



Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Board held remotely on Monday 1 February 2021 at 10.30 am.

Present:

The Highland Council:

Councillor Alasdair Christie, Depute Leader
Donna Manson, Chief Executive

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland (Substitute) (also representing Community Partnerships)

NHS Highland:

Ann Clark, Vice Chair, NHS Highland Board
Pamela Dudek, Chief Executive
Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

Police Scotland:

Chief Superintendent Conrad Trickett, Divisional Commander, Highland and Islands

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Derek Wilson, Local Senior Officer

The Scottish Government:

Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Location Director

Community Partnership representative:

Eann Sinclair, Chair of Caithness Community Partnership (also representing HIE)

High Life Highland:

John West, Head of Culture (Substitute)

Highland Third Sector Interface:

Margaret Somerville, Chair of HTSI Board
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
John West, Co-Chair, Community Learning, Development and Engagement Delivery Group
(also representing High Life Highland)
Iain MacLelland, Chair, Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group
Cathy Steer, Chair, Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group
Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group
Niall MacLennan, Chair, Community Justice Partnership
Melanie Murray, Committee Administrator, Highland Council

Mr A Christie in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Margaret Davidson, David Oxley, Steve Walsh and Graham Neville.

2. Minutes of Meetings

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Board – 5 November 2020;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 17 September 2020;
and
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 4 November 2020.

In relation to the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership (CJP) on 4 November 2020, attention was drawn to the references to difficulty obtaining information for the Community Justice Plan (Item 5) and justice conversations possibly being diluted at CPP level (Item 8), and it was queried whether the Board could do anything to assist with these issues.

The Chair of the CJP having undertaken to discuss the issues with colleagues and report back, it was suggested that he liaise with the Chair of the Community Planning Board and the Vice Chair of NHS Highland Board in the first instance. The wider partnership would be informed of any developments and the matter could be revisited at the next meeting.

The Board so **AGREED**.

3. Action Tracker

An Action Tracker had been circulated to enable the Board to review progress of its agreed actions.

In relation to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) hosting a meeting of relevant partners to discuss the Young Person's Guarantee and the potential for a regional workforce plan, the Regional Skills Planning Lead confirmed that an initial meeting had taken place on 25 November 2020 which had led to a number of further meetings between SDS, UHI, the Council and the DWP to discuss the "no wrong door" approach. A further meeting of wider partners was scheduled to take place on 5 February to discuss the employer recruitment offer that formed part of the Young Person's Guarantee.

The Chair having highlighted that a CPP vision statement would be presented to the next meeting for consideration, the Board **NOTED** the Action Tracker and the update provided.

4. Partnership Priority Setting

Updates were provided as follows:

Lockdown 2 – Partnership Updates

Each partner organisation gave a verbal update on current activity/service provision and the key ongoing and emerging challenges. Areas of concern that it was suggested required a partnership focus included:

- economic recovery and employment;
- mental health and wellbeing;
- hidden harms, including the significant increase in domestic abuse, adult and child protection issues, drug misuse and the increasing number of suicides; and
- welfare/poverty, there having been as much as a 263% increase in unemployment benefit claims in parts of Highland.

In addition, it was necessary to work together on the challenges and opportunities associated with the anticipated continued “staycation” approach when lockdown restrictions eased.

The Chief Executive, Highland Council, referred to a number of slides which she undertook to circulate to partners following the meeting. Similarly, the Operations Manager, South Highland, NatureScot, undertook to share the recent NatureScot report “Supporting a green recovery: an initial assessment of nature-based jobs and skills”.

Vaccination Update

The Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, gave a verbal update on the vaccination programme during which it was explained that good progress had been made with more than 45,000 vaccines having been administered across the NHS Highland area. All care homes had been completed except for three which had had Covid outbreaks at the time and would be returned to. The uptake percentage was approximately 85% for the over 80s and it was anticipated that vaccination of that age group would be completed by the end of the week. Plans were in place to vaccinate the entire adult population over the next few months but it was a huge task and it was emphasised that, whilst the vaccination programme was a good news story and there was good evidence it protected the individual, the extent to which it prevented community spread was still unknown. It was therefore important to continue to follow all the Covid safety precautions.

Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Delivery Group Leads

A verbal update on current activity was provided on behalf of the following HOIP Delivery Groups:

- Poverty Reduction
- Mental Health and Wellbeing (including its subgroups, the multi-agency Suicide Prevention Group and the Green Health Partnership)
- Community Learning, Development and Engagement
- Community Safety and Resilience

The Infrastructure Group Lead was not in attendance. However, the Group had now met. It was explained that the Infrastructure theme formed part of discussions taking place on the links between the CPP and the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership to ensure there was no duplication.

A fuller written report on the HOIP Delivery Group Plans would be presented to the next meeting.

Partnership Priorities for Ongoing Resilience

Following the various updates and based on the issues raised, the Chair suggested the following partnership priorities for ongoing resilience and invited partners to consider any additions:

- Economy and Employment
- Mental Health
- Hidden Harms, including domestic abuse, adult and child protection, suicide and suicide prevention, and drug misuse
- Welfare/Poverty

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it was important that discussions on the proposed priorities crossed over with the discussions on the impacts of Brexit. It was added that it was necessary to look at the implications of Brexit for staff and students as well as the impact on key industries/communities/individuals – for example, the impact on the fishing industry in communities such as Lochinver and Kinlochbervie and how that might affect the CPP;
- suicide and suicide prevention had been a CPP priority for a number of years and a lot of work had been done in that regard. However, much of the suicide prevention training was based on the interactions people usually had. Covid restrictions meant that people were not interacting in the usual way and it was suggested that it was necessary to consider a different approach that reflected the current circumstances;
- it was necessary to reflect on the fact that different communities were facing different issues and it might be necessary to focus partnership resources on specific areas/communities; and
- in response to a question, Ch Supt Trickett, Police Scotland, commented that the increased risk in terms of adult and child protection was undoubtedly something that both the Public Protection Chief Officers Group and the wider partnership should be focussing on. The current statistics were difficult to interpret and the concern was that the full picture was not known. Schools were one of the main sources of information in terms of child protection and as they were currently closed that information was not available.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the updates provided;
- ii. **AGREED** the following partnership priorities for ongoing resilience and that proposals as to how to take them forward, taking into account the points raised during discussion, be brought back to the next meeting:
 - Economy and Employment
 - Mental Health
 - Hidden Harms, including domestic abuse, adult and child protection, suicide and suicide prevention, and drug misuse

- Welfare/Poverty
- iii. **AGREED** that discussions on the agreed priorities should cross over with the discussions on the impact of Brexit; and
 - iv. **AGREED**, in relation to Brexit, that it was necessary to consider the implications for staff and students and the impact on key industries/communities.

5. Volunteering in Highland – Impacts of Covid

There had been circulated Report No CPB/01/21 by the Chief Officer, Highland Third Sector Interface.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- Citizens Advice Bureaux and other charitable organisations had seen a significant reduction in volunteers as a result of lockdown and there would be a re-training aspect when lockdown was lifted;
- the Chair suggested that partner organisations consider how they could support the areas of possible activity set out in section 4.3 of the report and provide a written response to the Board Administrator to inform a further report to the Board on 31 March 2021 identifying the gaps and strengths;
- it having been queried how further engagement might take place with those who had come forward during the national campaign but not been utilised, it was explained that HTSI was linking volunteers with community groups as best it could. However, it was emphasised that HTSI did not retain a bank of volunteers who were PVG checked and ready to be deployed, and concern was expressed regarding instances of requests for volunteers being received at very short notice. In addition, feedback had been received from volunteers regarding a lack of Covid safety measures and not knowing who their contacts were, and it was suggested that further discussions were required with organisations such as the Red Cross on the arrangements/requirements in relation to the deployment of volunteers;
- in response to a question, it was confirmed that volunteer fatigue was an issue that needed to be addressed. However, Covid had also made many volunteers, a lot of whom were elderly, re-evaluate their personal circumstances and cease volunteering. It was suggested that both issues needed to be looked at equally;
- the Chief Officer, HTSI, reminded partners that the HTSI Awards 2020 would be taking place on Facebook Live on Thursday 4 February 2020; and
- it having been questioned whether enough support was being provided to the third sector to utilise technology such as Near Me to enable activities to be carried out in different ways, the Chair suggested that this also be picked up in partners' written responses to the Board Administrator.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the report;
- ii. **AGREED** that partner organisations consider how they could support the suggested areas of possible activity set out in section 4.3 of the report, as well as what support could be provided to the third sector to utilise technology such as Near Me to enable activities to be carried out in different ways, and provide a written response to the Board Administrator by 10 March 2021 to inform a further report to the Board on 31 March 2021; and
- iii. **AGREED** that further discussions take place with organisations such as the Red Cross on the arrangements/requirements in relation to the deployment of volunteers.

6. Brexit Update

Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland, HIE, provided a verbal update on the current issues and impacts as a result of leaving the EU, particularly the short-term impact on the fishing industry and other food and drink sectors in terms of both imports and exports. There was also a growing issue with the labour market with businesses, particularly those in tourism and food and drink sectors, already indicating that availability of labour was a key issue. This was likely to become more obvious in the spring/summer. There was a CoHI (Convention of the Highlands and Islands) subgroup working on this issue and there would be an update at the next CoHI.

During discussion, the following issues were raised:

- it having been questioned whether decisions relating to the impacts of Brexit sat with the CPP or the Economic Recovery Partnership, discussion ensued during which the Chair suggested that a mapping exercise be carried out to establish what Brexit activity was taking place and which forum was best placed to take on the lead/decision-making role, with the CPP Board potentially having a coordinating or critical friend role;
- as the year progressed, whilst it was hoped that the impacts of Covid would be lessening, the wider social impacts of Brexit might begin to play out;
- some of the unintended consequences of the economy opening up that were experienced last year were likely to be repeated this summer with some sectors coming under significant pressure. Additionally, the labour market position might be different this year and it was necessary to factor that into discussions;
- it was necessary to think about how to jointly communicate the activity taking place and it was suggested that the Board had a role to play in that regard as the impact on communities was significant. In addition, it was necessary to look at how to connect with communities differently, including by utilising technology such as Near Me. It was suggested that these matters be considered at the next meeting of the Board; and
- the Economic Recovery Partnership was looking at how to have a more productive relationship with intermediary organisations.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the update provided;
- ii. **AGREED** that a mapping exercise be carried out to establish what Brexit activity was taking place and which forum was best placed to take on the lead/decision-making role, with the CPP Board potentially having a coordinating or critical friend role; and
- iii. **AGREED** that consideration be given, at the next meeting of the Board, to how to jointly communicate the activity taking place and connect with communities differently, including by utilising technology such as Near Me.

7. Review of Strategic Risk Register

The Board was asked to consider and review the Strategic Risk Register which had been circulated, including the two new risks added to reflect Covid impacts and recovery.

In relation to Covid Resilience, Members considered that the Untreated Score of 25 (Red – Very High) was correct. However, given the earlier discussions on issues such as suicide and drug misuse, it was questioned whether the proposed Current Score of 16 (Amber – High) was sufficiently high and it was suggested that the Current Impact score should be increased to 5, thereby increasing the total Current Score to 20 (Red – Very High).

The Board **APPROVED** the additions to the Risk Register subject to the Covid Resilience current impact score being increased to 5, thereby increasing the total current score to 20.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 31 March 2021 at 2.00 pm.

9. Any Other Business

Community Justice Partnership

The Chair of the CJP provided a verbal update, during which it was explained that:

- Ross MacKillop, who had recently retired from Police Scotland, had been appointed as Independent Chair of the CJP with effect from 1 April 2021;
- the current Community Justice Plan would come to an end in 2021 and work was underway to put an interim one-year plan in place. With the help of the Chief Officer, HTSI, funding had been sourced and an independent company had been employed to review the work of the CJP and identify information on specific areas to help shape the interim plan;
- the Violence Reduction Unit project established through the CJP had been in abeyance due to the Covid pandemic but work was now underway again with a focus on Caithness; and
- discussions were taking place with the Justice Department with a view to a Sheriff joining the CJP to enable better liaison with the Justice Department and to work through some of the issues being experienced, particularly in relation to Community Payback Orders.

Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership

On the matter being raised by the Chief Executive, NHS Highland, discussion took place on the need to establish where the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership sat within the Community Planning Partnership and it was suggested that the governance arrangements be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the update in respect of the Community Justice Partnership; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the governance arrangements in respect of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

The meeting ended at 12.10 pm.