

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****SUBMISSION FROM THE CENTRE FOR SCOTTISH PUBLIC POLICY (CSPP)**

The Centre for Scottish Public Policy draws its membership from all political parties and from individuals and organisations without affiliation. Our interest in this sphere lies in improving the quality of public services in Scotland and encouraging a more open debate on aspects of public policy.

One strand of our activities is a continuing involvement in promoting Public Service Reform, in different elements of the public service architecture of Scotland.

We therefore welcome the enquiry by the Committee and are encouraged by its wide ranging.

We have focused our attention at this time on issues relevant to the first strand of the enquiry, and may follow up with evidence to the subsequent phases of the Committee's work.

Our submission to this phase of the enquiry is therefore not lengthy and focuses on those questions that we think most relevant to our engagement with various public bodies.

How could councils better integrate their partners into the process?

Our observation is that the question might be better reversed; there are currently weaker formal perceptions of the extent to which partners are expected to be involved in the CPP process than there is for councils. An extension to all public bodies of the duty to secure best value and an obligation to enhance well-being would provide a firmer basis for CPP leading to agreement on Outcomes than currently exists.

How can local authorities and their partners move further towards real, integrated working?

By focusing first on those shared and linked statutory and community responsibilities where progress can be seen to be beneficial to all the agencies involved – and to the citizens.

How can the community planning arrangements be adapted and developed to promote outcomes-based and preventative approaches?

This process could be encouraged through a greater emphasis by the Scottish Government on outcomes than sometimes appears to be the case in specific policy

fields. The insistence on input measurement – in say, police numbers - does not encourage an emphasis on outcomes.

How can the partners further improve on the progress that has been made and overcome the remaining challenges on engaging communities and voluntary sector organisations in the process?

By continual development and reflection upon shared experience. There is considerable energy [and institutional pride] involved in claiming achievements in collaboration. Sometimes, therefore, there is reluctance to robustly evaluate that collaborative experience but it is necessary to do so in order to learn from this and enhance further collaborative developments

What steps would facilitate the sharing of budgets in pursuit of shared outcomes?

A clearer line itemisation and subsequent ‘blocking ‘of budget heads that relate to particular intended outcomes consistent with national and local priorities. So, for example, itemisation [in cash terms] of budgetary allocation for, say, learning disabilities within the shared boundaries of the local authority and the health board. This might be followed by discussion [and hopefully] agreement on how this spend might be directed to either community provision or into self-directed support.

How could local authorities and other public bodies contribute more to influencing and improving outcomes in their area?

One approach would be to encourage greater measures of public education and vision promotion of the potential improvement to the lives of citizens if various outcomes are achieved. We would encourage the development of some pilot exercises to see local initiatives better co-ordinated with country wide mass advertising campaigns [e.g. on mental health and on blood donation] are some recent examples.

How can arrangements, processes and accountability be improved?

By placing similar expectations of accountability and shared legal commitments on all statutory partners to the CP process.