

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	EDU/11/21



Community Planning Board – 9 June 2021

Community Planning Partnership Development Update

Report by: Head of Policy, Highland Council

Recommendations:

The CPP Board is asked to:

- Consider and agree the updated vision statement at section 2.
- Note the update on the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership at section 3
- Consider and note the update on the CLD inspection journey outlined at section 4
- Consider the update on the development of the new CLD plan including the proposed priorities in section 4 and through the accompanying presentation.
- Consider and discuss the audit findings outlined in section 5.
- Consider the update against locality planning in section 6 which includes:
 - Note the feedback from the review of locality planning
 - Agree the proposed approach to taking forward locality planning at 6.6
 - Agree the principles to guide this approach outlined at 6.8
 - Agree the areas for improvement outlined at 6.9
- Note the update against resource at section 7 and agree that a Board workshop be held prior to the next Board meeting to explore how best to address the issue of resourcing the partnership.

1. Background

1.1 This paper provides an update on a number of areas related to the continued development and improvement of the Community Planning Partnership. The paper includes:

- A revised CPP vision statement
- An update on the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership and how this proposes to operate in the future to delivery against key partnership economic priorities

- An outline of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) inspection journey, as requested at the last Board meeting.
- An update on the progress to develop a new CLD Plan for Highland
- A report on the findings of two audits looking at Highland Council and NHS Highland and the learning and recommendations relating to the CPP
- An outline of the findings of a short review of locality planning and proposing a new approach to this going forward in order to improve delivery and achievement of outcomes
- An update on resourcing of the CPP.

2. CPP Board Vision Statement

- 2.1 The March meeting of the CPP Board considered a draft vision statement to capture the core focus of activity for the Partnership. It was considered important that any vision reflected the issues particularly pertinent at present but also that the vision would last beyond the current pandemic crisis.
- 2.2 Following discussion some minor amendments were made to the vision at the Board meeting, but it was also requested that further work be undertaken in order to effectively capture the scope of wellbeing and inequalities within our Highland context. This is set out below with the changes noted in bold. This includes proposed amendments to the draft vision itself but also clarifying notes which were suggested at the last meeting.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership is committed to supporting and promoting the wellbeing, safety and prosperity of the Highland area and its residents. **We will aim to ensure residents in all of our communities have the skills and resources to improve their circumstances and live better lives.***

We will work together to support an inclusive approach to economic growth and a sustainable economic future for the region. Through working together, we will focus on reducing inequalities and maximising incomes and assets within our communities in order to create a fairer society.

We recognise that inequalities** are different within our diverse geographical communities and across the generations and our approach will encompass and embrace this diversity.

We will protect our natural environment by working together towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions for the Highland area and promoting the responsible use of our natural environment to support the positive mental and physical health of our population.

Note:

**Wellbeing is meant in the broadest sense. The partnership is committed to considering and addressing the physical, mental, economic and social wellbeing of residents.*

***Inequality reflects the difference between levels of different aspects of life. This could relate to income but also living standards, access to services and opportunities. The nature of inequality can therefore vary between geographical communities and also different groups within the population.*

- 2.3 The Board is asked to consider, and following any amendments, agree the updated statement.

3. Highland Economic Recovery Partnership

- 3.1 As reported to the March CPP Board meeting, it has been proposed the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership is best placed to lead on the economic recovery partnership priorities and that reports on progress from this group can be shared with the CPP Board. The Partnership is a joint public and private sector partnership which has been reformed from the Economic Partnership with the purpose of better managing, in the Highland Council area, the economic recovery from the COVID19 pandemic and the adjustment following the UK's departure from the EU.
- 3.2 The partnership will operate at two levels: a regional level covering the whole Highland Council area, and a sub-regional level. These sub-regional areas are Caithness and Sutherland, The Inner Moray Firth (including the Inverness travel-to-work area, south Loch Ness and Badenoch & Strathspey), and Lochaber Skye and Wester Ross.
- 3.3 The Highland Economic Recovery Partnership met on 27th May, with an Agenda that was developed in partnership with area-based groups of public and private sector representatives. The main agenda items discussed were:
- A review of easing of lockdown restrictions – (led by Lochaber Chamber of Commerce)
 - Skills and talent – (led by Skills Development Scotland)
 - Housing for growth – (led by Cairngorm Business Partnership)
 - Levelling up – (led by Highland Council)
- 3.4 Key actions that were agreed at the meeting were:
1. The Chambers of Commerce to interface on the development of local solutions to recruitment and training and skills , with the support of DWP, SDS and the UHI colleges.

2. Establishment of a small group with influential leaders to address the specific challenges in Highland of housing, and to develop options for short and longer term solutions.
3. Partners to use their influence during engagement with MPs and MSPs regarding the development of Shared Prosperity Fund as current UK regional programmes do not address challenges of rural and island areas. Also to engage in developing a strong pipeline of projects for future bids.
4. Appointment of a joint chair from the private sector. Stewart Nicol of Inverness Chamber of Commerce has offered to take on this role and he will chair the next meeting.

3.4 The Board is asked to note the update on the Highland Economic Recovery Partnership.

4. **CLD Inspection Journey and Development of the new CLD Plan**

4.1 Community Learning and Development (CLD) partners within Highland and the area of Mid Ross were inspected by Education Scotland during October and November 2018. During the inspection four quality indicators were reviewed and subsequently graded (shown in table below) to establish the quality of the strategic leadership of CLD and the quality of CLD provision in the area.

Quality Indicator No.	Description	Score
1.1	Improvements in performance	satisfactory
4.1	Impact on the local community	Good
5.1	Delivering the learning offer with learners	Good
9.2	Leadership and direction (including some themes from 9.3 and 9.4)	satisfactory

The full inspection report can be found on the Education Scotland website - <https://education.gov.scot/assets/contactorganisationinspectionreports/cldhighlandcouncil140119.pdf>

- 4.2 In summary the 2018 inspection found the following key strengths:
- Increased value placed on CLD and partnership working;
 - Community organisations improving local infrastructure and increasing learning opportunities;
 - Rich landscape of vibrant, self-starting community groups increasing sense of place and reducing isolation; and
 - Staff and volunteers are delivering quality services and learning opportunities which improve lives.
- 4.3 The following improvement priorities below were identified by Education Scotland:

- Strengthen the alignment of local provision with strategic and area priorities and plans to ensure a clear shared sense of direction;
- Improve joint evaluation and performance monitoring to better capture and report CLD impact;
- Strengthen the role of communities in local planning and decision making; and
- Develop clear learning pathways for adults.

4.4 A full programme of improvement activity took place over 2019 which resulted in positive outcomes being noted by ES during their November 2019 revisit, a year after the original inspection. These included;

- Partners demonstrated their shared commitment to strengthening the 9 Community Partnerships
- Improved processes enabling increased collaborative working with partners through the CLD Networks
- Improved use of data to identify a range of CLD priority actions to build the role, effectiveness and sustainability of community planning.
- Evidence of highly effective and ambitious community organisations continuing to enhance community life by delivering a wide range of services and well delivered learning opportunities continuing to meet the identified needs.
- The Mid Ross CP proactively taking steps to involve more local people through improved targeted engagement activity.
- Partners working together to support young people to participate in decision making processes with particular note being made to their involvement in the co design of the Highland Youth Work Strategy.

4.5 The revisit did highlight areas still requiring improvement, namely:

- the direction of CLD provision across CLD in Highland was “not yet sufficiently clear and coordinated across partners”.
- Particular concerns remain around CLD governance arrangements.

4.6 In response to the latter the CLDE Delivery group carried out a review of existing arrangements and as a result, the group has been redesigned into the following 2 groups to make governance clearer:

1. **CLD Strategic group** responsible for setting the strategic direction including how CLD resources are allocated. Membership includes: THC Education, THC Communities, THC Health & Social Care, HTSI and High Life Highland; and
2. **CLD Operational Group** responsible for delivering the 3year Highland CLD Plan. Membership includes: High Life Highland Adult and Youth Work Services, 9 Community Partnership CLD Leads, LEAD Scotland, WEA, UHI, NHSH, HIE, THC Education, THC Communities.

Progress against the Highland CLD Plan will be reported annually to THC Education and Learning Committee and to the Highland Community Planning Board.

4.7 During 2020 the focus of CLD partners was providing humanitarian support to vulnerable individuals and communities. This created a pause in terms of the distinct improvement work linked to inspection findings. However, the rich learning gained during this time is now the focus of renewed development work with Education Scotland, CLD partners and communities. Education Scotland are at this time in a support role – this is detailed further in section 5 - and we have no indication at this stage whether a revisit inspection is proposed.

4.8 *Developing the new Highland CLD Plan 2021-2024*

In Autumn of 2020 work began on the development of the new 3 year CLD Plan. Starting with a review of all the available CP locality plans and analysis of the learning from covid response efforts 5 themes were identified; Mental Health & Wellbeing; Voice, Participation & Inclusion; Digital Inclusion; Employment, volunteering & training; and Community Development & Resilience. A series of focus group sessions with partners and wider stakeholders helped inform the draft priorities set out in the table below. A draft plan will be available in July for comment with the plan due to be considered by the CPP Board in September prior to publishing in September 2021.

Theme	Draft CLD Priorities
Mental Health and Wellbeing	The CLD community in Highland will prioritise working together to improve the levels of wellbeing experienced by people in our communities. This work will be targeted towards those at greater risk of poorer outcomes.
Voice, Inclusion and Participation	The CLD resource in Highland will prioritise supporting targeted individuals and groups to develop their abilities and confidence to; speak out and influence the services in their lives and be and feel a part of positive change.
Digital Inclusion	It is a priority of CLD partners in Highland to maximise digital inclusion. This priority will focus on increasing; skills, confidence, and access of target communities which includes the CLD workforce.
Employment, volunteering and training	It is a priority of CLD in Highland to provide; visible, easy to access opportunities which support routes into Employment, volunteering and training for those who need it most.
Community Development and Resilience	CLD in Highland will prioritise targeted support to the development of capacity in key areas and of groups to increase their resilience for the future. This priority will build on the experiences and outcomes of Highland communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 4.9 As work progresses towards the publication of the Highland CLD plan 2021 -2024, Education Scotland continue to support and build capacity in the sector through facilitating a range of development opportunities, including; themed practitioner dialogue sessions; webinars; and workshops. The Lead Inspector also provides the Delivery group with direct support and challenge through their attendance at the quarterly meetings.
- 4.10 A presentation outlining the emerging themes for CLD in Highland and key lesson learned from our continuing engagement with Education Scotland will be presented at the meeting.
- 4.11 The Board is asked to consider and note the update on the CLD inspection journey and the update on the development of the new CLD plan.

5. Highland Council Best Value and NHS Highland Internal Audit Findings

- 5.1 It was requested at the March Board meeting that an update be provided on the findings of two recent audits for the Council and NHS Highland that considered community planning and the delivery against the duties in the Community Empowerment Act. This is relevant when considering how the CPP moves forward and sections 6 and 7 on the agenda propose how to address some of the findings of these audits.
- 5.2 In 2019, the Council underwent a Best Value Audit Review (BVAR) by Audit Scotland. The [final report](#) was published in January 2020. The BVAR reflects on the past 10 years of the Council, the period since the last Best Value review in 2009.10. Whilst the Audit focuses on Council performance, strategic direction and use of resource, it also considers whether the Council is working well with its partners.

The audit findings considered the approach to Community Planning and specifically progress around locality planning. Comments from the Auditors are outlined below:

88. The Community Empowerment Act requires CPPs to develop locality plans for the communities facing greatest inequality. The HOIP states that each community will have a delivery plan, the live document recording actions and impacts. These plans will be reviewed regularly and reported back to communities. The Scottish Government required these plans to be complete by October 2017. However, currently only 11 of the 25 plans have been developed. Like many other councils, slow progress is the result of a lack of resources– to carry out the significant level of engagement and consultation required.

89. For the plans that are in place, the level of engagement is good and there is evidence of involving a range of communities and TSOs. Some community workers

have used the Place Standard tool to develop an understanding of how people feel about their communities. However, many actions in the plans are small-scale and lack any details of resources allocated or required by partners. It is difficult to assess the impact of the activity and if there has been progress in achieving the outcomes identified within the plans. In addition, not all plans are publicly available which may reduce ownership by the communities and their ability to scrutinise the plans. A recent self-assessment carried out by the CPP highlighted that partners had mixed views on:

- whether or not there are effective governance arrangements in place in relation to scrutiny and accountability*
- whether or not actions are in place to deliver the HOIP*
- whether or not the partnership can evidence achievements made through community engagement*
- whether or not the partnership can demonstrate effectiveness in delivering real outcomes and impact for the people and communities in its area – several informants say they don't know*
- whether or not evidence demonstrates what the partnership is doing to improve outcomes and reporting to stakeholders is regular and effective.*

5.3 Key issues highlighted relate to:

- not delivering against the locality planning commitment
- the lack of resourcing to support locality planning
- plans and actions need to be measurable

One of the 7 key recommendations is targeted not just at the Council, but the wider community planning partnership:

The CPP should increase the pace in developing the remaining locality action plans in line with the requirements of the Community Empowerment Act (paragraph 88).

5.4 In 2019, NHS Highland undertook an internal audit on Community Planning. While the audit identified areas of good practice, including initial community engagement work and provision of training to community partnerships, a number of issues for improvement were identified. This included:

- The need to provide updated guidance on expectations of community partnerships and how they can be achieved with current resources
- Lack of dedicated resource for community partnerships to deliver local outcomes, including no pooling of resource across the community partnerships
- Gaps in leadership, direction and focus in some community partnerships
- Lack of staff capacity to resource the day to day management of community partnerships and deliver training and other initiatives
- Lack of a long term resource model to build capacity in participative processes and lack of formal communication and engagement strategies

- Links between development of local adult and children's plans and the governance routes within NHS Highland are not well developed

5.5 The risks identified with these issues include:

- Lack of clarity over direction could lead to duplication and/or gaps, and impaired planning processes such that outcomes are not achieved
- Plans are developed and implemented that are not inclusive of all needs and fail to work effectively for all stakeholders
- Failure to meet expectations of the Community Empowerment Act and local communities
- Failure to agree local adult and children's plans could lead to ineffective use of resource and fail to address local inequalities and meet outcome objectives

5.6 The audit made a number of recommendations including:

- Update guidance for community partnerships
- Community partnerships should develop communication and engagement strategies, including protocols for engaging through social media
- Develop performance information arrangements for locality plans
- Reports on progress of community partnerships should be reported to the Board of NHS Highland
- A robust process to ensure adult and children's plans are reviewed at Highland level, ensuring alignment of planning processes

5.7 The Board is asked to consider the findings of both the Council's Best Value Audit Review and the NHS Internal Audit. Both would support a refocused approach for locality planning to ensure more effective and measurable delivery of these and a need to reconsider how best to support the partnerships in relation to resourcing. These are considered further in sections 6 and 7.

6. A New Approach for Locality Planning

6.1 As reported to the CPP Board in March, a review was required of locality planning and consideration taken how to improve approaches going forward. Developing 25 separate plans within specific communities across Highland has proved challenging and even now, not all plans are in place. A different approach is therefore required in order to better achieve the aim of reducing inequalities within communities

6.2 A short review of locality planning has been undertaken with key personnel involved in Community Partnerships in order to better understand what is working, the challenges and opportunities. Key messages from this engagement are as follows:

What is working well:

- Strong local relationships
- Strength of local engagement through the pandemic and positive practical partnership working

- Local understanding of actions that will make a difference
- Strength of local involvement in partnerships through the pandemic
- Streamlining plans – taking a thematic approach – getting broader commitment from the community
- Political support for the partnership
- Autonomy in own partnership to do what is right

The challenges:

- Sustaining good quality engagement
- Balance between 'core' role and partnership role – still seen as separate both by individuals and their management. Cross agency issue.
- Getting buy in from the whole community when plans are targeted
- Hearing the hard to reach voices
- Resource to implement plans
- Some confusion around principles and purpose of community planning
- Better understanding needed of inequality
- Developing the plans
- Lack of discussion about sharing resources
- Delivering against actions – need focus on delivery rather than development of plans
- Evidencing and measuring what has been achieved
- Delivery of adult and children's plans

The opportunity:

- Locality planning a real opportunity to work with and engage communities in order to identify, understand and deliver key priorities and actions required locally
- Critical part of place based planning and community development
- Opportunity for refocusing and aligning existing resources to where the needs and priorities are
- Local plans should assist to inform strategic priorities
- Better understanding of inequality as a result of covid

6.3 It is reasonable to conclude that the current approach to locality planning is not working. Three and a half years on, not all plans are in place and this is not a result of a lack of commitment from individuals, but a key issue is the challenge around the development and delivery of multiple plans at a local level. The level of resourcing locally does not match the current ask. This is confirmed through the various audit processes highlighted in sections 4 and 5 of this report. Even where additional resource has been accessed to develop plans, there remains a challenge of delivery of multiple plans concurrently. Learning would suggest that where Partnerships have begun to streamline approaches, and take a whole area approach, this is proving more

manageable and deliverable and providing focus for the partnership and the community.

- 6.4 A further issue is achieving buy in from the wider community when activity is targeted at a small number of communities. Learning from the pandemic has also highlighted the success of taking a broader approach to engagement and on a thematic basis which involves the wider community but still enables targeting within. It should be noted the positive practical partnership working that has taken place over the last year where there has been a clear focus and direction.
- 6.5 Resourcing remains a challenge. The use of the resources that are available needs to be more targeted and learning has demonstrated that there is not the capacity to develop and deliver against multiple plans . Effective re-direction of existing resources has not yet happened and this is linked to a need for stronger understanding and commitment to partnership work within all organisations and at all levels within organisations.
- 6.6 With a view to refocusing and supporting partnerships to deliver locally, the Board is asked to consider the following proposals to refocus the approach to locality planning in order to better support Community Partnership to deliver effectively at a local level.

Proposed Approach:

- Each Community Partnership is required to deliver one locality plan. Each plan should include targeted actions for specific geographical or communities of interest within the wider area but also enable a thematic approach for some issues where a wider area-based approach would be appropriate. The focus would remain on addressing inequality. Each plan needs to include a clear set of priorities that are measurable and can be monitored and reported.
- The separation of adult and children's plans has been unhelpful in considering an overall approach to priorities. It is proposed no longer to have separate adult and children's plans and that the one locality plan should include actions for adult and children aligning to the strategic plan e.g. Integrated Children's Service Plan. NHS and Council leads would remain responsible for ensuring this alignment and supporting identification of priorities.

6.7 Benefits

- The proposed approach would continue to meet the legislative requirements
- The approach still considers individual communities where inequalities are greatest but also considers communities of interest.
- Retains purpose and aims but streamlines and simplifies the approach for a more effective delivery against outcomes.
- One clear set of priorities for each Community Partnership that are measurable and can be monitored and reported.

- Retains flexibility for partnerships on the approach they wish to take and enable local identification of priorities.
- Supports commitment and buy-in from whole community

6.8 Supporting Principles

- There is a clear focus on targeting inequality both in terms of place but also communities of interest
- Engagement should still consider targeting communities where voices may not be heard therefore identifying need in those communities where there are the greatest inequalities.
- Locality plans should clearly identify what action to take to address inequality within an area and how any outcomes will be evidenced and measured.

6.9 Improvement areas:

- All partner organisations need to ensure prioritisation of partnership working and addressing poverty and inequality is embedded throughout the organisation with awareness from managers at all levels.
- The Community Partnership toolkit requires to be updated to reflect current learning and circumstance and to support new members of partnerships and individuals new to community planning. (This is underway)
- Community engagement training required to be delivered for all staff. (This previous commitment was put on hold due to the pandemic but requires to be revisited.)
- Training on inequalities required to ensure there is shared and consistent understanding which should also support core service delivery and improved targeting of resource to address need.
- An improved approach to data is required to ensure priorities are supported by an evidence base and are measurable and reportable.
- Resourcing the function – there is a need to resource the facilitation of the CPP, leadership, CPD although not the delivery of actions. (This is discussed further at section 7.)
- Consideration is required on where the work of Community Partnerships and locality planning sits with the context of place planning. It is proposed a report is taken to a future Board meeting.

6.10 The Board is asked to consider the update against locality planning and:

- Note the feedback from the review of locality planning
- Agree the proposed approach to taking forward locality planning at 6.6
- Agree the principles to guide this approach outlined at 6.8
- Agree the areas for improvement outlined at 6.9

7. Resourcing

- 7.1 The challenge of resourcing has been a regular matter on CPP Board agendas over recent years. The new duties under the Community Empowerment Act did not come with additional financial resources for any partner organisation and has come during a period of sustained budget challenges for all public sector agencies.
- 7.2 Recent inspection findings, highlighted in this report, have noted a direct correlation between the slow pace to deliver against key priorities and resourcing. It needs to be acknowledged that some of this challenge relates to the ask on local partnerships and there are proposals contained within this report that set out an amended approach to help streamline and simplify delivery in order to support partnerships to deliver.
- 7.3 However, there is still a requirement to re-consider key areas of resourcing including data analyst support to ensure outcomes are evidenced and targets measurable and supporting the function of the CPP, including the relationship with data but also the leadership and supporting engagement.
- 7.4 It is proposed that a Board Workshop is held in advance of the September Board meeting to enable partners to focus, discuss and consider a way forward to address the challenge of resourcing.

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