

Agenda Item	8
Report No	HC/47/23

The Highland Council

Committee: The Highland Council

Date: 14 December 2023

Report Title: Resetting the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

Report By: Chief Executive

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) is the Strategic Plan for the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) in Highland. Developed in 2017, in response to the new duties contained within the Community Empowerment Act, the plan has a vision to reduce inequalities in Highland with five focused outcomes directly related to delivering that vision. These were identified by the community as key areas for action in order to address inequality.
- 1.2 Since the current version of the HOIP was agreed, agencies have updated their strategic plans and have undertaken significant stakeholder consultation in so doing. The partnership has also had to respond to the covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. With these factors in mind, along with the current financial challenge facing the public and third sectors, it is timely to review and reset the HOIP. In doing so, there remains a commitment to the importance of the original priorities but a recognition that the challenges facing the region have changed with increased recognition of the importance of addressing these in partnership.
- 1.3 Following agreement at the CPP Board in September, work has been undertaken to progress the review process. This paper outlines the work so far including the review of partnership and organisational plans alongside the strategic review undertaken by senior partnership officers. It sets out the design principles proposed to guide the review of the HOIP, alongside emerging Strategic Outcomes and potential areas for partnership development. It is important to note that this work is at an early stage and further and broader engagement is proposed to progress the review which is detailed in the paper.
- 1.4 From the perspective of the Highland Council, it is important that the HOIP provides a golden thread to the Council's programme and the Council's Budget Strategy for the next three years. Members are asked to consider and agree the work outlined to date to reset the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and guide future partnership working activity.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Consider and agree** the work outlined to date to reset the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan; and
- ii. **Note** the next steps planned and that this will support the review and its consequential impact on planned developments in Highland Council's future activity.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

Work to reset the HOIP is being undertaken within current resources. It is intended that the reset HOIP will enable a more effective alignment of partnership resource in future, including the possibility of sharing services and joint third sector commissioning.

3.2 Legal

3.2.1 Community Planning Partnerships have a duty to develop a 10-year Local Outcome Improvement Plan that must address inequality.

3.2.2 The Community Empowerment Act enables CPPs to establish as corporate bodies. As outlined in section 9, the Highland CPP is currently exploring the potential benefits and opportunities of this.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

3.3.1 The purpose of the HOIP is to focus activity to address inequality and other strategic priorities affecting Highland communities, such as population changes over time and their concomitant impacts.

3.3.2 Involvement of the local community to develop the HOIP is a core requirement, and extensive engagement was undertaken to develop the current plan. Engagement as part of the reset of the HOIP is crucial, and this is detailed in the paper.

3.3.3 An integrated impact assessment was undertaken as part of the development of the HOIP in 2017 and a refreshed assessment will be important as part of the work to reset.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

The move to Net Zero, and the opportunities presented as a result of green energy production, are among the wider partner priorities not currently contained within the current HOIP. This is being considered as part of the reset.

3.5 Risk

There is a risk that not aligning partnership resource has the potential to impact communities negatively, with reductions in services managed in silos, rather than through true partnership redesign. The current financial challenges facing the public and third sectors mean that it is essential to redesign our approaches to maximise the opportunities from the resources available and reduce duplication.

3.6 **Health and Safety** (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)

There are no implications.

3.7 **Gaelic**

There are opportunities to be realised through the development of skills and employment pathways related to Gaelic language and culture and wider economic benefits through the promotion of Gaelic culture. These opportunities are considerations as part of the reset of the HOIP.

4. **Background**

4.1 The Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is the Strategic Plan for the Highland Community Planning Partnership. It was ratified in 2017 following a period of engagement across the Highland area that identified the strategic outcomes and priority areas.

4.2 The HOIP was in response to new duties outlined in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for CPPs. The Act set out a stronger role for CPPs in relation to addressing inequality and focusing on prevention. A decision was taken by the CPP Board that the HOIP would have fewer strategic priorities than previous partnership plans and that it would not attempt to capture everything that we do in partnership, rather the plan would aim to address inequality and focus on prevention.

4.3 The purpose for the Partnership was agreed as:
“To work together to reduce inequalities in Highland”

5 strategic outcomes were agreed to support this purpose:

- Poverty Reduction
- Community Participation and Dialogue
- Infrastructure
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety and Resilience

5. **Current Context**

5.1 The current financial challenges facing the public sector, in addition to COVID recovery and the cost-of-living crisis, have necessitated that all agencies review their current position and consider refreshed delivery models, redesign of services and ultimately priorities. The Partnership is no different and, at the September meeting of the CPP Board, it was agreed that a review of the HOIP would be undertaken. The HOIP is a 10-year plan so this reset would be for the final three years, up until 2027.

5.2 In addition to the financial challenges, the current economic and population challenges also suggest that a resetting of Partnership priorities would be timely. Particular drivers for this change include:

- population decline in communities across the Highland area;
- the need to develop an effective workforce to respond to investment opportunities and sustain local communities;
- the climate crisis and the need to shift to Net Zero;
- the demand for housing for essential workers across certain communities and to support growth in other communities;
- the predicted growth of 70% in people over 75 over the next 22 years and the services required to support and sustain people within their own communities; and
- maximising opportunities presented e.g. Green Freeport.

- 5.3 Only through working in partnership will effective solutions and responses to these challenges be delivered and therefore a shared framework and agreed actions will ensure partner agencies maximise their resources and reduce duplication.
- 5.4 For the Council, these challenges reflect those identified in the Council's Programme and greater alignment between this and the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan will assist in supporting delivery of these objectives. There remain 3 years on the current Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, which would align with the current Council Programme and three-year budget setting process.

6. Reviewing the HOIP – Approach

6.1 The approach to reviewing the HOIP is taking several key strands:

6.1.1 1. *Review of existing partnership and strategic plans and priorities*

In reviewing the current priorities contained within partnership plans across the CPP it is clear that the planning landscape is cluttered with a lack of synergy and some duplication in activities. The outcomes and priorities of many of the core plans – e.g. Integrated Children's Service Plan, the strategic plan for adults, Public Protection Plans are not consistently reflected in the HOIP.

In addition, there are a number of our core partnership priorities that are not reflected within the separate organisational strategic plans, for example reducing offending/diversionary activity and Corporate Parenting.

In relation to the organisational strategic plans, the review has identified good alignment across a number of priorities but these are not always reflected in the HOIP. These priorities include:

- Economy – skills / young people / modern apprenticeships / growing our own/Gaelic culture and language
- Housing – developing affordable and accessible housing and key worker housing opportunities
- Community Wealth Building – sustaining wealth within the community and developing a people centred approach to economic development
- Attracting external investment – to develop a sustainable and vibrant economy that sustains communities across Highland
- Sustainable transport – developing green transport and active travel solutions
- Place based planning – to create stronger, enabled communities, investment opportunities and delivery of local services needed
- Co-location – access to co-located, visible local services
- Support for vulnerable individuals – to live well, independently and providing appropriate care and support
- Drugs and alcohol intervention and prevention

6.1.2 2. *Current financial picture*

Whilst individually, organisations are facing challenging financial outlooks, collectively, there remains significant resources across the Highland area which provides opportunity for aligned delivery of services to address the challenges facing the region. The collective resource is:

Highland core CPP partners = £1.9bn net budget 2023/24
Highland core CPP partners = 20,169 FTE staffing
Highland core CPP partners = £127.7m capital/year

6.1.3 3. *Engagement*

Initial engagement on the review of the HOIP has taken place at senior officer level to establish design principles, potential strategic priorities, areas for development and opportunities for change. These areas are outlined in section 4 with further engagement to consider and develop the themes and actions to be undertaken over the next two months with wider partnership groupings including the Regional Economic Partnership, Public Protection Chief Officers Group and local Community Partnerships. Initial third sector engagement has begun, and a third sector engagement forum, with representatives from the wider sector, will also be a key mechanism to help refine the early thinking and set the direction for the reset of the HOIP.

Public engagement was critical to the development of the original HOIP, and the priorities identified still remain relevant and key areas for partnership work. As part of resetting the HOIP, wider public feedback will be considered through the Council's budget engagement challenge which includes a question about partnership priorities. Recent engagement activity and joint strategic needs assessment work through the development of the Integrated Children's Services Plan, Strategic plan for adults and HIE's Regional Economic Strategy will also help to inform this process.

7. **Emerging position**

7.1 The design principles agreed for the original HOIP are outlined at section 4.2. This included the focus on addressing inequality and that the HOIP should not encapsulate everything that we do in partnership. Following discussion across senior officers, a set of design principles are proposed, underpinned by the aim of seeking positive outcomes for Highland. The CPP Board will be asked to agree these at its meeting on 5 December to guide the HOIP reset:

- To establish an agreed collective vision to maximise opportunities and improve outcomes for Highland communities.
- To deliver against the challenges facing Highland communities.
- To be ambitious and bold in vision and action within the resources available.
- Collaborative in focus and design to avoid and reduce duplication.
- To deliver at a strategic and local level.
- Establish clear and understandable priorities which are aligned to service delivery.
- Preventative approaches should underpin what the Partnership does along with addressing inequalities.
- Mobilising community action should be at the heart of the Partnership.

7.2 It is proposed that a set of Strategic Priorities are established to sit above the current areas for action. These should align to the design principles and deliver against a vision of maximising opportunities to create a thriving Highlands. The emerging themes for these strategic priorities are outlined below. They address the specific challenges facing the Highland area, as well as aligning with the strategic priorities of the individual partners and the current HOIP priority areas.

People = To support and enable people to live independently and well within their local community

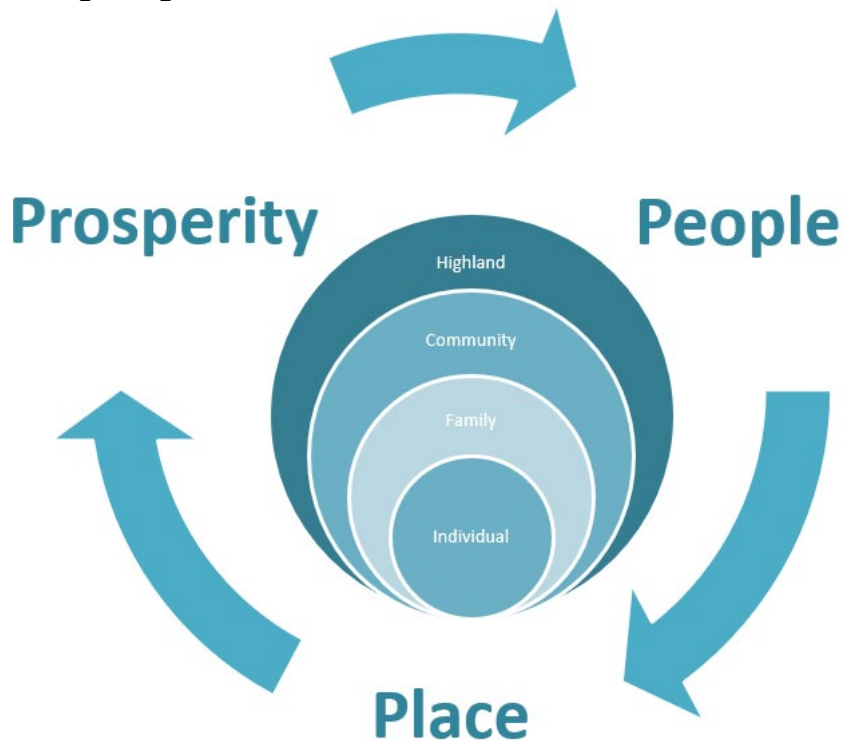
- Person centred approaches
- Clearer processes for access to services and support
- Whole population preventative approaches
- Targeting vulnerable individuals

Place = Sustaining and sustainable local communities

- Removing barriers, for example in infrastructure, childcare and housing
- Delivering efficient services and improving facilities within local communities
- Integrated approach to place-based planning
- Supporting the move to net zero and maximising opportunities from green energy production

Prosperity = To support people and places to enable economic prosperity

- Workforce – skills development, pathways to employment, training
- Community wealth building
- Integrating investment



8. Areas for Development/Alignment – Opportunities for Change

- 8.1 The resetting of the HOIP provides the opportunity to consider key areas of change for the Partnership; change which is essential given the current financial challenges facing the public and third sector. The following outline potential shared areas for development to support delivery of the emerging strategic priorities outlined in section 7 and representing areas of redesign for the Partnership with a particular focus on reducing duplication and aligning resource. As work progresses on resetting the HOIP, these areas for development will be further refined, potential additional opportunities added and actions identified.

8.2 *Developing the Highland Workforce*

- Internal – Supporting Workforce Development
 - Joint solutions to barriers e.g. housing, childcare
 - Shared approaches to recruitment
 - Training and skills pathways for key roles
- External
 - Aligned approach to the development of skills and employment pathways to support the Highland economy

Share Approaches to Practice

- Identification of local approaches to support and development of multi-service roles – person centred approaches

Asset management

- Alignment and reduction in duplication - buildings, depots, fleet, mechanics
- Housing for essential workers – joint investment model
- Development of community hubs for co-location and delivery of local services

Joint Commissioning 3rd Sector

- In conjunction with the third sector, jointly develop a commissioning framework to deliver more effective local community based supports in key areas of practice. Creating a strong shared partnership approach with the sector and supporting longer term sustainability and investment.

8.3 From a Council perspective, the areas outlined above broadly align with the thematic budget areas being progressed and outlined elsewhere on this agenda, in particular our approach to asset management, addressing future population challenges and future workforce development. The work already commenced in this area will be complemented and enhanced through this broader partnership approach which will enable greater opportunities to be realised.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 The work to reset the HOIP is in its early stages, however significant steps and partner agreement on the direction of travel has already been achieved. As outlined at section 6.3, further work is required to test out and refine the emerging strategic priorities identified and further explore the opportunities for change outlined in section 8.
- 9.2 Specific engagement with key partnership groups is planned over the next two months, with a particular focus on direct work with the third sector. Individual organisations, including the Council, will engage internally with officers and Members, to develop this revised approach to the HOIP and how this can, and will, align with the Council's strategic direction.
- 9.3 Work has begun to explore whether the option to establish the Partnership as a corporate body should be progressed. Consideration is required whether having an entity through which to deliver services could support partnership activity and also how deliverable this potentially is.

9.4 A further workshop with senior partnership officers is planned for early February to align with budget setting processes, with a revised Highland Outcome Improvement Plan to be considered at the CPP Board meeting on 1 March 2024. This will come for final approval at the Council meeting on 14 March 2024 alongside any revised council programme which may be required to provide a collective approach to deliver the Council's Budget Strategy for the next three years.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 1 December 2023

Author: Alison Clark, Head of Community Support, Contact and Engagement

Background Papers: [Highland Outcome Improvement Plan](#)