

Agenda Item	15.
Report No	CPPB/29/25



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 5 December 2025

Partnership Development Team Quarterly Update: September to November 2025

Report by: Partnership Development Manager and CPP Senior Officers

Summary

This quarterly update outlines the progress of the Partnership Development Team in supporting the delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and strengthening Community Planning across Highland between September and November 2025.

Key highlights include:

- **Community Networking Events:** Five events delivered across Inverness, Mid Ross, Badenoch & Strathspey, Nairn, and Lochaber. Lochaber event was the largest to date with 50 stallholders and strong attendance from community groups, officers, and the public.
- **Thematic Delivery Groups:** Continued support for Poverty Reduction, Mental Health & Wellbeing, and Community Safety & Resilience groups, including facilitation of discussion sessions at the Mental Health Delivery Group Developmental Session.
- **Housing Need and Demand Assessment:** Active promotion of the surveys and engagement with partners, including a briefing at the September Partnership Coordinating Group.
- **Community Partnership Plans:** Final stages of template development, launch scheduled for December 2025.
- **Community Planning Induction Module:** Pilot underway with Communities and Place Committee Members; further rollout planned for January 2026.
- **Strategic Engagement:** Partnership Development Manager confirmed as Co-Chair of the Scottish Community Planning Network, strengthening Highland's national influence.

Challenges to note:

- **Partner Engagement Decline:** Statutory partners' attendance at local level has decreased, impacting delivery and collaboration. This is combined with not taking forward agreed actions.
- **Secretariat Gaps:** A few Community Partnerships lack Secretariat support which should be provided by the lead organisation for the partnership, creating sustainability issues for meeting administration.

The Board is asked to:

- i) Note the Quarterly Report.
- ii) Note the update on challenges highlighted and the actions needed to address the issues identified.
- iii) Note the updated Year 2 Milestones at Appendix 1.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the December 2021 Board, a new approach and financial model for resourcing the Community Planning Partnership was agreed. This would involve the appointment of a full time Partnership Development Manager and a team of Partnership Officers who could be appointed on a funded or secondment basis.
- 1.2 At the April 2022 Board a Community Planning Development Update was discussed. The Board agreed to establish a core central team with the purpose of supporting local partnership working. The rationale for this approach is a central team to support shared learning and develop consistent approaches across Highland.
- 1.3 The Partnership Development Team took up post in June 2023. The Team consists of:
 - 1 x full time Development Manager
 - 2 x full-time Partnership Officers (contracted to May 2027)The size of the team has decreased during Year 2, the Partnership Officer on secondment from Police Scotland returned to their substantive post at the end of March 2025.
- 1.4 The allocation of the nine Community Partnerships in Highland is split across the team with the Partnership Officers now being allocated four Community Partnerships each and the Partnership Development Manager taking one. A significant change during Year 2 is the completion of funding for Project Officer support for Caithness and Sutherland Community Partnerships came to an end in March 2025. The level of support allocated to these two Partnerships has increased since April 2025. Both Partnerships are currently reviewing potential future funding opportunities.

2. Quarterly Update: September to December 2025

- 2.1 This quarterly update outlines the continued progress of the Partnership Development Team, between September and November 2025:
- 2.2 **Community Networking Events:** Stronger Communities – fostering collaboration and local engagement. Organised a series of Community Networking Events for five of the Community Partnerships:
 - Inverness (Eastgate Centre, Inverness) – new for 2025
 - Mid Ross (Fortrose)
 - Badenoch & Strathspey (Carrbridge)
 - Nairn and Nairnshire (Nairn)
 - Lochaber (Fort William)

- 2.3 **Lochaber Community Partnership – Partnering for Progress Community Networking Event:** Extended thanks to the working group who organised this event in the Nevis Centre, Fort William on 12th November. Showcasing the power of collaborative partnership working. Jointly organised by the Partnership Development Team, Highland Council's Community Development Team, Fort William 2040 and Voluntary Action Lochaber, the event featured 50 stallholders promoting services, consulting on local priorities, and raising awareness of community activities. Key note addresses were provided by the Council's Chief Executive and the Senior Project Manager for the new Belford Hospital from NHS Highland. The event attracted strong participation from community groups, partners, officers, and members of the public throughout the day, demonstrating the value of coordinated engagement.
- 2.4 Team members have attended or will be attending events on behalf of two Community Partnerships in Caithness and Sutherland, with a further two Community Networking Events to be organised early 2026 for Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross and Easter Ross. Planning for the Easter Ross Event is in partnership between the Partnership Development Team, NHS Highland, a local Elected Member and the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme. Again, another excellent example of Community Partnership partners working together.
- 2.5 **Thematic Delivery Groups:** Continued to support the Poverty Reduction (Secretariat role), Mental Health and Wellbeing and Community Safety and Resilience Delivery Groups. The team facilitated discussion sessions at the recent Mental Health Delivery Group Developmental Session.
- 2.6 **Housing Need and Demand Assessment:** The team has been promoting the Surveys through a variety of routes and contacts, actively promoting it to partners, Community Briefing contacts and others. Including having the Strategic Lead for Housing and Customer Services, Highland Council give an overview at the September Partnership Coordinating Group to raise awareness.
- 2.7 **Community Partnerships:** Supported all nine Community Partnerships, delivering a full round of meetings. With the current round taking place November to December 2025. Two meetings have been postponed to early 2026: one due to transition of a new Chair and finalising their new structure; the other due to staff absence of Chair and interim gap of Vice Chair (now resolved). Officers facilitated reviews within two Community Partnership during this period. Themes covered across the Community Partnership meetings during this period included: Poverty; Youth Work; Planet Youth; Renewables; Climate Hub; Kishorn Port.
- 2.8 **Community Partnership Plans:** Final stages of development of the Plans template, with a planned launch December 2025 at the Partnership Coordinating Group. Delayed due to incorporating local data included within the Indicator Report on Health Inequalities.

- 2.9 **Social Value Charter:** Highland CPP website updated with an informative section focusing specifically on the Highland Social Value Charter: [Highland Social Value Charter](#)
- 2.10 **Community Planning Induction Module:** Finalising the format of the new Module with a pilot taking place currently with Communities and Place Committee Elected Members. Once complete the Module will then be tested across partner officers and launched internally in January 2026. Discussions with partners to take place for integrating use across the wider CPP to follow.
- 2.11 **Short Life Working Groups:** Ongoing support for the Health Inequalities group, with the Indicator Report reaching final stages – see separate Agenda item. Supporting the Natural Capital group with identifying pilot communities, good progress to date with further meetings planned in the New Year to engage Community Partnerships, identify boundaries and stakeholders.
- 2.12 **Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group:** Facilitated the first meeting of the Sub-Group with the next meeting taking place prior to the CPP Board Development Session where the Risk Register will be discussed further with discussion required on the identification of risks.
- 2.13 **Third Sector Engagement:** Following agreement at the September meeting the online survey is being finalised and will be circulated early December. Reporting will take place at the CPP Board Development Session in January, to allow incorporation of feedback into discussions for the 2027 – 2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- 2.14 **CPP Board Development Session:** Organised for January 2026. Format of the day is in-person in Highland Council Headquarters. Programming for the day is to finalised but will include: Board Improvement Plan; Strategic Risk Register; 2027 – 2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- 2.15 **2026 Annual CPP Conference:** Due to the timing of Easter weekend and school holidays, the 2026 Conference will likely take place in mid-May 2026, avoiding the Scottish Parliament Election on Thursday 7th May 2026. To allow for expansion of the Conference, support is required from partners. Previously attendees have focused of core and key partners and contacts from across Highland and has been limited to 100 attendees. For the 2026 Conference it is intended to increase this to 150, with a focus on increasing the third sector participation from across Highland. However, this will see an increase in costs, it will still be possible to use Strathpeffer Pavilion as the preferred venue choice. It is proposed the theme for the 2026 Conference will be the future direction of Highland Community Planning Partnership, as the new 2027 – 2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan will be developed during the year. This would be one of the most significant engagement opportunities available to the partnership. This will be discussed at the CPP Board Development Session in January.
- 2.16 **Reporting Schedule:** Drafted and on the December Agenda for discussion. Sets out when key reports will be presented to each quarterly Board meeting (March, June,

September, December) to support forward planning and ensure timely oversight of partnership priorities.

- 2.17 **Age Friendly Communities:** Research is ongoing with members of the team attending a recent Generations Working Together event in Inverness and the launch of the new Highland Inclusive Living forum. Engagement will continue and be incorporated into planning for 2026 engagement, working towards the 2027 – 2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

3. Milestones

- 3.1 A copy of the updated Year 2 Milestones for the Partnership Development Team can be found at Appendix 1.

4. Challenges

- 4.1 **Partner engagement at a local level:** A decline in partner engagement, particularly among statutory partners, has been observed during this period. Contributing factors may include workload pressures, capacity constraints, and long-term staff absences. While these challenges are acknowledged, absence is impacting upon delivery and activity of the partnerships. This has been combined, in some partnerships, with a lack of progress against actions. This risks reducing meetings to discussion forums rather than action-focused collaborations and not meeting the desired outcomes.

To support this, the Partnership Development Team will re-circulate the Guidance and Toolkit and Terms of Reference in the New Year as a reminder of roles and responsibilities and arrange a meeting with Chairs and Vice Chairs to support them in their roles and identify areas for action. The Partnership Development Manager is meeting with senior officers across organisations to discuss levels of engagement and seek opportunities to strengthen collaboration. Board members are asked to support this by reiterating the expectation of active engagement and responsibility among representatives.

- 4.2 **Ongoing Secretariat issues within Community Partnerships:** The team is currently providing Secretariat support for a few Community Partnerships. This arrangement is not sustainable long term due to expanding responsibilities and has been raised with Chairs, as the agreed model requires the lead partner to provide Secretariat support alongside the Chair. A solution has recently been identified for one partnership where meetings will be recorded (online or in person) and submitted to support staff for typing however no Secretariat support is currently available for three partnerships.

- 4.4 **Lack of progress with Shared Virtual Space:** The development of a Shared Virtual Space for the Community Planning Partnership has stalled for a number of months. An alternative suggestion from the team is to create a secure virtual platform as part of the website, however this will require financial resourcing as it is an additional capacity which needs to be added to the website and is not a function it can currently do.

5. Scottish Community Planning Network Update

The Partnership Development Manager attended a variety of meetings during this reporting period.

5.1 September 2025

Updates received from Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan Refresh, COSLA; Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy from Scottish Government; Homelessness Prevention Provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Bill from Scottish Government. CPPs from across Scotland were invited to contribute to the agenda with a Local Housing Focus, with the Chief Officer Housing and Communities presenting on Highland's behalf.

5.2 October 2025

Scottish Government's Student Mental Health Action Plan: Senior Policy Officer, Student Equalities and Fair Access, Directorate for Lifelong Learning and Skills, Scottish Government introduced the Action Plan, setting out the background and highlighting context including challenges such as students not effectively accessing local, funded mental health services and the importance of sector connections - including those with CPP's. The Action Plan aims to improve student access to local mental health services and strengthen collaboration between institutions, Health Boards, local authorities, and CPPs. It sets out five key actions to enhance student wellbeing and promote Student Mental Health Agreements. Following the session, the Partnership Development Manager facilitated a connection between UHI and NHS Highland to support ongoing engagement.

5.3 November 2025

Quarterly Scottish Community Planning Network Event: Key discussions focused on the Community Planning Improvement Board (CPIB) reviewing its future priorities, operating model, and strengthening links with all 32 CPPs. Topics included sustainable resourcing, political oversight, and clear success measures. The Scottish Government/COSLA update covered the Place Director role and development of a CPP Charter, with a further update expected at the next Board meeting. Gail Prince was confirmed as Co-Chair of the Scottish Community Planning Network alongside Annette Lang (Midlothian CPP).

5.4 **Public Health Scotland – Rural & Island Place Standard Tool:** Public Health Scotland is developing a Place Standard Tool tailored for rural and island communities, which make up 98% of Scotland's landmass. The tool aims to address competing priorities such as housing, climate and biodiversity, food and energy security, and economic sustainability, aligning with the National Planning Framework (NPF4). The Partnership Development Manager will attend a virtual event on 2 December to contribute to its development.

6. Next Steps

- Finalise Community Planning Induction Module.
- Launch Community Partnership Plans.
- Deliver 2025 Third Sector Engagement.
- Progress Strategic Risk Register Review.

- Finalise arrangements for CPP Board Development Session in January 2026.
- Arrange meeting with Community Partnership Chairs and Vice Chairs.
- Organise partner meetings to discuss Challenges.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:




- i. Note the Quarterly Report.
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Author: Partnership Development Manager and CPP Senior Officers

Date: 25th November 2025

Appendices: Year 2 Milestones

Partnership Development Team Milestones Year 2

 On Track
 Underway
 No Progress



Milestone	Measures for Success at end of Year 2	Measures for Success Lead	Status	Status Update
Circulate quarterly HCPP Board updates to Community Partnerships	Quarterly updates circulated within 4 weeks of meetings	Partnership Development Manager	On Track	Last update circulated October 2025
Complete National Community Planning Self-Assessment	Board members complete and submit individual CCP checklists when circulated Organise a Board Development Session to review the Highland CPP checklist report once available from Improvement Service to identify actions	Highland Community Planning Partnership Board	On Track	Board Development Session (organised for January 2026)
Continue to review HCPP Governance: Terms of Reference; Strategic Risk Register; Action Tracker	Strategic Risk Register reviewed quarterly ahead of Board meetings Action Tracker monitored and progressed ahead of Board meetings Terms of Reference updated to reflect new HOIP Delivery Structure	Partnership Development Manager & Senior Officers	On Track	Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group first meeting took place October 2025. Next meeting scheduled for January 2026
Coordinate involvement in Place Standard Tool for Community Safety	Participate in Information Sessions and work with Senior Community Development Manager and Police Scotland Senior Officer to assess opportunities for identified communities in Highland - Spring 2025	Partnership Development Manager & Senior Officers	No Progress	Finished tool due to be launched at the SCSN Annual Conference in March 2026
Create & implement Performance Monitoring & Reporting Framework	HOIP Delivery Framework and Indicators implemented Framework adapted and implemented for Community Partnerships	Partnership Development Manager & Senior Officers	On Track	Performance Framework indicators being adapted for Community Partnership Plans with priority localities identified.
Create Community Planning Induction Module	Induction Module created and shared across partners Potential to pilot with Elected Members	Partnership Development Team	On Track	Module being finalised with pilot for Communities and Place Committee Members organised for November 2025
Create National/Highland/Local Plans/Policies/Strategies central resource for HCPP Website	Resource created and uploaded to CPP website	Partnership Development Team	On Track	Website review completed, Directories and Resources sections updated
Create Quarterly / Annual Reporting schedule for HCPP Board meetings	Schedule to be drafted based on new HOIP Delivery Structure for discussion at December 2024 Board meeting	Partnership Development Manager & Senior Officers	On Track	Draft schedule prepared, on December Agenda
Deliver first round of Community Networking Events: October/November 2024	Partnership Officers coordinating organisation of in person events Minimum 50% Community Partnerships will deliver events	Partnership Development Team	On Track	Successful events delivered for 5 Community Partnerships in 2025: Lochaber, Mid Ross, Inverness, Nairn & Nairnshire and Badenoch & Strathspey, Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross and Easter Ross in planning stages.
Deliver HCPP annual update to Elected Members business meetings	Aim to deliver an annual CPP update to all Service Support Business Meetings between October and December 2024	Partnership Development Team	On Track	
Develop shared virtual space for CPP network (Aligning Partnership Practices HOIP Cross-cutting Theme)	Platform identified - with support through Highland Council Content developed and use implemented	Partnership Development Team	No Progress	Potential platform identified - Egress. Business Case drafted, to be reviewed prior to submission to Chief Officer Highlighted as a challenge in PDT Report December 2025
Finalise Community Partnership Plans: including priority locality areas - thematic community of interest and/or geography	Plans finalised and presented to Community Partnerships January to March 2025	Partnership Development Team	Underway	Template almost complete. Data section will be updated to include potential data sets resulting from the work of the Health Inequalities Short Life Working Group. As a result of a number of Community Partnerships reviewing and updating their priorities this section will be updated once this work is complete. The template will be completed and the Partnership Development Team aims to launch the Plans with individual Community Partnerships in December 2025.
Finalise HOIP Delivery Plan, HOIP Delivery Framework, Indicators	2024 - 2027 HOIP officially published New governance arrangements identified	Partnership Development Manager & Senior Officers	On Track	Presented to December 2024 meeting
Identify opportunities to engage seldom heard voices in Community Partnerships: Gypsy / Travellers communities	Ongoing Initial discussions with Gypsy / Travellers communities contacts in Highland Council and NHS Highland	Partnership Development Team	Underway	Initial discussion with Gypsy/Travellers communities undertaken
Implement HCPP Communications Strategy	Following agreement of Strategy at September 2024 Board meeting Communication from the CPP will be increased	Highland Community Planning Partnership Board	On Track	Agreement in place, Strategy has been adapted for Community Partnerships

Investigate Age-Friendly Communities framework, including alignment with existing Partnership work	Identified opportunities to include framework in Highland - consider all ages	Partnership Development Team & Senior Officers		Researching across CPPs in the SCPN network their approaches to develop Age Friendly Communities work
Launch Community Partnerships Guidance & Toolkit	On completion of the HOIP Delivery structure incorporate into document and launch October 2024	Partnership Development Team		Officially launched in February 2025. A number of Community Partnerships have reviewed and signed the template Terms of Reference, for transparency these will be uploaded to their individual webpages.
Manage, develop & maintain HCPP Website	Ongoing management of CPP website as main point of contact for all community planning information	Partnership Development Team		A full review of the website completed Summer 2025
Organise Annual CPP Conference: April 2025	Delivery second annual Conference and continue engagement across all partners and the region	Partnership Development Team & Senior Officers		Second annual Conference took place on Friday 25th April 2025, with 100 delegates attending from across Highland representing a number of partner and groups working within the wider Community Planning Partnership.
Participate in National CPP network & feedback to HCPP Board	Partnership Development Manager to attend quarterly meetings and include updates in quarterly reports	Partnership Development Manager		Scottish Government Whole Family Support Short Life Working Group; Your Police Stakeholder Engagement Forum; online SCPN sessions
Report on Community Partnerships progress against Minimum Standards Model to HCPP Board	Monitor progression and include updates in quarterly reports	Partnership Development Manager		Included in PDT quarterly update report December 2024
Report Partnership Development Team Year 1 activity to HCPP Board: September 2024	Report submitted to September 2024 Board meeting	Partnership Development Manager		Completed - September 2024
Schedule Calendar of Partnership Engagement Events: August 2024 - May 2025	Calendar developed for September 2024 to May 2025	Partnership Development Team		Calendar included with Partnership Development Team report June 2025
Support development of proposals for Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership grants across Community Partnerships	Engage with HADP Coordinator to progress Partnership Officers support development of proposals locally	Partnership Development Team & HADP Coordinator		Fund will be managed internally in HADP with applications welcomed from statutory and third sector organisations across Highland. The Fund aims to provide grants for one off funding for small - scale projects up to a value £2500 whose outcomes align with one or more of the National Drugs Mission Outcomes
Support development of service delivery mapping (Connecting People & Places HOIP Cross-cutting Theme)	Engage with HTSI/NHS re Highland Directory of Services development	Partnership Development Team & Senior Officers		Directories section created on CPP website
Publish HCPP Annual Report	June 2025 - develop and publish Annual Report - to be presented to Board, and Full Council and published on the CPP website	Partnership Development Manager & Senior Officers & Highland Community Planning Partnership Board		Annual Report finalised October 2025