

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

17th December 2009

Agenda Item	12
Report No	HC-38-09

Strategic Planning Arrangements to Support a “safer Highland”

Report by Chief Executive

SUMMARY

This paper sets out new strategic planning arrangements that have been put in place to support a ‘safer Highland’. It also makes proposals about governance arrangements through Committees of the Highland Council and proposes a “political champion” for each of the strategic groups within the partnership.

1. Introduction

1.1 Over recent years, largely as a consequence of national initiatives and requirements, including legislation in some areas, a number of multi-agency strategic planning forums have developed across the community planning partnership that address public protection issues, covering:

- Adult Support & Protection
- Alcohol & Drugs
- Child Protection
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (regarding violent and sexual offenders, known as MAPPA)
- Violence against Women
- Youth Justice

1.2 Recognising the significance of these issues, Chief Officers have been involved in a process of consultation, including the Scottish Government and elected members, to establish optimal co-ordination of these arrangements. The objective has been to ensure effective and efficient working, with clear workplans, without unhelpful duplication or overlap across planning and reporting processes.

1.3 This activity accords with the commitment of the Community Planning Partnership to review partnership working, delivery and performance management arrangements in the following key Single Outcome Agreement areas:

- people are, and feel, safe from crime, disorder and danger;
- attitudes and behaviours towards alcohol and other drugs are changed and those in need are supported by better prevention and treatment services;
- the cycle of deprivation is broken through intervention in early years.

2. Strategic Structure

- 2.1 The 'safer Highland' strategic structure has now been established, involving a strategic planning group and operational delivery group for each area of activity as detailed in Section 1.1 above.
- 2.2 The Chief Executives of the Highland Council and NHS Highland and the Chief Constable and the chairs of the Strategy Groups have formed a Leadership Group to oversee and scrutinise 'safer Highland' workplans and performance. Each Strategy Group has a Chief Executive or the Chief Constable as a member, acting as the 'sponsor', and they are all ex-officio members of each group.
- 2.3 Each of the Strategic Groups is reviewing and taking forward a dedicated workplan. These workplans will be considered by the Leadership Group to ensure that effective public protection measures are in place and that the corporate objectives of each organisation are being addressed, as well as the common priorities identified in the Single Outcome Agreement.
- 2.4 Further, operational community safety matters are now being addressed in the Joint Highland Community Safety Tasking Group. This involves all of the lead agencies and utilises intelligence from the Council Areas and Police Operational Commands to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the organisation of community safety.

3. Governance Arrangements

- 3.1 It has been an outstanding issue for Members of the Highland Council that the activities of these important groups, for example with regard to child protection or alcohol and drugs, are not reported through the Strategic Committees of the Council.
- 3.2 It is suggested that the development of the 'safer Highland' partnership provides an opportunity to address this matter. Indeed, each lead agency within the Community Planning Partnership is presently giving consideration to the issue of governance.
- 3.3 Accordingly, it is proposed that minutes of the strategic groups are presented to the appropriate Committees of the Council:
 - Adult Support & Protection – to the Housing & Social Work Committee
 - Alcohol & Drugs – to the Housing & Social Work Committee
 - Child Protection – to the Joint Committee for Children & Young People
 - Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (regarding violent and sexual offenders, known as MAPPA) - to the Housing & Social Work Committee
 - Violence against Women - to the Housing & Social Work Committee
 - Youth Justice – to the Joint Committee for Children & Young People

4. Political Champions

- 4.1 Albeit governance arrangements have not been in place, there has been a degree of democratic involvement in some of these groups through the participation of identified Elected Members. This is most apparent with regard to the Alcohol & Drugs

Partnership and Violence against Women Strategy Group.

- 4.2 Given the helpful experience of this political linkage, and the similar work of other political champions in Children's Services, it is proposed that an Elected Member is identified as a champion for each of these strategic groups, to
- a. provide a democratic perspective to the activities of the strategy groups;
 - b. provide a public profile and support the articulation of relevant issues to the wider community;
 - c. ensure that issues with regard to each strategic area, including in relation to implementation of the Single Outcome Agreement and 'Strengthening the Highlands' are highlighted in appropriate political forums, including at all Strategic Committees and at the Highland Council;
 - d. support the development and operation of the new governance arrangements to promote a 'safer Highland'.
- 4.3 The political champion should be a member of the governance Committee with responsibility for that strategic area as proposed in Paragraph 3.3.

5. Community Health Partnerships

- 5.1 It is also proposed that to provide improved governance for the Council that in future the minutes of Community Health Partnerships (one in each of 3 areas) be reported to the Housing and Social Work Committee.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that the Council:
 - i) welcomes the formation of the 'safer Highland' partnership.
 - ii) agrees the proposed governance arrangements
 - iii) agree the principle and that the relevant governance Committee considers nominations for political champions for each of the strategic groups.
 - iv) agrees that the minutes of the Community Health Partnerships (3) be reported to the Housing and Social Work Committee.

Signature:

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 8th December 2009

