representatives' within the relevant structures and support their understanding of the process?
- Would they be willing to recommend the model for adoption to the CP Board at their next meeting?