

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	CPB/16/23



**Highland**  
Community  
Planning  
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas  
Dealbhadh  
Coimhearsnachd

**na Gàidhealtachd**

## Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 15 September 2023

### Scottish Parliament Inquiry – Summary of Findings

Report by: Head of Community Support, Contact and Engagement

#### Summary

The Scottish Parliament's inquiry into Community Planning reported in June 2023. This report sets out the findings from the inquiry and asks the Board to consider and discuss the findings and the potential areas of learning for the partnership.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 In November 2022, the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing & Planning Committee, launched an inquiry into Community Planning. This forms part of the Committee's post-legislative scrutiny of the Community Empowerment Act 2015. In particular, the inquiry explored the steps taken by partners to improve collaboration, the challenges faced by CPPs and the progress and impact of local partnership. The Highland partnership submitted evidence, which can be found at the following link: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/81796/item\\_9\\_scottish\\_parliament\\_inquiry\\_into\\_community\\_planning](https://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/81796/item_9_scottish_parliament_inquiry_into_community_planning)

## 2. Summary of findings

- 2.1 The inquiry reported in June 2023 and made a series of recommendations to the Scottish Government, intended to inform the Government's Review of the Community Empowerment Act. A summary of the main findings are outlined below:

### 2.2 *Effectiveness*

- Community Planning plays an important role but it could be more effective in some areas and requires more support and investment.
- There is variation in performance between CPPs and this should be taken into account in the review of the Community Empowerment Act.

### *Guidance*

- CPPs should have a clear and defined role in national guidance in the response to emergency situations.

- Guidance on Community Planning should be updated to reflect comments made by stakeholders and should reflect new national priorities e.g. Community Wealth Building and regionalisation of economic development and what the role of CPPs in these areas of work.

### ***Partner involvement and accountability***

- The Act should be updated to require CPPs to invite Third Sector interface's to be partners.
- Any review of the Community Empowerment Act should consider how CPPs could involve the private sector in community planning and how CPPs can contribute to economic regionalisation.
- Any routine Audit Scotland audits should include the effectiveness of the organisation's participation in community planning.
- Simplifying the complex lines of accountability should be explored.

### ***Responsibilities***

- Any review of the Act should consider whether the ambitions for community planning are realistic without being back up by direct investment. Sufficient resourcing is required before any additional requirements are created e.g. community wealth building. Partners also need to consider how they can direct their resources to underpin CPP work.
- The review should support CPPs to focus on the importance of empowerment and participation and opportunities to drive improvement.
- CPPs need to ensure that communities of interest are fully included in community planning and their voices clearly reflected in LOIPs and locality plans.

### ***Areas for development/investment***

- Community engagement requires a particular skill set that cannot be met solely by CPP officers. Scottish Government should explore how it can resource a network of engagement officers and encourage local authorities to ensure they have sufficient community planning officers.
- Scottish Government should commission work to understand the impact made by CPPs to improving inequalities.
- There is a need to better align outcomes across the public sector through local delivery by statutory partners.
- The review should consider how to foster more sharing and continuity in leadership through rotating chairs amongst partners
- In the development of a Community Wealth Building Bill, early consideration needs to be given to the role of CPPs and any changes to legislation needed to support that
- The review of local governance needs to incorporate the role of CPPs.

### 3. Key areas for exploration

3.1 Whilst the majority of the recommendations relate particularly to Scottish Government and either potential changes in relation to guidance/legislation/resourcing, some do focus on the way in which partnerships operate.

For Highland, key areas for discussion could include:

- The role of the partnership in relation to economic and regional development as a driver for inclusive economic growth and catalyst for reducing inequalities
- How to broaden representation on the partnership, particularly in relation to the business community
- How the work and role of the partnership aligns with our emergency planning/resilience arrangements
- Streamlining priorities and outcomes across partners and the partnership
- The opportunities for aligning and targeting resources on shared priorities and outcomes

#### **Recommendation**

The Board is asked to:

- Consider and discuss the findings from the Scottish Parliament Inquiry into community planning

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