

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	CPPB/22/26



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 11 September 2026

Title of report – Partnership Development Team Year 3 Annual Report including Quarterly Report for June to August 2026

Report by – Gail Prince, Partnership Development Manager and CPP Senior Officers

Report Classification (tick as appropriate):

Strategic Priority: ☒ People ☒ Place ☒ Prosperity

Cross-Cutting Theme (tick all that apply):

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|---|--|
| ☒ Connecting People and Places | ☒ Employment / Employability |
| ☒ Whole Family and Community-Based Approaches | ☒ Housing |
| ☒ Shared Approaches to Commissioning | ☒ Community Wealth Building |
| ☒ Aligning Partnership Practices | |

Report Purpose (tick as appropriate):

☒ For Noting ☒ For Approval ☐ For Decision ☐ For Comment

Recommendation(s)

The Board is asked to:

- i) Note the Year 3 Annual Report for June 2025 – June 2026
- ii) Note the Quarterly progress update for June 2026 to August 2026 at Section 16

Executive Summary

This report provides the Partnership Development Team's Year 3 Annual Report, covering the period June 2025 to June 2026 and summarises the Quarterly progress between June and August 2026. It highlights progress in strengthening Community Planning across Highland on behalf of the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP), supporting delivery of the 2024-2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP), and preparing for development of the 2027-2037 HOIP.

During the reporting period, the team maintained support for all nine Community Partnerships, strengthened governance arrangements, expanded community engagement activity, and increased Highland's national involvement through leadership within the Scottish Community Planning Network. Community Partnerships have continued to mature, increasing alignment of local tackling inequalities with HOIP

strategic priorities of People, Place and Prosperity and Area Place Plans, whilst supporting tangible local outcomes including thematic delivery groups, resilience planning, and Community Networking Events.

The report demonstrates continued alignment with the 2024-2027 HOIP and supports the CPP's duties under the Community Empowerment Act to tackle inequalities through community planning. Key strategic risks include partner capacity constraints, variable engagement at locality level, secretariat gaps, and the resource implications associated with development of the 2027-2037 HOIP. These continue to be monitored through established governance arrangements.

Key achievements during the year include:

- Strengthened CPP governance arrangements, including progression against the CPP Board Improvement Plan and reporting progress to the Improvement Service.
- Development of the new Community Planning Induction Module (launching September 2026).
- Development of a new CPP Board Induction Pack (launching September 2026).
- Establishment of the Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group.
- Delivery of a successful Highland CPP Conference to date.
- Expansion of Community Networking Events activity.
- Progression of the Health Inequalities Indicators and Natural Capital work streams.
- Establishment of the Fuel Poverty Action Group.
- Support for all nine Community Partnerships and their evolving thematic delivery approaches.
- Increased national involvement through Highland's role within the Scottish Community Planning Network.
- Commencement of engagement and planning for the 2027-2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

1.	Background
1.1	In December 2021, the Highland Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board agreed a new approach to resourcing Community Planning, including the establishment of a dedicated Partnership Development Team to strengthen strategic and local partnership working across Highland.
1.2	The Partnership Development Team became operational in June 2023 and is hosted by The Highland Council on behalf of the CPP. The Team works across the partnership to support delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP), strengthen delivery arrangements, facilitate partnership collaboration and support Community Planning activity at both strategic and local levels.
1.3	The Team currently consists of: 1 x full-time Partnership Development Manager 2 x full-time Partnership Officers (contracted until May 2027)
1.4	During Year 3, the Team continued to support the delivery of the 2024-2027 HOIP and the Delivery Plan, plus strengthening alignment between Community Partnerships and Area Place Plans, expand community engagement activity,

	support partnership governance and begin development of the 2027-2037 HOIP. Despite capacity pressures across the public and third sectors, the Team has continued to play a significant and key role in enabling collaboration, supporting local delivery and strengthening Community Planning across Highland.
2.	Year 3 Annual Report Overview
2.1	Year 3 has been a period of significant achievement, development and influence for the CPP's Partnership Development Team.
2.2	Working across local, regional and national levels, the team has continued to strengthen Community Planning arrangements across Highland whilst supporting delivery of the 2024-2027 HOIP and laying the foundations for the development of the new 2027-2037 HOIP. Despite reduced staffing capacity and increasing demands across the partnership as a whole, the team has maintained support for all nine Community Partnerships, expanded strategic engagement nationally, strengthened delivery arrangements and increased alignment between local action and strategic priorities.
2.3	The year has demonstrated increasing maturity across Highland's Community Planning structures, with Community Partnerships evolving beyond coordination forums into local place based delivery mechanisms, helping drive collaborative action around community priorities and ambitions.
3.	Strengthening Community Planning Governance
	Throughout Year 3, the team has played a central role in strengthening delivery, accountability and strategic leadership across Community Planning structures.
3.1	Key achievements included: • Development and implementation of a new Indicators framework. • Introduction of a reporting schedule to support strategic oversight. • Establishment and support of the Strategic Risk Register Sub-Group. • Delivery of Board Development Sessions focused on governance, risk and future planning. • Development of the Community Planning Induction Module. • Development of a comprehensive CPP Board Induction Pack, providing Board Members with a single point of reference for Community Planning arrangements, structures, roles and responsibilities. • Implementation of the Board Improvement Plan actions developed through the Improvement Service Self-Assessment process. • Strengthening links between strategic governance structures and delivery arrangements.
3.2	A copy of the newly developed CPP Board Induction Pack will be circulated to the Board September 2026. The Pack forms part of the CPP's ongoing commitment to strengthening governance, supporting effective participation and embedding a shared understanding of Community Planning across partner organisations
3.3	The new Community Planning Induction Module, launching September 2026, represents a significant milestone for the CPP, supporting greater understanding

	of Community Planning roles, responsibilities and opportunities across partner organisations.
3.4	Together, the Community Planning Induction Module and CPP Board Induction Pack represent a significant investment in strengthening partnership leadership and governance. They provide a sustainable framework for onboarding new members, developing existing members and partners and promoting a shared understanding of Community Planning across Highland.
4.	Delivering the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan
4.1	The Partnership Development Team has continued to act as a key enabler for delivery of the 2024-2027 HOIP.
4.2	Through support provided to Community Partnerships, Delivery Groups, Short Life Working Groups and associated delivery structures, the team has strengthened alignment between local priorities and the HOIP strategic themes of People, Place and Prosperity.
4.3	During Year 3 the team supported progress across all seven of the HOIP cross-cutting themes, evidenced here:
4.4	Connecting People and Places - Continued support to the wider place-based working and the links between Community Partnerships and Area Place Plans. - Advancement of community resilience planning activity across several Community Partnerships.
4.5	Whole Family and Community Based Approaches - Progression of Health Inequalities Indicators work and associated report. - Enhanced engagement with communities, including young people, through local partnership structures.
4.5	Employment and Employability Support for locality discussions on employability pathways and workforce challenges.
4.6	Community Wealth Building - Promotion of Community Wealth Building principles across the Community Partnership, with the support of the Council's Renewables Officers locally. - Regional implementation planning undertaking for the launch of the new Community Wealth Building Bill.
4.7	Housing - Continued engagement with partners regarding housing as a key enabler of community sustainability. - Bringing together of local partners to discuss housing opportunities.
4.8	Shared Approaches to Commissioning - Increased collaboration and alignment between partners around preventative approaches and community-based support. - Involvement in the promotion and establishment of regionally funding structures, BeConnected within Highland Council.
4.9	Aligning Partnership Practices

	• Strengthening of governance, data and performance arrangements. • Rollout of partnership development tools and resources.
5.	Community Partnerships: Strengthening Local Delivery
5.1	Community Partnerships remain the primary mechanism through which Community Planning is delivered locally across Highland.
5.2	Throughout Year 3, the team has supported all nine Community Partnerships through meeting facilitation, governance support, community engagement, local planning processes and priority setting and thematic development activity.
5.3	A significant achievement during the year has been the increasing shift towards thematic and delivery-focused approaches, ensuring Community Partnerships are focused on outcomes rather than solely information sharing.
5.4	Emerging themes across Highland included: • Community resilience. • Poverty and inequality. • Mental health and wellbeing. • Drug and alcohol services. • Opportunities for young people. • Community wealth building. • Transport and connectivity. • Employability and skills development. • Climate adaptation and natural capital.
6.	Community Partnership Outcomes and Emerging Impact
6.1	During Year 3, Community Partnerships increasingly demonstrated their ability to bring partners together to address locally identified priorities and deliver place-based solutions.
6.2	Easter Ross • Establishment of the Easter Ross Transport Forum, creating a collaborative platform for transport providers, communities and agencies to address local connectivity challenges. • Continued progression of Community Wealth Building and community resilience priorities linked to the Area Place Plan.
6.3	Inverness • Introduction of themed meetings focused on young people and community safety. • Strengthened collaboration through alignment with Operation Youth Respect and preventative partnership approaches. • Pilot community work undertaken in Merkinch with the Natural Capital Tool.
6.4	Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross • Delivery of the successful Kishorn Port engagement event, bringing together partners to consider economic opportunities and community benefits arising from major developments.

	- Increased focus on health and wellbeing in remote and rural communities. - Targeted engagement work beginning in the Wester Ross area.
6.5	Lochaber - Progression of community resilience activity and planning. - Delivery of the largest Community Networking Event to date, involving over 50 organisations and community groups and strengthening cross-sector collaboration.
6.6	Badenoch and Strathspey - Establishment of a Short Life Working Group focused on childcare, employability and access to opportunity. - Progression of local resilience planning activity. - Establishment of a Transport Forum, now chaired by an Elected Member.
6.7	Caithness - Delivery of the first Community Conversation event, bringing together communities, partners and local organisations. - Development of partnership discussions around poverty reduction and drug and alcohol service provision. - Pilot community work undertaken in Thurso with the Natural Capital Tool.
6.8	Mid Ross - Support for Community Council resilience planning and improved community preparedness. - Continued alignment between partnership activity and Area Place Plan implementation.
6.9	Nairn and Nairnshire - Strengthened multi-agency discussions around anti-social behaviour, suicide prevention and wellbeing. - Improved partnership coordination around local community safety issues.
6.10	Sutherland - Introduction of a new thematic structure focused on Poverty Reduction, Climate Adaptation, Community Wealth Building, and Transport and Resilience. - Improved accountability and focus on delivery across local priority areas.
7.	Aligning Community Planning and Area Place Plans
7.1	An area of progress during Year 3 has been the strengthening relationship between Community Partnerships and Area Place Plans.
7.2	Community Partnerships increasingly provide the mechanism through which local priorities identified through Area Place Plans can be discussed, coordinated and progressed through partnership action with a focus on tackling inequalities. This has strengthened place-based working and improved alignment between community aspirations, local investment priorities and partnership delivery.
7.3	Examples include: Easter Ross progressing priorities through resilience, transport and Community Wealth Building activity.

	• Mid Ross linking resilience activity and local priorities with implementation. • Sutherland establishing thematic groups around priorities closely aligned to local place planning ambitions. • Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross supporting coordinated discussions around economic opportunities associated with Kishorn Port and wider area development.
7.4	This increasing alignment demonstrates how Community Planning can support delivery of place-based priorities whilst ensuring local activity contributes to the wider objectives of the HOIP.
8.	Community Networking Events and Engagement
8.1	Year 3 saw the most extensive programme of Community Networking Events delivered to date.
8.2	Events were delivered across multiple Community Partnership areas and provided opportunities for community organisations, public services, third sector partners and local residents to connect, learn and collaborate.
8.3	The events: • Increased awareness of local services. • Strengthened partnership relationships. • Supported community engagement. • Improved visibility of Community Planning activity. • Created opportunities for collaborative working.
8.4	The Lochaber event in particular demonstrated the value of coordinated partnership activity and remains a notable example of community-led engagement in practice.
9.	National and Regional Leadership
9.1	Year 3 has been a period of growing national influence for the CPP with the Partnership Development Manager taking the co-chair of the Scottish Community Planning Network. This has provided an opportunity for Highland to contribute to a range of national developments including Place Director Charter, National Performance Framework and Rural and Island Place Standard Tool.
9.2	Through these activities Highland has both influenced and informed national thinking whilst ensuring Highland's unique opportunities and challenges remain visible within policy discussions.
10.	Annual CPP Conference
10.1	The 2026 Highland CPP Conference was the largest and most impactful conference delivered to date. With approximately 120 attendees from across Highland, the event showcased community planning in practice and created opportunities for networking, learning and collaboration. Feedback highlighted the quality of speakers, relevance of content and opportunities for future partnership

	working. The conference provided an important platform for discussing the future direction of Community Planning.
11.	Challenges
11.1	Whilst significant progress has been achieved during Year 3, challenges remained.
11.2	Key challenges include: • Capacity pressures across partners. • Ongoing Secretariat and Chair situations within some Community Partnerships. • Variable engagement from some statutory partners at local level. • Potential resource pressures associated with development of the new 2027-2037 HOIP.
11.3	These challenges continue to be actively managed through engagement with partners, support for local involvement and strengthened arrangements.
12.	Quarterly Overview: June to August 2026
12.1	• Community Partnerships are increasingly functioning as delivery forums rather than information-sharing meetings. • Stronger alignment is emerging between Community Planning, Area Place Plans and local partnership delivery structures. • Local leadership capacity has improved through resolution of Chair and Secretariat issues. • Community resilience has emerged as a significant cross-cutting priority across Highland, supported by increasing multi-agency collaboration and locally led action. • Highland continues to strengthen its national influence through active participation in Scottish Community Planning Network.
12.2	Overview of Quarterly Achievements and Outcomes: Strategic Priority Workstreams • Established the Highland Fuel Poverty Action Group, creating a new partnership mechanism for coordinating activity, sharing evidence and strengthening collective action to address fuel poverty across Highland. The first meeting of the Group was successfully convened during the reporting period. • Continued progression of engagement, stakeholder mapping and evidence gathering to inform development of the 2027-2037 HOIP. • Beginning to support progression of Health Inequalities activity through engagement with partners and incorporation of evidence-led approaches across Community Planning structures. • Submission of a CPP response to the Scottish Parliament's Budget Scrutiny 2027-2028 Call for Views, ensuring Highland perspectives and challenges were represented in national policy discussions.

	Local Partnership Support • Joint presentation to the Easter Ross and Black Isle Area Committee demonstrating alignment between Community Planning, Area Place Planning and local priorities, showcasing how Community Partnerships are supporting implementation of community-led priorities and strengthening place-based working. • Progression of community resilience planning across multiple Community Partnership areas, further embedding resilience as a priority theme for local partnership working, including development of partnership-led Community Resilience Workshops. • Completion of the Easter Ross Transport Forum themed programme, bringing together partners around transport accessibility and connectivity issues and identifying future priorities focused on potential solutions and exploration of opportunities to replicate transport-focused partnership approaches in other localities, including Wester Ross. CPP Governance Development • Completion of the CPP Board Induction Pack and Module ahead of launch in September 2026, providing Board Members with a comprehensive resource covering governance, structures, roles and responsibilities along with strengthening understanding of Community Planning principles and responsibilities. • Ongoing enhancement of the CPP website, including updating information, partnership resources and thematic content to improve accessibility and visibility.
17.	Risks and Mitigations
17.1	Secretariat gaps within Community Partnerships • Secretariat capacity gaps have reduced but some remain ongoing, risk meeting continuity, action tracking, and statutory partner follow-through at locality level. • Mitigation - Short-term: Provide limited central admin support and deploy a “record & type” arrangement where feasible. • Mitigation - Medium-term: Partners to confirm Secretariat allocation per Partnership.
17.2	Variable partner engagement at locality level • Reduced attendance and slippage on agreed actions risk Community Partnerships becoming discussion-only forums and slowing delivery of priorities. • Mitigation - Senior Officers to engage internally with regards representatives at a locality level.
17.3	Shared Virtual Space • Stalled shared virtual space development risks continued version-control issues and inefficient document sharing.

	• Mitigation – Support sought internally within Highland Council.
17.4	HOIP timeline slippage due to capacity constraints • Development of the 2027–2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan requires sustained coordination, input, partner engagement and facilitation across multiple workstreams. Current capacity constraints both within the Partnership Development Team and across key partner organisations pose a risk to meeting the engagement, drafting and consultation milestones. This may impact the quality, inclusivity or timeliness of the HOIP. • Mitigation – the draft Engagement Routemap is under review, to allow for limitations, expanding timescales accordingly.
5.	Resource Implications
5.1	2 x Partnership Officer fixed-term contracts are due to complete at the end of May 2027. Without Partnership Officers the Partnership Development Manager capacity will be seriously impacted.

Impact Assessment

The activities delivered during this reporting period are expected to have positive impacts on communities across Highland. Support to Community Partnerships, Delivery Groups, thematic workstreams and other delivery mechanisms and locality-based engagement strengthens participation, improves access to information, and supports coordinated action for tackling inequality. Work on the Health Inequalities Indicator Report and use of national resources further enhances the evidence base for tackling inequalities.

There are potential negative impacts where Secretariat gaps, variable partner engagement, or limited capacity could reduce consistency in local action. Mitigations include targeted support.

Environmental impacts are neutral to positive, with contributions from the Natural Capital SLWG and Place-based work supporting climate-aligned decision-making.

Resource impacts remain manageable but require sustained partner contributions for events and the development of collaborative tools such as the Shared Virtual Space.

Overall, the work continues to strengthen partnership working, improve local engagement, and support fairer outcomes, with mitigations in place for identified risks.

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Date: 27th August 2026

Appendices: None