



Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Board held remotely on Friday 7 October 2022 at 9.00 am.

Present:

The Highland Council:

Councillor Raymond Bremner, Leader of the Council
Councillor Kate MacLean (substitute)
Donna Manson, Chief Executive

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

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

NHS Highland:

Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

Police Scotland:

Chief Superintendent Conrad Trickett, Divisional Commander, Highland and Islands

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Michael Humphreys, Area Commander

The Scottish Government:

Donna MacKinnon, Scottish Government Location Director

Community Partnership representative:

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

High Life Highland:

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

Highland Third Sector Interface:

Cath Wright, Chair of HTSI Board
Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer

NatureScot:

Dave Mackay, Head of Operations - North

Skills Development Scotland:

Stephen Sheridan, Regional Skills Planning Lead

University of the Highlands and Islands:

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

In attendance:

Ian Kyle, Chair, Community Learning, Development and Engagement Delivery Group
Jenny Valentine, Chair, Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Group
Alison Clark, Chair, Poverty Reduction Delivery Group
Elisabeth Smart, Interim Chair, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
Debbie Stewart, Coordinator, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
Melanie Murray, Committee Administrator, The Highland Council

Mr S Black in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Minutes of Meetings

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Board – 8 April 2022;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 15 February 2022;
- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 9 March 2022; and
- iv. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 17 May 2022.

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.

In relation to the Annual Report by the Director of Public Health, the focus of which had been suicide and mental health, it was explained, for the benefit of those not present at the previous meeting, that this was being looked at by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group and the Suicide Prevention Steering Group. The Director of Public Health commented that considerable progress had been made in terms of getting the systems right, and a lot of positive activities were taking place. It was suggested that a more detailed update on suicide prevention activity be provided at the next meeting. Supt Jenny Valentine, Police Scotland, added that she had recently taken over as Chair of the Suicide Prevention Steering Group, and a number of meetings had taken place regarding the next round of action planning in respect of suicide prevention, which would be informed by the Director of Public Health's report and the new national Suicide Prevention Strategy. The Steering Group was participating in the next Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group session on 26 October and the next meeting of the Steering Group was scheduled to take place in November.

With regard to the format of the Action Tracker, the Chair suggested it would be helpful to add a RAG status column to indicate whether actions were on track or running behind.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the action tracker and the update on suicide prevention activity;
- ii. **AGREED** that a more detailed update on the suicide prevention activity taking place be provided at the next meeting of the Board; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a RAG status column be added to the Action Tracker.

4. Terms of Reference – Update and Review

There had been circulated Report No CPB/4/22 by the Head of Community Support and Engagement, Highland Council.

On the point being raised, it was confirmed that the Economic Forum had been superseded by the Economic Recovery Partnership, and the Terms of Reference and CPP structure diagram should be updated accordingly. The Head of Operations - North, NatureScot, undertook to find out the current position in respect of the Environment Forum and report back to the next meeting.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the update outlining the purpose and remit of the CPP Board;
- ii. **AGREED** the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference;
- iii. **NOTED** that the Economic Forum had been superseded by the Economic Recovery Partnership and **AGREED** that the Terms of Reference and CPP structure diagram be updated accordingly; and
- iv. **AGREED** that the current position in respect of the Environment Forum be investigated and reported to the next meeting.

5. Understanding the cost of living challenge in Highland

The Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland, HIE, gave a presentation during which information was provided on the potential impacts of the rising cost of living; the cost of living in rural areas as opposed to urban parts of the UK; fuel poverty in Highland; the findings of the “My Life in the Highlands and Islands” survey in terms of the types of energy people used to heat their home; the findings of HIE’s Business Panel survey as to the extent to which businesses were being impacted by rising costs; and the UK and Scottish Government support currently available. In terms of next steps, a CPP workshop on cost of living impacts and partnership action would take place on Friday 18 November 2022, an invitation to which would be issued in due course. It was confirmed that a copy of the presentation would be circulated following the meeting.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- feedback was shared from a recent meeting of the Poverty Reduction Delivery Group which had focussed on the cost of living challenge. Issues raised included the need to ensure existing good resources – eg The Council’s “Worrying About Money” leaflet – were up-to-date and distributed via partners’ networks; ensuring people knew where to get support, both in terms of income maximisation and from an energy perspective; the importance of helping people understand what the energy cap meant – ie it did not mean they would not pay more £2500; the energy challenges in Highland, as highlighted during the presentation; the importance of an integrated approach across partner organisations; the need to make the most of external funds and ensure community groups were aware of and had access to them; that whilst there might be specific partnership actions the CPP wanted to take in the short-term, the Board had already agreed medium to long-term priorities that were still important and relevant, particularly in respect of employability, the real Living Wage and community wealth building;

- in relation to the types of fuel people used to heat their homes, NatureScot had seen an increasing interest in peat extraction, particularly in the far North. However, in some instances this was being done without permission and there were sensitivities in terms of some of the areas peat was being discovered – eg key parts of the proposed Flow Country World Heritage Site;
- much of what had been said was about short-term mitigation, and it was necessary to think forward and consider links to climate change;
- there was now a £100 payment available for people using heating oil but this was a tiny proportion of the overall cost;
- “My Life in the Highlands and Islands” was a useful survey which also showed the extent to which people in the Highlands were, unsurprisingly, dependent on cars. The Chair suggested that a presentation on the findings of the survey take place at the next meeting of the Board; and
- the Chair suggested the proposed workshop should be hybrid to enable partners to join remotely if they so wished.

The Board:

- NOTED** the presentation and that it would be circulated to Board Members and officers following the meeting;
- NOTED** that the proposed CPP workshop on cost of living impacts and partnership action would take place on Friday 18 November 2022; and
- AGREED** that a presentation on the findings of the “My Life in the Highlands and Islands” survey take place at the next meeting of the Board.

6. Economic Recovery Partnership Update

The Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland, HIE, provided a verbal update during which it was explained that the main agenda item at the most recent meeting of the Economic Recovery Partnership was a presentation by the company which had been supporting the interesting and innovative housing-related work taking place in the Cairngorms area, Lochaber and Skye, on the back of which a steering group was taking forward a local housing strategy for Highland. It was intended to hold a workshop in November, invites to which would be issued in due course, looking at housing investment priorities over the next five years. The other main topic of discussion had been the cost of living crisis.

The Chair, who had attended the meeting, commented that discussion had taken place as to how both businesses and the public sector were struggling to recruit, particularly in rural areas but also in Inverness, due to a lack of housing. It was intended to take forward some issues with the Scottish Government, particularly flexibility around their benchmark rates which did not work well in rural communities. Discussion had also taken place on the difficulty in getting builders to bid for smaller contracts, if at all, and the increasing cost of doing business, which had come through strongly in the latest Business Panel survey.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

7. Review of Drug Related Deaths in Young People

There had been circulated Report No CPB/5/22 on behalf of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group by Chief Superintendent Conrad Trickett and Dr Stephanie Govenden.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- the report made important recommendations that it was necessary to follow up on. However, it was essential that it was not seen as a one-off and that there was continuing work that would add to the recommendations and link in to partners' day-to-day roles;
- drug-related deaths in younger people reflected wider societal issues such as a sense of belonging and how young people were able to feel part of a community. It was essential to learn from these tragic deaths and work to improve health and reduce deaths in the future, and the importance of making links right across the system was emphasised;
- it was highlighted that there was now a system in place for reviewing all child deaths, which Dr Stephanie Govenden was leading on;
- the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership had met with Dr Stephanie Govenden to discuss how best to collaborate on this issue and, going forward, was looking at a whole systems approach;
- the Board had previously agreed an approach to harm reduction hubs and would be discussing family hubs under item 9, and it was queried whether it was necessary to consider those mechanisms as part of the approach to reducing drug-related deaths;
- Recommendation 1 of the review report, which referred to a pathway of care for young people at high risk due to their background in terms of complex trauma and substance use, was particularly important. It was not clear what was currently done to identify such young people and reduce the risk factors that, on occasion, led to death, and an integrated pathway that looked at how agencies worked collectively to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors would be of benefit;
- in an environment where need was increasing and resources were reducing, it was necessary to tie up all available intelligence in terms of where interventions were working and target resources where they would have the most impact. In addition, it was necessary to understand the fragility of the landscape and what it was likely to look like in 12 to 18 months in terms of service provision;
- privacy and data protection legislation presented difficulties in terms of partner agencies coordinating and sharing information;
- on the point being raised, it was suggested that six months was an appropriate timescale for the proposed short-life working group and that a further report be presented to the Board at that time. It was further suggested that Public Health was best placed to chair the working group. However, others were of the view that it should be led by Children's Services, which would give the group a broader focus and demonstrate to the public and partner agencies that drug-related deaths were a priority. It was proposed that this be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group. Regardless of which agency took the lead, it was important to recognise that it was a multi-agency and societal issue, and to ensure good engagement from all partners;
- the need to learn from and benchmark against other areas was recognised, and Dundee, which had had a real focus on drug-related deaths, was suggested as a potential comparator area; and
- Dr Stephanie Govenden was commended for her work in carrying out the review.

The Board:

- i. **AGREED** to sponsor the establishment of a short life working group to deliver on recommendation 1;
- ii. **AGREED** to support a self-assessment of the level of trauma informed partner agencies currently were and develop a programme of improvement to evolve as a trauma informed workforce in line with recommendation 2;
- iii. **NOTED** that the Drugs Death Review Group and NHS Highland would consider recommendation 3 and develop an improvement plan in relation to clinical governance;
- iv. **AGREED** to support the self-assessment of the effectiveness of our current family services and develop a programme of improvement in line with recommendation 4;

- v. further to i. above, **AGREED** that the duration of the short-life working group should be six months and that the matter of which agency was best placed to chair it be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the Public Protection Chief Officers Group; and
- vi. **AGREED** that a further report be presented to the Board in six months' time.

8. Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) – Delivery Progress Report 2021/22 and Investment Plans 2022/23

There had been circulated Report No CPB/6/22 by the HADP Coordinator.

Information having been sought, and provided, as to how the challenges referred to in the report were being addressed, the Board **APPROVED** the HADP Delivery Progress Report 2021/22 and Investment Plans 2022/23.

9. Improving Outcomes for Children and Families – Update and Next Steps

There had been circulated Report No CPB/7/22 by the Executive Chief Officer, Health and Social Care, Highland Council.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- the HADP had recently worked in partnership with the Scottish Government to be a test of change area for a series of national learning events around applying a whole family approach to situations where children were impacted by parents' drug and alcohol problems. Approximately 150 staff from a range of partner agencies had participated, and there had been a lot of interest in taking forward a whole family approach;
- support was expressed for the proposals, which were a good example of trying to join the dots across the partnership and would also deliver in relation to the earlier report on drug-related deaths. It was not about duplicating effort but about identifying where the links were;
- on the point being raised, it was confirmed that the proposed Project Manager post would be funded by the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding allocated by the Scottish Government, as described in the report; and
- whilst understanding the logic of the approach that had been taken, concern was expressed that breaking investment down into specific geographical communities failed to recognise thematic groups of need. In addition, there was a risk of duplicating costs by funding activity in stages as opposed to looking at the ability to utilise Highland-wide investment, and it could be difficult for third sector organisations to understand where they fitted within the commissioning model.

The Board **AGREED**:

- i. that the additional resource provided through the whole family wellbeing fund be utilised to drive forward the proposed programme as previously agreed by the CPP Board;
- ii. to identify and fund a project manager post to plan and implement the Lochaber programme as a pilot, prior to rolling this out across Highland; and
- iii. to establish a project and delivery team and plan to develop this partnership approach using the national principles for holistic whole family support that would report on progress to the Integrated Children's Service Board and ultimately to the CPP Board.

10. Review of Strategic Risk Register

The Strategic Risk Register had been circulated for review.

It was highlighted that, as agreed at the previous meeting, a risk had been added in respect of Homes for Ukraine, and the Board was asked to consider whether it was content with the wording and RAG status. In addition, the Board was asked to consider whether there should be risk relating to the cost of living challenge, draft wording in respect of which had been added to the Register.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- not only was there a risk of failure to coordinate support for Homes for Ukraine but there was a potential risk of having insufficient resources to meet existing and new demand. In addition to the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme there were numerous refugees living in hotels, and it was suggested that the risk should be updated to reflect the wider issues associated with the increasing number of refugees arriving in Highland, mental health support being critically important;
- the inclusion of a risk and associated action relating to the cost of living challenge was endorsed. Reference was made to the need to work in partnership and coordinate efforts, as well as the impact of wage increases and strike action on businesses and service delivery. It was suggested that officers liaise and work up the draft risk further for the next meeting; and
- reference was made to news reports of potential power cuts during the winter which would have significant impacts, particularly on older people.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the addition of a risk in respect of Homes for Ukraine, as agreed by the Board on 8 April 2022, and **AGREED** that this be updated to reflect the wider issues associated with the increasing number of Ukrainian refugees arriving in Highland; and
- ii. **AGREED** there was a need for a risk on the cost of living crisis, and that the draft risk be worked up further for the next meeting of the Board.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday 9 December 2022 at 11.30 am and that it would be a hybrid meeting, with the option to attend An Lòchran in person or participate remotely via Teams.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 10.30 am.