



**Highland**  
Community  
Planning  
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas  
Dealbhadh  
Coimhearsnachd

**na Gàidhealtachd**

Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board held in the HIE Boardroom, Ground Floor, An Lòchran, Inverness Campus, Inverness, and via Microsoft Teams, on Friday 15 September 2023 at 11.00 am.

**Present:**

**The Highland Council:**

Councillor Kate MacLean (substitute) (remote)  
Derek Brown, Chief Executive (remote)

**Highlands and Islands Enterprise:**

Stuart Black, Chief Executive  
Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland (also representing Community Partnerships)

**NHS Highland:**

Ann Clark, Vice Chair, NHS Highland Board  
Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

**Police Scotland:**

Chief Superintendent Rob Shepherd, Divisional Commander, Highland and Islands

**Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:**

Michael Humphreys, Area Commander (remote)

**The Scottish Government:**

Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Location Director (remote)

**Community Partnership representative:**

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

**High Life Highland:**

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

**Highland Third Sector Interface:**

Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer

**Skills Development Scotland:**

Stephen Sheridan, Regional Skills Planning Lead (remote)

**University of the Highlands and Islands:**

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

## **In attendance:**

Fiona Duncan, Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care, The Highland Council (remote)

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

Cathy Steer, Chair, Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group

Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group

Ross MacKillop, Chair, Community Justice Partnership (remote)

Elisabeth Smart, Interim Chair, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (remote)

Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager

Melanie Murray, Principal Committee Officer, The Highland Council

## **Also in attendance:**

Kate Lackie, Interim Depute Chief Executive, The Highland Council (remote)

## **Mr S Black in the Chair**

### **Business**

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair welcomed Derek Brown, newly appointed Chief Executive of The Highland Council, to his first meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Raymond Bremner, Councillor Graham MacKenzie and Pamela Dudek.

#### **2. Minutes of Meetings**

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership Board – 22 June 2023;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 23 May 2023; and
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 15 June 2023.

#### **3. Action Tracker**

The Board was asked to review progress of its agreed actions as set out in the Action Tracker which had been circulated.

With regard to formalising the governance arrangements in respect of the various groups that formed part of the CPP structure, particularly in relation to recruitment of independent Chairs, the Partnership Development Manager explained that work had commenced and she had connected with all the groups in the CPP network that had independent Chairs. However, further engagement was required and it was proposed that a report be presented to the December Board.

The Interim Chair of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) explained that the HADP had now appointed an independent Chair, Carron McDiarmid, who had previously worked for The Highland Council. The Interim Chair confirmed that she was

happy to share information about the recruitment process that had been followed and lessons learned.

The Board **NOTED** the Action Tracker and the updates provided.

#### 4. Partnership Development Team Update

There had been circulated Report No CPB/11/23 by CPP Senior Officers and the Partnership Development Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- information was sought, and provided, as to how the work of the Partnership Development Team would help in terms of having two-way alignment between local and strategic priorities and whether, in due course, the workplan might be extended to include a column on how the outcomes and impact of the work being undertaken would be measured;
- the workplan was intended to be an evolving document, and the proposed quarterly review was an opportunity for Board Members to highlight any specific areas of development to be included; and
- the proposed review of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) was welcomed. Post-Covid and in light of the lessons learned from the initial phase of the HOIP, it was an optimal time to improve alignment and, given the resources available to the various partners going forward, the HOIP being a focal point for future activity was essential.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Partnership Development Team structure;
- ii. **NOTED** the allocated Community Partnerships within the Partnership Development Team;
- iii. **NOTED** the proposed workplan, including milestones and measures for success, in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- iv. **AGREED** that a quarterly update be provided to the Board on the progress against the workplan.

#### 5. Review of Strategic Risk Register

The Strategic Risk Register, which had been reviewed by the Partnership Senior Officers Group, had been circulated.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- some Board Members were of the view that it was reasonable to remove the risks relating to Covid although it was important not to forget about it and to bear in mind that, whilst the impact and likelihood had reduced, the situation could change quite quickly. Others questioned removing the Covid Recovery risk as there were still implications;
- in relation to Covid Resilience, there was a risk that the CPP had not done the learning from the response to Covid to inform how things might be done differently in the event of a similar situation in the future;
- it was questioned whether the CPP was sighted on the compounding economic impact of Brexit, Covid recovery and a pre-Brexit and Covid projection of workforce issues. In

relation to workforce availability, it was added that it was necessary to consider the impact of population demographics;

- it was questioned whether the Cost of Living Crisis risk should be lowered at present given that interest rates were rising and a lot of the support that had been in place last year, particularly in terms of energy bills, had been discontinued;
- discussion took place regarding the Board's approach to risk identification and management, during which it was suggested this be revisited in conjunction with the review of the HOIP, and that greater alignment between the HOIP and the Risk Register should be the aim. In terms of risk reporting, it was not expected that every risk would come to the Board but that commentary would be provided on the major risks;
- from a health perspective, the longer-term impacts of Covid, eg in the mental health field, and the impact of the cost of living crisis on population health as well as services were still very much at the forefront; and
- reference was made to the scale of the current challenge in terms of public sector funding and the associated risk in terms of the CPP's ability to deliver and work as a partnership, and it was suggested that a risk be added in that regard.

The Board:

- NOTED** against the CPB Communication risk that a CPP Communications Strategy was being developed;
- AGREED** to retain the Covid Resilience and Covid Recovery risks at present and that they be considered further, taking into account the points raised during discussion;
- AGREED** to lower the risk in respect of the Crisis in Ukraine to low, based upon current local evidence and operation;
- AGREED** that the Cost of Living Crisis risk should not be lowered at present, noting that this would continue to be reviewed;
- AGREED** the proposed additional risk in respect of the Partnership Development Team, which related to the resourcing of the team;
- AGREED** the Risk Owners and Risk Leads that had been included; and
- AGREED** that a risk relating to public sector funding be added for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

## 6. Length of Chair's Tenure on CPP Board

The Chair referred to the length of the CPP Board Chair's tenure, which was currently 18 months, and suggested this be extended to 2 years to provide more continuity. In addition, it was suggested that the duration of Community Partnership Chairs' tenure be reviewed, some Chairs having been in post for as long as 5 years.

Support having been expressed for the proposals, the Board **AGREED**:

- to extend the duration of the CPP Board Chair's tenure from 18 months to 2 years; and
- that the duration of Community Partnership Chairs' tenure be reviewed as part of the work being undertaken by the Partnership Development Team.

## 7. Mental Health Improvement and Suicide Prevention in Highland

There had been circulated Report No CPB/12/23 by the Chair of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group.

Detailed discussion took place during which the following main points were raised:

- it was necessary to articulate the data-findings driving the approach being taken;
- the need to align and maximise partnership resources and get to a point where there was a clear line of sight between inputs, outputs and outcomes was emphasised;
- there was a lot to be commended in the report, particularly the extensive engagement process that had been undertaken. However, concern was expressed regarding capacity to deliver and whether it was focussed enough given the scale of the challenge being faced in terms of funding, workforce and the impact of Brexit, Covid and the cost of living crisis. It was added that this was an issue not only for the Mental Health Delivery Group but for the wider review of the HOIP;
- it was questioned whether HOIP Delivery Groups should have a headline message in terms of people experiencing something much more inequalities-focussed; how the Mental Health Delivery Group plan linked in with mainstream service delivery; and whether, given the current position in terms of resourcing, it was necessary to take a different approach in terms of being agile as a partnership and focussing on a much smaller set of priorities;
- it was highlighted that the third sector had engaged extremely well in the review process and had offered to lead on and deliver a number of actions in the plan, and this was welcomed. It was added that, from a UHI perspective, the third sector was often the first stop for students in crisis. The Chief Officer, HTSI, expressed thanks to the Chair of the Mental Health Delivery Group for the inclusive approach that had been taken and queried how it was envisioned the third sector would engage across the new structure;
- the vision for mental health improvement and suicide prevention needed to be expanded upon to include the “because”;
- the Mental Health Delivery Group structure worked very well operationally and had underpinned some important work such as the Green Health Partnership and the Active Highland Strategy, and the strategic discussions at CPP Board level would help develop it further;
- it was questioned how to get better at articulating the interdependencies between the different strands of activity within the CPP;
- it was necessary to get better at both valuing and understanding the rich data and intelligence that existed within the third sector. However, there was a challenge in that it did not necessarily conform to what the public sector was used to in terms of handling data;
- it was questioned how the work set out in the report aligned with resourcing, how to make that more transparent and, in a wider context, how to ensure that it was not public sector first but the best service first;
- it would be helpful to have a separate conversation about using Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Funding as a pilot phase of funding that would then inform NHS Highland commissioning processes;
- it was questioned where embedding new practice came into this;
- it was helpful to have more of an asset-based than a deficit-based approach to mental health as people often conflated mental health and mental illness;
- young people, particularly care experienced young people, placed a high importance on mental health;
- suicide rates in Highland were higher than Scotland generally, and the last figures showed a slight increase; and
- it was important to remember the large older population in Highland and the impact of loneliness and social isolation, and it was suggested this was an area that could be strengthened in the plan.

The Board **AGREED**:

- i. the revised structure to deliver the refreshed priorities, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report;
- ii. the refreshed set of priorities for the Mental Health Delivery Group Plan, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- iii. the proposed principles and ways of working, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report; and
- iv. that the points raised during discussion be taken into consideration as thinking developed.

## 8. Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) Annual Reporting Template 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No CPB/13/23 by the HADP Coordinator.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the focus of Alcohol and Drugs Partnership work was often on drugs, certainly at national level, but it was important not to forget the importance of and complexities associated with tackling alcohol misuse. The burden of disease was much higher with alcohol than with drugs but because alcohol was more normalised in society this was often overlooked;
- it was queried how the annual report helped inform redesign practice;
- in relation to involving more people with lived experience in the work of the HADP, it was suggested that many of the clients involved in the Custody Link Project, which was the subject of item 10 on the agenda, were a source of lived experience and rich learning for many services such as mental health, alcohol and drugs, school counselling etc;
- it having been queried whether the HADP was required to produce a public-facing annual report in the same manner as the Community Justice Partnership, the Interim Chair of the HADP commented that it would be useful to produce a public-facing document in a more digestible format; and
- whilst the reporting template was an improvement on the previous year, it was questioned how helpful it was in terms of assessing the outcome of the activity taking place, and what the HADP was doing to produce something more useful, both for itself and to provide assurance to the Board.

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the HADP annual reporting template 2022/23; and
- ii. **AGREED** that consideration be given to producing a public-facing Annual Report in a more digestible format.

## 9. Community Justice Annual Report 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No CPB/14/23 by the Community Justice Partnership Manager.

In introducing the report, the Chair of the Community Justice Partnership highlighted that the Annual Report was not fully complete as information had been awaited from Criminal Justice Social Work. This had now been received and would be incorporated, and it was suggested that the Annual Report be approved subject to the inclusion of the additional information.

The Board **APPROVED** the Highland Community Justice Annual Report 2022-23 prior to submission to Community Justice Scotland by 29 September 2023, subject to the inclusion of additional information from Criminal Justice Social Work.

## 10. Custody Link Project – “CLinks”

There had been circulated Report No CPB/15/23 by the Chief Officer, Highland Third Sector Interface.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- information was sought, and provided, on the re-offending rate for those who had fully engaged with the service, the cost of continuing to fund the project being small in comparison to the cost of those people re-entering the system;
- prevention was key, and it was queried whether there was an understanding of the reasons why some people rejected the service and how, if the project was able to be continued, to get more people to engage with it;
- in the event there was funding available for a reduced service, it would be helpful to know which age group or type of offender the service was most effective with. In that regard, it was suggested it was necessary to look at a younger cohort, ie 15 plus, as the staff team believed they could have the biggest impact on that age group;
- there was a business case to be made in terms of preventing repeat offending;
- delivering the project across the region must have been a huge challenge, and it was important that the evaluation took the Highland context, and the impact of the Covid pandemic, into consideration;
- further information was sought, and provided, as to how the CLinks project compared to the Glasgow project in terms of completion rates and outcomes, and the reasons for the difference in outcomes between males and females, male outcomes being far better, and whether this was Highland-specific;
- a housing officer would be joining the HADP on a six-month secondment to embed the Housing First model within practice, and it would be ensured there was close alignment with the CLinks project and the lessons learned;
- there were a number of aspects to consider, and it was suggested a small officer group be established to discuss potential options to continue the funding of the project or how the needs of the individuals involved might be met through alternative means. Given the time constraints that needed to happen quickly, and it was suggested the outcome be reported to the December Board;
- it would be helpful to look at how to link the discussions on the CLinks project with some of the wider discussions around social prescribing and the interest the Scottish Government had expressed in what was being done in Highland; and
- it was highlighted that when HTSI distributed funding, such as the Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, the Scottish Government stipulated that HTSI was not allowed to access it, which had implications for projects such as CLinks.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the evaluation reports appended to the covering report and the impact of the project in relation to those most vulnerable and more likely to be impacted by socio-economic disadvantage; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a small officer group be established to consider potential options to continue the funding of the project or how the needs of the individuals involved might be met through alternative means, and that a further report be presented to the December Board.

## 11. Scottish Parliament Inquiry – Summary of Findings

There had been circulated Report No CPB/16/23 by the Head of Community Support, Contact and Engagement, The Highland Council.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- community planning being mentioned in the Programme for Government was welcomed;
- the five points set out in section 3.1 of the report represented the crucial drivers for future partnership activity, and should be structured into the review of the HOIP;
- the discussions under earlier items had highlighted the importance of finding a structured way to commission, resource and align activity;
- the Scottish Government Location Director welcomed the report and the useful discussions that had taken place, and confirmed that the Deputy First Minister would be leading on the review of the Community Empowerment Act 2015; and
- the Head of Health Improvement, NHS Highland, confirmed she had joined a new national group looking at how to improve engagement of health in community planning, which would provide insight that could be shared with the Board.

The Board otherwise **NOTED** the findings from the Scottish Parliament Inquiry into community planning.

## 12. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 2.00 pm.

## 13. Any Other Business

The Chair of the Community Learning, Development and Engagement Delivery Group/Head of Integrated Children's Services, The Highland Council, expressed thanks to Board Members for their support and attendance at the recent Vision 2026 event to celebrate the launch of the Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-2026. The event had been a huge success, with over 70 stallholders showcasing the range of support available for children, young people and their families, and over 500 people in attendance.

The meeting ended at 12.45 pm.