



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Minutes of Meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board held in Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Highland Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday 6 June 2025 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

The Highland Council:

Councillor Hugh Morrison, Vice Chair of Communities and Place Committee (substitute) (remote)
Kate Lackie, Assistant Chief Executive – People (substitute)

Highlands and Islands Enterprise:

Eann Sinclair, Area Manager – Caithness and Sutherland (also representing Caithness Community Partnership) (remote)

NHS Highland:

Sarah Compton-Bishop, Chair, NHS Highland Board
Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:

Paul Freeman, Station Commander (substitute) (remote)

Community Partnership representative:

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

High Life Highland:

Steve Walsh, Chief Executive

Highland Third Sector Interface:

Cath Wright, Chair of HTSI Board (remote)
Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer (remote)

NatureScot:

Graham Neville, Head of Operations - North

Skills Development Scotland:

Roddy Bailey, Area Manager (remote)

University of the Highlands and Islands:

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

In attendance:

Fiona Duncan, Chief Officer - Health and Social Care, The Highland Council (remote)
Fiona Malcolm, Chief Officer – Integrated People Services, The Highland Council (remote)
Ian Kyle, Chair, Community Learning, Development and Engagement Strategic Group
James Maybee, Chair, Community Justice Partnership (remote)

Carron McDiarmid, Chair, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) (remote)
Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager
Melanie Murray, Principal Committee Officer, The Highland Council

Also in attendance:

Hayley Brown, Senior Manager Early Years, The Highland Council
Jaci Douglas, Chief Executive, Care and Learning Alliance
Liz Humphreys, Non-Executive Director, NHS Highland (remote)
Frances Matthewson, Research and Intelligence Specialist, Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (remote)

Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Chair highlighted that Tim Allison, Director of Public Health, was retiring and today was his final meeting as a member of the CPP Board. Jennifer Davies would be his successor.

It was also highlighted that Michael Humphreys, former Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had moved on to a new role within the SFRS. His successor was Lynne Gow.

Thanks were expressed to Tim and Michael for their contribution during their time on the Board.

In addition, the Chair welcomed Liz Humphreys, Non-Executive Director, Public Health Scotland and Scottish Ambulance Service, who was shadowing her as part of the Aspiring Chairs Programme, to the meeting.

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Raymond Bremner, Councillor Graham MacKenzie, Derek Brown, Stuart Black, Fiona Davies, Ch Supt Rob Shepherd, Lynne Gow, and Vicki Nairn.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

For transparency, the Chair of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership declared a connection to items 5, 11 and 13 as a Non-Executive Director of Public Health Scotland. However, there was no conflict of interest.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

3. Minutes of Meetings

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Community Planning Partnership Board – 21 February 2025;
- ii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Community Justice Partnership – 12 December 2024; and

- iii. **NOTED** the Minutes of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Strategy Group – 11 February 2025.

4. Action Tracker

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

The Board **NOTED** the Action Tracker and **AGREED** that the remaining actions be closed.

5. Health Inequalities

The Chair of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership declared a connection to this item as a Non-Executive Director of Public Health Scotland. However, there was no conflict of interest.

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/6/25 by the Director of Public Health, NHS Highland, who gave a presentation in amplification of the report.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the useful and interesting report and the proposed indicators were welcomed;
- in relation to the indicator in respect of alcohol-related deaths or admissions, it was explained that the HADP had been tracking alcohol-specific rather than alcohol-related deaths. The Chair of the HADP undertook to look at including alcohol-related deaths. However, it was understood there was an issue around time lags in the data. The Director of Public Health suggested it was necessary to look at both alcohol-related and alcohol-specific deaths, explaining that alcohol-related deaths demonstrated the contribution of alcohol to a number of different diseases – for example, a proportion of strokes were as a result of alcohol;
- it was queried whether it might be helpful to include not only the gap in life expectancy but the gap in healthy life expectancy, which was also a good marker for inequality and gave a sense of the burden of disease and the type of care people might need. The Director of Public Health confirmed this could be looked at, explaining that the gap in healthy life expectancy was important but data in that regard could be harder to get, and it was necessary to balance the utility of the indicators with the ease of obtaining the data;
- with reference to the recommendation in the Director of Public Health's Annual Report that the CPP learn from models such as Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland (CHES), it was explained that Public Health Scotland had developed CHES with partners and although there were pilot areas in Scotland (Aberdeen City, North Ayrshire and South Lanarkshire) there was scope to be part of the learning network. The Chair of the HADP undertook to provide a link to sign up to the learning network for distribution to partners;
- information was sought, and provided, as to why the percentage of exclusively breastfed babies in Caithness was less than half that in Wester Ross, and the Director of Public Health undertook to look further at the underlying reasons;
- it was suggested the proposed indicator in respect of the S4 tariff score should take account of all school leavers rather than focussing solely on S4. The Council's Assistant Chief Executive – People confirmed data was readily available for all school leavers;
- with reference to the indicator in respect of access to open space, it was suggested more could be done around access to nature, which linked to the work of the Green Health Partnership and the Natural Capital tool at item 7 on the agenda. There was inequality

around access to high nature space rather than just open space, and engaging with nature led to positive mental and physical health outcomes;

- the impact sport, physical activity and culture could have in terms of addressing inequality was emphasised, and it was suggested it should be given greater prominence. There was a lot of data available on what High Life Highland was doing in partnership with **sportscotland** and the Council in terms of the Highland Investment Plan, which would see a significant amount of investment to address inequality across the region. It was added that the Scottish Human Rights Commission's report at item 9 on the agenda talked about some areas of Highland being a "cultural graveyard" and it was necessary to take that on board;
- UHI was in the process of developing a Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy specifically for students and it would be helpful, at a later stage, to bring the draft policy to the Board for feedback. Drugs such as Ecstasy were available for as little as £1, and misuse of drugs and alcohol amongst the student body was linked to gender-based violence, safeguarding, health and safety, and negative impacts on mental health. There was work to be done, collectively, to ensure Highland did not become as impacted as other parts of Scotland. The Chair of the HADP confirmed she was happy to connect with the Principal and Chief Executive, Inverness College UHI, regarding support for students. It was added that the Council's Lifestyle Survey of school pupils included questions on alcohol and drugs, and might provide some useful data;
- in relation to the proposed indicator regarding active travel to school, it was suggested this would be extremely difficult to measure. Many learners got a bus or taxi to school due to the geography in Highland, and the ability to use active travel was also weather-dependent;
- given the indicators were still under development, and the points raised during discussion, the Chair suggested that partners take them away and review them in terms of how they aligned with work already taking place, and feed back to the Director of Public Health accordingly; and
- the Director of Public Health thanked Board Members and attendees for their constructive comments and welcomed further feedback in the future. It was added that health inequalities linked to many other items on the agenda, and the indicators would provide a way of sense-checking where the CPP was across a range of different areas.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Report of the Director of Public Health and its recommendations;
- ii. **NOTED** the work on health inequalities and **APPROVED** the indicators as a basis for future reporting to the Board, subject to the points raised during discussion; and
- iii. **AGREED** that partners review the indicators and feed back to the Director of Public Health in terms of how they aligned with work already taking place.

6. Childcare Innovations

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/7/25 by the Jaci Douglas, Chief Executive, Care and Learning Alliance; Hayley Brown, Senior Manager Early Years, The Highland Council; and Jacqueline McGuigan, Senior Development Manager, HIE.

The appendix to the report was **confidential** and had been circulated separately.

During discussion, the need for change was recognised, support was expressed for the proposals, and it was commented that Highland had a track record of being a testbed for innovative solutions. Whilst there were still legislative and regulatory barriers to be overcome, progress appeared to be being made and information was sought, and provided, on the discussions that had taken place in that regard, and the current position. The

Ministers responsible for both adult care and childcare had indicated their support for the concept, as had CoHI (Convention of the Highlands and Islands). The Council's Assistant Chief Executive – People explained that the Permanent Secretary, Joe Griffin, had also been receptive to the proposals at a recent meeting, and it was intended to share the Childcare Innovations report with him.

With reference to item 9 on the agenda, it was highlighted that the Scottish Government's response to the Scottish Human Rights Commission's (SHRC) report explicitly mentioned novel approaches to childcare, and it was suggested there was an opportunity for the CPP to respond to the SHRC's report in a similar way to the Scottish Government but expanding on what novel approaches potentially looked like and emphasising the third sector's contribution to the collaborative approach being taken.

It was also highlighted that the Just Transition Commission, which reported directly to the Scottish Government, had visited north Highland recently, and childcare innovations had formed part of the discussions. The Commission was scheduled to return with its final report in the next few weeks, which would be another opportunity to raise the matter.

The Board **AGREED** to:

- i. recognise and endorse the multi-agency cross sector place based and person centred innovative approach;
- ii. endorse the Single Care Model proposal and pilot;
- iii. help identify any funding streams that could support development on the ground; and
- iv. provide advice, guidance and support to the project.

7. Integrating NatureScot's Landscape-Scale Natural Capital Tool into the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/8/25 by Graham Neville, Head of Operations – North, NatureScot.

In response to questions regarding the proposed short-life working group, it was explained that partner representatives had yet to be identified, and that one of the tasks of the group would be to select pilot area(s) to test the Natural Capital Tool. It was suggested that core partners, as set out in the draft Terms of Reference, consider who would be best placed to sit on the group and notify the Head of Operations – North, NatureScot, accordingly by the end of July.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** progress to establish the agreed Short-Life Working Group;
- ii. **NOTED** the draft Terms of Reference for the Short-Life Working Group which would be refined in the first group meeting; and
- iii. **AGREED** that core partners, as set out in the draft Terms of Reference, notify the Head of Operations – North, NatureScot, by 31 July 2025, of their nominated representatives to sit on the Short-Life Working Group.

8. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015: Update and Findings Report

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/9/25 by CPP Senior Officers and the Partnership Development Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- there was an element of frustration amongst the third sector that the review of the Community Empowerment Act did not fully reflect the relatively consistent feelings, not only within Highland but across Scotland, regarding third sector participation. Feedback was it was felt there were still issues in terms of power imbalances and tokenism within community planning structures. In addition, the throughline from participation to design to delivery to impact was not necessarily visible to the third sector;
- a CPP Annual Report would provide an opportunity for the Board to reflect on what had been done and would help in terms of communication. It would also provide an opportunity for learning and continuous improvement. In that regard it was highlighted that, as indicated in the Partnership Development Team Quarterly Update at item 14 on the agenda, an Annual Report would be produced for submission to the September Board;
- the Partnership Development Manager spoke to her involvement in groups such as the Scottish Community Planning Network, which had given Highland a voice nationally. The Update and Findings Report had been discussed at a recent meeting, and she undertook to keep the Board updated on future developments;
- it was suggested there was an opportunity to do some more engagement work with the third sector, and that it would be advantageous for that to be carried out by the Partnership Development team rather than HTSI;
- it was necessary to compare the assessment of Community Planning in the Update and Findings Report with the CPP's own self-assessment work and the work that had been done with the Improvement Service; and
- reference was made to a previous workshop with third sector representatives, and it was suggested it would be helpful for the associated feedback report to be circulated to Board Members.

The Board:

- NOTED** the report and the Scottish Government commitments, with particular reference to the Assessment of Community Planning section on pages 24 through 31; and
- AGREED** that the third sector feedback report referred to by the Chief Officer, HTSI, during discussion be circulated to partners for information.

9. Scottish Human Rights Commission: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/10/25 by the Partnership Development Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- it was helpful to look at the findings of the Scottish Human Rights Commission's (SHRC) report through the lens of the CPP, and thanks were expressed for the summary report;
- it would have been helpful for the Board to have the opportunity to analyse how individual partner organisations were responding to the SHRC's report;
- whilst the limitations of the SHRC's methodology were recognised, the report represented lived experience across the region and it was considered there would be value in providing a CPP response outlining the positive work currently taking place in relation to the issues identified. The Chair added that such a response would need to be informed by partners, and she suggested that a draft be prepared and circulated for input;

- with reference to the locations visited during the SHRC's research, Badenoch and Strathspey was represented by Skye and Lochaber, and it was suggested it be fed back that a portion of the Highland demographic, with its own challenges and issues, had been missed out. In that regard, the cadence of the Commission's visits was queried, and it was suggested that enquiries be made as to the next steps;
- there had been no systematic engagement by the SHRC with service providers to understand broader context, opportunities and constraints in terms of service delivery, which was a missed opportunity; and
- the summary report was a start in terms of laying the SHRC's report over the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and identifying where work was already taking place as well as where there might be gaps in CPP activity.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the summary report;
- ii. **NOTED** the Scottish Human Rights Commission's 2024 report on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands found at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- iii. **AGREED** that a CPP response to the Scottish Human Rights Commission's report be drafted, taking into account the points raised during discussion, and circulated to partners for input.

10. Integrated Children's Services Annual Report

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/11/25 by the Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- Board Members commended the significant amount of work that had gone into the Annual Report, and the way it was presented;
- it was welcomed that Indicators 15 and 18, which related to alcohol and drug use, were moving in the right direction. It was added that the five secondary schools involved in the Planet Youth initiative would have more up-to-date and in-depth data in that regard. There were now eight secondary schools keen to be involved in Planet Youth, and the possibility of funding that through the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership would be investigated; and
- it was queried whether it would be worthwhile including questions regarding vaping use and exposure to gambling harms in the Lifestyle Survey. In relation to gambling in particular, concern was expressed regarding how companies were targeting young children, whether through gaming or advertising at sports events. The Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board explained that the importance of the Substance Awareness Toolkit, which had been enhanced to include vaping, had been discussed at a recent development day for the next Integrated Children's Services Plan, and the Toolkit would continue to be promoted throughout the life of the next Plan. The Partnership Development Manager referred to gambling awareness work being undertaken by Citizens Advice Bureaux, and undertook to forward information in that regard to the Chair of the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board.

The Board:

- i. **APPROVED** the Integrated Children's Services Planning Board Annual Report which shared the work undertaken by the children's services planning partnership 2024/25 in delivering the Highland Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023/2026; and

ii. **NOTED** the work of the delivery groups.

11. **Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (HADP) Annual Reporting Survey 2024/25**

The Chair of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership declared a connection to this item as a Non-Executive Director of Public Health Scotland. However, there was no conflict of interest.

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/12/25 by the HADP Coordinator.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- it having been queried how information on outcomes was reported to the Scottish Government, it was explained that most government scrutiny currently related to achievement of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards and the number of confirmed deaths from alcohol and drug use. However, there was a recognition that more needed to be done to achieve the national mission around those areas and, as a result, a National Delivery Support Group had been established. The Group's first engagement session with Alcohol and Drugs Partnerships was scheduled to take place the following week, and it was anticipated it would seek to have more outcome reporting put in place. The Chair added that it would be helpful for the Board to be kept informed as matters progressed;
- it was welcomed that the HADP had the opportunity to benchmark through national reporting;
- it was difficult to identify good measures for substance use, and an example was provided in that regard; and
- it was necessary to focus more on outcomes and to recognise the importance of the range of other activities which contributed to a reduction in harms from substance use. It was also important to understand service users' experience of the services they received.

The Board scrutinised and **AGREED** the HADP Annual Reporting Survey submission for 2024/25.

12. **HOIP Core Priority Update: Community Wealth Building – Highland Social Value Charter**

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/13/25 by Alan Webster, Economy and Regeneration Manager, The Highland Council.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- it having been queried what channels existed for the CPP or individual organisations to feed back to the Scottish Government regarding industry engagement with the Social Value Charter and the need for mandatory community benefit, it was suggested this could be done via the Scottish Government Place Director. It was added that there had been detailed engagement with the Scottish Government at both official and ministerial level but, to date, Ministers had not been minded to make community benefit mandatory;
- it was important not to disincentivise investment in the area if there were other benefits to be gained from that investment, and the fact that developers did not have to meet all nine points in the Charter to sign up was key. Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), for example, would not be contributing to the strategic fund but would be investing significantly in housing. SSEN signing up to the Charter was a great endorsement and, it was hoped, would encourage smaller companies to do the same;

- it was emphasised that the strategic fund was in addition to local community benefit;
- it having been queried whether community benefit could potentially be made a material planning consideration, it was explained it was important there was absolute separation between the Social Value Charter and the planning process to prevent undue influence and ensure planning decisions were based on factors such as the development's impact on the local natural environment; and
- it was highlighted that representations regarding the Social Value Charter and community benefit had been made in the CPP's response to the consultation on Community Benefits from Net Zero Energy Developments and the Community Wealth Building Bill call for views.

The Board:

- NOTED** updates on progress against the Highland Social Value Charter;
- NOTED** the draft Partnership Agreement template detailed in Appendix 1 of the report which, once finalised, would be trialled over the next 6 months;
- NOTED** that the Council would continue making representations to both the Scottish and UK Governments on the need for mandatory community benefit;
- NOTED** that the Chair of the Highland Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee had written formally to Scottish Renewables seeking their immediate engagement with the Highland Social Value Charter; and
- AGREED** that the CPP's views in terms of engagement with the Social Value Charter and the need for mandatory community benefit be fed back to the Scottish Government by the Scottish Government Place Director.

13. Active Highland Strategy

The Chair of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership declared a connection to this item as a Non-Executive Director of Public Health Scotland. However, there was no conflict of interest.

Following endorsement by the CPP Board, at its meeting on 4 December 2024, of the proposed set of priority actions to deliver on the agreed outcomes for the refreshed Active Highland Strategy, the final Strategy document and associated Action Plan had been circulated for information on behalf of the Active Highland Partnership Group (AHPG).

The Active Highland Partnership Group was now looking to develop awareness and support building work to strengthen the foundations for implementation. Discussions around that were in progress, including developing a programme of dissemination and calls to action across the region, supported by the Active Highland Partnership members and their teams.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:

- the Active Highland Partnership Group (the group) needed to deliberate on how partners were going to deliver against the Strategy, and ensure there was a plan in place that underpinned it. It was understood the group had struggled to bring in partners at the right level to support the Strategy, and it was suggested it would be helpful to review the Terms of Reference and bring a report to the next meeting of the Board with a view to reinvigorating the group. The Chief Executive, High Life Highland, undertook to liaise with the Head of Health Improvement, NHS Highland, in that regard;
- from a Council perspective, the Assistant Chief Executive – People gave a commitment to ensure the right people were involved in the group to make sure the Action Plan was deliverable and sufficiently ambitious. In particular, it was suggested more could be done, strategically, in terms of education; and

- the importance of play in terms of attainment and healthy outcomes for children was emphasised, and it was welcomed that play was threaded throughout the Strategy;

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** the Active Highland Strategy 2025; and
- ii. **AGREED** that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Board, based on the points raised during discussion regarding the need for partner commitment to support the delivery of the Strategy, and a review of the Terms of Reference of the Active Highland Partnership Group.

14. Partnership Development Team Quarterly Update

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/14/25 by the Partnership Development Manager and CPP Senior Officers.

The Chair commended the Partnership Development Manager and her team for the significant amount of work taking place, as reflected in the report. Particular reference was made to the success of the recent Highland CPP Conference. In addition, it was helpful for the Board to see the next steps set out in the report.

The Board **NOTED**:

- i. the quarterly report; and
- ii. the updated Year 2 Milestones at Appendix 1 of the report.

15. Strategic Risk Register Review

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/15/25 by CPP Senior Officers.

In response to a question, it was explained that local Community Partnerships did not currently have Risk Registers. However, it was intended that the new Strategic Risk Register could be a template that could be used at all levels of the CPP going forward.

In relation to the proposed Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group, it was suggested that CPP Senior Officers identify suitable partner representatives with experience of Risk Registers to sit on the group. Liz Humphreys, Non-Executive Director, NHS Highland, offered her assistance to the group, explaining that she had an interest in risk and chaired Public Health Scotland's Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

The Board:

- i. **NOTED** progress on the Strategic Risk Register review;
- ii. **AGREED** to establish a Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group of the Board;
- iii. **AGREED** that CPP Senior Officers identify suitable partner representatives with experience of Risk Registers to sit on the Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group.

16. Highland Community Planning Partnership Terms of Reference Review

There had been circulated Report No CPPB/16/25 by CPP Senior Officers and the Partnership Development Manager.

The Chair highlighted that one of the changes in the revised Terms of Reference was the inclusion of the Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership (HITRANS) in the CPP Board

membership. In addition to the changes summarised in the report, she proposed that a Vice Chair of the CPP Board be appointed and that, to form a succession pipeline, it should be the succeeding Chair, currently Ch Supt Rob Shepherd, Police Scotland.

The Board **AGREED** the revised Highland Community Planning Partnership Terms of Reference as at April 2025, subject to an addition regarding the appointment of a Vice Chair of the Board, to be the succeeding Chair.

17. Date of Next Meeting

The Board **NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday 19 September 2025 at 10.00 am.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.