

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
SUBMISSION FROM COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**

Strand 1 – Partnerships and outcomes

To examine the on-going development of community planning partnerships and the community planning process and assess how these could be built upon to support outcome-based approaches to service planning and delivery in local areas.

a) How could councils better integrate their partners into the process? How could the degree of commitment to the process amongst other community planning partners be improved? How can any legislative or administrative barriers that make partnership working more difficult be overcome?

There needs to be recognition that public bodies are funded and controlled in different ways, with the effect that flexibility in making decisions on local spend and targets is more problematic for some partners.

There needs to be a shift in the accountability on the work of CPP to all community planning partners, rather than just the local authority. Local Authorities as the lead partner should inevitably be scrutinised for delivery of the CPP and SOA, but other public bodies and third sector partners should also be accountable for their delivery on SOA targets and outcomes.

Incorporation of SOA targets and outcomes into partner's business plans at strategic level is also key, and can be encouraged at a local as well as national level. Accountability for these targets at a national reporting level could also help.

Changes in legislation to incorporate a duty on other public bodies to actively participate in and be accountable for community planning, would help to ensure partners are participating in CPPs

In the Outer Hebrides (and the other Island Authority areas) a Single Public Authority model, as outlined by CPSS study and Christie Commission report, is an aspiration of some partners. Working towards this would inevitably overcome some of the barriers public bodies face in integrated working, shared budgets and partnership working.

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

As stated above working towards a Single Public Authority model would move this agenda forward. National programmes are useful and requirement on funding streams (i.e. Change Fund) to integrate working and share budgets help make aspirations more realistic.

Public bodies encouraged and allowed to devolve budgets to other partners to deliver on integrated services. Working closer with the third sector, not only on the delivery of services, but in the design of services that better meets the needs of service users.

However there needs to be a recognition that the way public bodies are funded and controlled is different meaning that flexibility on making decisions on local spend and targets is more problematic for some partners

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

Understanding that public bodies are funded and controlled in different ways is needed. Flexibility on making decisions on local spend and targets is more problematic for some partners and some of these barriers need to be addressed at a national level.

There is a need to have the finances 'up-front' to be able to spend on preventative measures to save in the long term while financial pressures and demand for services continues to grow. This will also require a cultural shift in how budgets are set and results reported as both are generally managed on a short to medium term basis.

The maturity of partnerships and the current challenges around the public sector funding limit the appetite to develop new approaches; the main concern is to protect the delivery of front line services. There is a need to align partner outcomes at a national level and develop new approaches to outcome measurement and the funding structure to support this. A collaborative approach to measuring impact and outputs by Scottish Government of national organisations could assist in overcoming this

d) 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?

Third Sector partners are eager to be part of collaborative working and delivery of services, but they have identified a need for improved relationships between the voluntary sector and the public sector through longer term partnership agreements (rather than SLAs) and improved community engagement in budgetary decisions.

A cultural shift is required to enable communities and the third sector to be more involved in the design of services, as well as the delivery. It also needs to be recognised that though social enterprise has brought good learning and new ways of working for the voluntary sector, the use of social enterprise as a delivery mechanism for preventative spend interventions is not realistic as these are not self-sustaining and so do not suit the social enterprise business model.

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

Recently the OHCPP has moved to a much more outcomes based approach. Identifying priority areas that will lead to achieving the local outcomes but also using planning tools (logic modelling) which starts with the outcome rather than the activity to identify what partners needed to do.

SOAs need to be based on agreed outcomes by the CPP partners, but as indicated above there are barriers to changing ways of working, whether this is the current economic climate, protection of current service delivery, jobs etc, different reporting systems and delivery arrangements or the need for cultural shifts in service delivery.

f) How is the work of delivery on SOA outcomes managed, coordinated and driven through the various community partnership structures and agreements? How could Single Outcome Agreements be improved to deliver on community planning targets?

In the Outer Hebrides the SOA Outcomes are overseen by the OHCPP board (which meets five or six times a year) and the executive group. The Executive Group meets monthly and is made up of the five chairs of the Outcome Groups, the Chair of the OHCPP and the Chair of the third sector interface. The group steers the delivery of the SOA and also ensures that collaboration between the outcome groups is taking place.

The OHCPP has five outcome groups which are chaired by a variety of partners and take the strategic overview of the outcomes, the groups drive the work in relation to the outcomes and priorities, as well as monitoring progress and addressing issues that arise that prevent delivery on the outcomes. Beneath the outcome groups there are a range of partnership groups which are, in general, delivery groups. The Outcome Groups report to the full OHCPP twice a year on progress on the SOA.

The CPP and the work relating to it are supported by a Community Partnerships Coordinator and Community Partnerships Administrator Partners are asked to consider the SOA in their business planning. The Council has the SOA as a key driver in their business planning. Other partners are asked to consider how the SOA is reflected in their business planning (e.g. SNH as a national body has a key work stream in its business planning regarding involvement and contribution to Community Planning and SOAs. This allows appropriate and meaningful contributions at a local level.)

SOAs need to remain with a local focus as well demonstrating the links and contributions to the National Outcomes. Community Planning partners engage more when the issues they are tackling are local and the impact of interventions can be seen locally. In addition it may improve delivery on targets if SOAs become more embedded in partners planning and accountability structures.

g) What is the purpose of a Single Outcome Agreement in assisting the delivery of improved outcomes? How are local Single Outcome Agreements developed, and how do they relate to national priorities?

The development of the SOA is informed by the community and helps focuses partners on key issues raised locally as areas of concern. Through the development of the SOA, opportunities for partnership interventions are identified.

The OHCPP SOA was developed through a programme of workshops with a variety of stakeholders: Community, CPP Executive Group, CPP Outcome Groups and the full CPP. A variety of methods were used including community engagement, logic modelling and prioritisation exercises.

The local outcomes all link to the National Priorities (diagram attached at end of paper). By delivering on local outcomes there is a contribution to the delivery of the national priorities.

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

A shift towards prevention rather than cure will have an impact on the outcomes for an area. As indicated above that this brings challenges though the benefits seem clear.

Some public bodies choice of activities is sometimes constrained by the reporting requirements on them from a national level and these can be additional to local priorities. Freeing up public bodies to be able to prioritise at a local level first and national second will help have an impact on local outcomes.

The priority of the SOA in business planning will also affect the input, resources and funding a public body will put into delivering on local outcomes.

i) How can arrangements, processes and accountability be improved?

Public bodies and third sector interfaces need to be accountable for their contribution to the delivery of the SOA and role within the CPP.

This will vary for each public body as to the best way to take this forward as national/regional organisations will need to take a different approach to those operating in a local authority area.

Though the formal work of Audit Scotland is a necessary part of governance and accountability it does not necessarily require enhancement, but rather should be more specific, locally informed and proportionate.

In regard to Strand 2 the questions mainly refer to the Local Authority. The Executive Group may wish to add comments to Strand 2 but in particular might wish to comment on Strand 2 point d)

Strand 2 – Benchmarking and performance measurement

To examine the development of work that has taken place over the last two years in relation to the development of benchmarking and comparative performance data and cost measurement and assess how it can contribute to the performance of local authorities in Scotland

- a) What are the main challenges (cultural, technical, geographical or other) in developing performance measurement and benchmarking systems for local authorities across Scotland?
- b) To what extent has the work undertaken over the last two years by the Improvement Service, SOLACE and others contributed to developing a common approach to benchmarking across Scotland's local authorities?
- c) What technical or other resources are needed to continue and complete the development of recent work on benchmarking?
- d) To what extent can the developing work on benchmarking be extended across community planning partnerships? How can data derived from benchmarking influence the future direction of community planning and the contents of future SOAs?

Benchmarking could be used to influence the SOA and community planning. If best practice is found and can be implemented locally then plans could reflect this.

- e) How can the development of benchmarking help improve the performance of local authorities in Scotland?
- f) Should the Scottish Government have a role in providing national impetus to the development of benchmarking and performance measurement?

Strand 3 – Developing new ways of delivering services

To examine progress in relation to the development of shared services and other innovative ways of achieving economies of scale and harnessing the strengths and skills of key public sector partners to deliver the best possible quality services in local areas

a) How can cultural and organisational change be promoted to ensure that local authorities and community planning partners are able to work together to develop the kind of integrated services that are aspired to by local communities?

There is a raft of issues that need to be addressed for partners to work together effectively. Some of these have been mentioned in the response to Strand 1 of the Inquiry, but also includes: leadership and drive at strategic level; the need for common aims; effective systems and procedures such as for communication and involving the relevant people; ensuring adequate resources in terms of funding, staffing and time; and the more personal qualities of the professionals involved such as their commitment and drive and understanding the roles and responsibilities of other agencies.

b) How can the tensions between shared services creating savings through potential reductions in the number of staff involved and the economic impact brought about by any resulting job losses be resolved?

In the current economic climate it is going to be extremely difficult to resolve these tensions. During more prosperous times it might be possible to redeploy staff into other areas, find employment within similar private sector companies or re-train people for different sectors.

The creation of a vibrant and thriving economy which is not so reliant on the public sector is obviously key to resolving this tension, but in the current climate and particularly in the Outer Hebrides where opportunities are limited by population size and peripheral location, this is currently not a viable answer to this issue.

Investment by Government (both UK and Scottish) into sustainable economic industries may contribute to a rise in job opportunities outside the public sector.

c) How can any legislative or institutional barriers to developing shared and innovative service delivery models to their full potential be overcome?

In the Outer Hebrides (and the other Island Authority areas) a Single Public Authority model is an aspiration of some partners. Working towards this would inevitably overcome some of the barriers public bodies face in integrated working, shared budgets and partnership working.

d) Is there scope for further national shared services along the lines of the shared recruitment portal for local authorities, 'myjobscotland'?

e) What can be learned from elsewhere, for example from initiatives such as the Nottingham Early Intervention City or the Birmingham total place pilot?

National programmes are helpful in focussing attention and accelerating progress but not sufficient. Change requires local leadership, political backing, accurate data, a local incentive to improve and access to ways to rethink and redesign services.

Relationships are crucial, as is clear processes for developing ideas. The ability to hold the tensions that will occur in the partnerships as part of the processes so the partnership does not break down.

Programmes need to be responsive to local needs and lessons learnt and given 'permission' to change if something is not working

f) How can innovative delivery methods for services and collaborative arrangements (as mentioned, for example, in the Christie Commission report) help to improve outcomes and tackle embedded social problems focused in defined geographical areas?

g) What scope is there for developing ways of delivering services, such as the personalisation of care, in order to mitigate the effects of shrinking resources while also promoting improved standards of care?

Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership links between Local Outcome and National

