



Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Board held remotely on Thursday 5 November 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

The Highland Council:

Councillor Margaret Davidson, Leader of the Council

Councillor Alasdair Christie, Depute Leader

Carron McDiarmid, Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place (Substitute)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland (Substitute)

NHS Highland:

Ann Clark, Vice Chair, NHS Highland Board

Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

Police Scotland:

Supt Ross MacKillop, Chair, Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group (Substitute)

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Niall MacLennan, Group Commander Prevention and Protection - Highland, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland, and Chair of the Community Justice Partnership (Substitute)

High Life Highland:

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

Highland Third Sector Interface:

Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer

NatureScot:

Ben Leyshon, Operations Manager, South Highland (Substitute)

Skills Development Scotland:

Stephen Sheridan, Regional Skills Planning Lead

University of the Highlands and Islands:

Chris O'Neil, Principal and Chief Executive, Inverness College UHI

In attendance:

Ian Kyle, Co-Chair, Community Learning, Development and Engagement Delivery Group

Cathy Steer, Chair, Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group

Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group

Miss M Murray, Committee Administrator, Highland Council

Mr A Christie in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Donna Manson, David Oxley, Pamela Dudek, Conrad Trickett, Donna MacKinnon, Isobel Grigor and Graham Neville.

2. Minutes of Meetings

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Board – 21 August 2020; and
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 10 June 2020.

3. Review of Recovery Priorities

Representatives of the Partnership Coordinating Group gave a presentation on the early messages and key themes emerging from the review of partners' recovery plans, as well as Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Delivery Plans and Community Partnership priorities.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- an update was sought, and provided, on the status of the various HOIP Delivery Groups' action plans prior to lockdown in terms of moving from planning to implementation of actions, it having been commented that if they were at different stages it might affect the approach to implementing any priorities agreed by the Board at today's meeting;
- it was heartening to see the strong alignment across all partners' recovery efforts;
- the summary HIE had provided on implications for the workforce was pertinent to all partners and permission was sought to share it more widely within the Council. In that regard, the Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland, HIE, spoke to the workforce development work taking place within HIE, including an all-staff virtual conference and staff surveys that would inform new ways of working, and confirmed that he was happy to share it and work as closely as possible with partners;
- the use of language such as "reset" and "renew" in the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service recovery paper was insightful;
- the Council, as part of its Visitor Management Plan, was looking at the potential to create an expanded Ranger Service for Highland with partners and it would be helpful to engage with NatureScot in that regard given that one of NatureScot's priorities was to invest in skills, especially in youth employment;
- attention having been drawn to the comment in Skills Development Scotland's recovery paper that Highland was on the cusp of an unprecedented employment crisis, it was suggested that there was an opportunity for partners to work collaboratively to look at how to maximise the opportunities from the new government investment and instruments available such as the Young Person's Guarantee, the Adopt an Apprentice scheme and the Green Jobs Fund. The Regional Skills Planning Lead, SDS, added that there would be announcement by the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture later that day which it was hoped would provide more clarity on the Young Person's Guarantee;
- the importance of making connections across other strategies being developed by partners was emphasised, particular reference being made to green recovery which tied in to mental and physical health through access to the countryside, active travel and placemaking. In addition, there were opportunities for jobs associated with nature-based solutions such as woodland and peatland restoration and, from a UHI

perspective, appetite for forestry and engagement with the green economy was very healthy;

- if private businesses were struggling with apprenticeships in trades offered by the Council, the Council could potentially be part of offering a solution and adopt apprentices. It was added that, from an Inverness College and UHI perspective, appetite for apprenticeships was strong, targets having been exceeded, and there was still funding and opportunity to develop apprenticeship programmes. However, finding placements was challenging and it was necessary to work as a partnership in that regard;
- community planning partners were the largest employers in Highland, and it was necessary to work together and present partners' workforce requirements to the public, particularly young people and those who had fallen out of the workforce, in a united way;
- whilst the presentation reflected emerging priorities, it was necessary to have an increased focus on the areas raised during discussion, including joined up working, volunteer fatigue and green jobs;
- it was questioned whether there were sufficient resources for a separate strategic recovery plan and instead suggested that a CPP vision statement be developed for approval at the next meeting of the Board, incorporating points regarding the importance of the economy to recovery;
- in relation to how to ensure the economic recovery focus was integrated into the work of the CPP, it was suggested that economic recovery should be on the agenda for every Delivery Group and Community Partnership going forward;
- it was suggested that resource mapping and how statutory partners could potentially plug any identified gaps be considered as part of the next steps; and
- further to the comments regarding the Young Person's Guarantee and the need for a partnership approach to workforce planning, it was suggested that the Regional Skills Planning Lead, SDS, host a meeting of relevant partners to discuss these matters in more detail.

Thereafter, the Board:

- NOTED** the emerging themes arising from the review of organisation recovery plans and existing local and strategic CPP priorities;
- NOTED** that whilst there were recovery elements to all the priorities identified there remained a focus on response and mitigation of Covid impacts;
- AGREED** that the presentation reflected emerging priorities and that it was necessary to have an increased focus on the areas raised during discussion including joined up working, volunteer fatigue and green jobs;
- AGREED** that, given the alignment to existing priorities, a separate strategic recovery plan was not required but that a CPP vision statement be developed for approval at the next meeting of the Board, incorporating the points raised regarding the importance of the economy to recovery;
- AGREED** that economic recovery should be on the agenda for every Delivery Group and Community Partnership to ensure that it was integrated into the work of the CPP;
- AGREED** that resource mapping and how statutory partners could potentially plug any identified gaps be considered as part of the next steps; and
- AGREED** that Skills Development Scotland would host a meeting of relevant partners to discuss the Young Person's Guarantee and the potential for a regional workforce plan.

4. Review of Covid Learning

Key Covid learning from each organisation had previously been circulated alongside partners' recovery plans.

The Board was asked to consider and discuss the emerging Covid learning and agree appropriate shared actions.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- concern having been expressed regarding volunteer fatigue, particularly volunteer leadership fatigue, it was suggested that it was necessary to focus on how to support the structures that supported the coordination and mobilisation of volunteers, which took a professional context and framework. It was added that it would be interesting to see what effect the Chancellor's announcement regarding the extension of the furlough scheme had over the winter, many furloughed staff having volunteered during the initial resilience phase;
- partners sharing what they were doing was important both from a learning perspective and in terms of making best use of resources;
- the importance of providing signposting information to community groups was emphasised, particularly in relation to welfare and financial support, social care and mental health services, including suicide prevention. In response, it was confirmed that this had been picked up at both Community Partnership and HOIP Delivery Group level. Providing a range of information was crucial and the need for a partnership approach was emphasised;
- in conversations with community groups, strong support had been expressed for a place-based approach;
- as part of the response to Covid, exceptionally strong networks had developed in Caithness which would no doubt carry on and had strengthened overall partnership working in the area. It was added that there was learning for the CPP in terms of where more resource and support might be required as not all areas had developed similarly strong networks;
- the importance of shared and consistent messaging was emphasised;
- it was important to be alert to and share the non-obvious – for example, in relation to remote working, some lower paid staff were heading into a period of fuel poverty. The assumption had been that people were saving money as they were no longer driving to work but many staff did not drive to work as they could not afford a car, and work was a place where they were warm, safe and did not have to turn the heating on;
- fatigue was also an issue for staff, particularly health and social care staff who had had to work in very different ways throughout the pandemic;
- the knock-on effects of Covid were being felt far more in Highland, where the rates had been quite low, than elsewhere in the country. In particular, reference was made to the need to isolate and the difficulty getting tests in rural areas;
- it was highlighted that Caithness Community Partnership was having a joint meeting with colleagues in Ross-shire the following week for the purpose of sharing learning;
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that the Highland Resilience Network being developed by HTSI might, in the long term, address some of the issues raised in terms of having a single point where people could access the support they needed. However, this would take time to implement and a more immediate solution was required;
- it was necessary to take every opportunity to raise morale and support the people on the ground in what were fraught and uncertain times. In that regard, attention was drawn to the forthcoming Third Sector Awards and it was suggested that consideration be given, collectively, to how to recognise some of the incredible contributions people had made across the region; and
- there was a generational aspect to volunteering and, in that regard, it was suggested that High Life Highland's Leadership Programme could potentially be used more innovatively throughout Highland to allow young people to contribute more

meaningfully to their communities, recognising that careful consideration would need to be given to how they were deployed.

Thereafter, the Chair having suggested that the issues raised in relation to volunteering be taken forward as an action, the Board:

- i. **NOTED** the emerging Covid learning; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a piece of work be undertaken, in advance of the next meeting of the Board, on what action could be taken to address the issues raised in relation to volunteering, including volunteer fatigue, coordination of volunteering efforts, and the need to recognise the value of volunteers and raise morale.

5. EU Exit – Preparations and Potential Impacts

Partners provided verbal updates, on behalf of their organisation, on preparations for and the potential impacts of the UK's exit from the European Union, issues covered including immigration; the Council's role in supporting fish exporting businesses and carrying out checks on fishing vessels; concern regarding businesses preparedness for Brexit and the reduction in the number of Brexit-related enquires being received by HIE; movement of EU, EEA and Swiss students; the impact of the Global Talent Visa on the academic community; European researchers choosing to leave UHI and the associated loss of research grants; the potential impact of the loss of European funding programmes such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus Plus; staffing; and pharmaceuticals.

In relation to immigration in particular, National Records for Scotland estimated that there were between nine and twelve thousand EU citizens resident in Highland and the June figures showed that 7940 had applied for settled status. It was suggested that, when the new figures became available, consideration be given to a joint press release/communication welcoming the number of staff seeking settled status and encouraging those who had not yet applied to do so.

In addition, the Chair highlighted that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) had won a contract covering Highland, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles to provide advice and support to EU nationals who wished to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, and that details would be circulated to partners so they could make referrals to their local CAB.

Thereafter, the Board:

- i. **NOTED** the updates provided;
- ii. **AGREED** that, when the new figures were available, consideration be given to a joint press release/communication welcoming the number of staff with settled status and encouraging those who had not yet applied to do so - this would be passed to the Council's communications team to coordinate;
- iii. **NOTED** that the Citizens Advice Bureau had won a contract covering Highland, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles to provide advice and support to EU nationals who wished to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, and that details would be circulated to partners so they could make referrals to their local CAB.

6. Strategic Risk Register Review

The Strategic Risk Register had been circulated for discussion/review.

The Board **AGREED** that Covid and Recovery be added to the Risk Register.

7. Integrated Children's Services Plan 2020

There had been circulated Report No CPB/04/20 by the Head of Integrated Children's Services, The Highland Council.

The Chair suggested that officers liaise with the Board Administrator to ensure that Board meeting dates coincided with when the new Integrated Children's Services Plan required to be signed off.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that one of the key themes within the Plan was the transition from childhood to adulthood, including a focus on getting young people into employment.

Thereafter, the Board:

- i. **NOTED** the work undertaken by the Integrated Children's Service Plan Board in progressing the plan;
- ii. **NOTED** the decision to route the plan through the Community Planning Partnership Board in line with Scottish Government advice;
- iii. **NOTED** the revised timeline for publication of the Integrated Children's Services Plan in April 2021; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the Head of Improvement and Performance, Highland Council, liaise with the Board Administrator to ensure that Board meeting dates coincided with when the Integrated Children's Services Plan required to be signed off.

8. The Highland Community Justice Partnership Annual Return

There had been circulated Report No CPB/05/20 on behalf of the Community Justice Partnership.

During discussion, reference was made to the powerful and interesting stories on the Second Chancers website and partners were encouraged to visit it if they had not already done so. In addition, NHS Highland appreciated the focus within the Community Justice Partnership on a trauma-informed approach to practice and it was hoped that type of work would continue when the Community Justice Plan was refreshed.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the report and the Highland Community Justice Partnership Annual Return.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **AGREED**:

- i. that the meeting scheduled to take place on 18 December 2020 be cancelled and a new date be arranged in January 2021; and
- ii. that a status report be presented to the next meeting of the Board on the various locality plans and HOIP Delivery Plans.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm.