

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
SUBMISSION FROM EAST AYRSHIRE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

STRAND 1 – PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTCOMES

- 1. 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?**

It is recognised both nationally and locally that partnership working in East Ayrshire through the Community Planning process is robust and effective. However, if the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is to continue to deliver the services which our communities need in the current economic climate, we require to build on our existing strengths and successes to date, and reform how we work.

Ensuring commitment to reform at the local level will require a matching commitment and a clear message at the national level. To work effectively together to make a difference in our communities, partners require to be working to achieve a jointly agreed set of outcomes and have the ability to effectively direct budgets at the local level. New governance arrangements that would facilitate elements of NHS and Local Authority targets and budgets being set jointly would improve integration and commitment. Such an approach would be more consistent with enhanced Community Planning arrangements. The potential for the joint health and social care integration agenda to be developed around Community Planning Partnership boundaries has the potential to assist this process.

- 2. How can local authorities and their partners move further towards real, integrated working?**

Local communities in East Ayrshire have benefited from the delivery of joined up services locally with the Council and wider Partnership leading the agenda on the co-location of public services. Moving further towards real, integrated working would require a step change to how all partners currently work. It is widely accepted, and highlighted by the Christie Commission that, in this climate of significantly reduced resources, real change will require a partnership approach to outcomes based planning and a move from reactive to preventative services. This approach will require integrated teams, pooled budgets, joined up resource allocation systems and joint performance management frameworks. This a long term agenda which will require a change to process and culture at both a local and national level, however, it has the potential to make a significant impact locally.

- 3. What steps would facilitate the sharing of budgets in pursuit of shared outcomes?**

A budget can be defined simplistically as the financial requirements of a plan of activity. However, what requires to be pooled are resources – people, skills, physical assets as well as the money to pay for them. Pooling budgets alone will have no effect unless it follows on from a clear plan of what is to be achieved in terms of outcomes and associated outputs, and what inputs are needed to deliver them. One of the positive outcomes of current financial stringency may be a realisation by agencies that we need to further utilise all of the resources available locally in an integrated way if demand for services is to continue to be met.

Existing financial and governance arrangements would require to be reviewed and streamlined to facilitate/strengthen budget sharing arrangements. The ultimate responsibility for fiscal management still remains with the Chief Financial Officers of the respective organisations. Arrangements, therefore, require to be sufficient to satisfy each of these budget holders. This requires a complex governance structure that could be seen as stifling innovation.

Currently, through the Community Health Partnership, partners have aligned budgets and make joint spending decisions around the health and social care agenda. In relation to services for children, there is some alignment of budgets to meet the needs of the child through Integrated Children's Services Plans.

Initiatives such as the Change Fund have allowed CPPs to work more closely together and identify innovative solutions. Widening this approach beyond the existing services is the natural progression and additional funding streams would be useful in allowing joint work to be developed and progressed. The Reshaping Care programme and investment from the Change Fund provides an opportunity for whole system redesign to mitigate against these resource demands through health improvement and reinvestment of resources freed up from reduced dependency on institutional based services.

4. 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?

Our CPP has a strong and well established track record of engaging the community in the Community Planning process. Within East Ayrshire, we can cite a range of excellent examples of good practice in terms of delivering high quality, innovative, responsive and preventative services with and for communities. Many of these services have been positively highlighted in external inspections/audits and have been recognised nationally through the receipt of awards and accolades.

Our 'Transforming our Relationship with our Communities' agenda is aimed at taking our current systematic approach to community engagement to a new level by focusing on empowering our communities and neighbourhoods, moving away from a culture of dependency to a culture of co-production and the promotion of local ownership, responsibility and participation. The aim will be to build resilience and capacity in our communities; reduce dependency; and move to communities delivering services for their community.

The Council is taking the opportunity to build on previous success and consider new approaches and associated structures within the context of management review and service redesign. Our strategic review will bring together a range of departments/staff working in the areas of Community Space, Community Services Activities and Community Empowerment/Engagement.

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

As previously stated, these approaches will require existing partners to reform how they work individually and as a partnership. Consideration could be given, as recommended by the National Community Planning Group and cited in Christie, to extending public sector duties and accountability to include the achievement of positive outcomes on the basis that what ultimately drives public bodies is what they have a duty to do.

On a practical basis, systems would require to be put in place to look at the totality of public spending in an area and organisations would require to agree to fund evidence based interventions which would achieve jointly agreed outcomes for the area. In addition, there would require to be 'buy in' from national/local politicians and local communities.

Within the context of Community Planning in East Ayrshire, there has been a culture of early intervention and preventative spend, and a commitment over time to shifting the balance of care and resources to prevention across a range of services. The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) programme is founded on the principles of early intervention and provides a framework for putting these principles into action for all children and young people at the individual level. Similarly, we are already some way down the road to putting these principles into action within the education system through Curriculum for Excellence and within the NHS through Health for all Children. These principles also underpin work to provide More Choices and More Chances for children and young people at risk.

In this regard, we see merit in funding for the preventative health agenda, including health improvement and health promotion, coming under the direction of CPPs recognising that improving health is a crosscutting agenda which necessitates all partners working together.

There are challenges in moving further towards a more preventative approach to public services, in a time of reducing resources, not least maintaining necessary services to existing service user groups while increasing the focus on prevention/early intervention. It is recognised that the outcomes from preventative spend could be significant, as could the financial benefits. However, the conflict between preventative spend and spend on maintaining existing service levels requires to be resolved before further progress can be made. This will require additional investment, such as through Change Funding, and changes to current delivery models to free up resources going forward. All agencies need to be committed to the new approach and this can be difficult when the existing pressures also require to be met.

Importantly, it will require to be recognised that a focus on preventative spend will be to an extent a 'leap of faith', as we will be unable to demonstrate progress in achieving outcomes in relation to deep rooted social and health problems in the short to medium term.

6. 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?

The CPP Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council, with representation at chief executive level (or equivalent) from the core partner organisations, voluntary sector representation and community representation from the Federations of Community Groups, sets the strategic direction for Community Planning in East Ayrshire and ensures effective partnership working. East Ayrshire's SOA has been developed in the context of Community Planning and endorsed by all Partner agencies individually, and signed off both by the Council's Cabinet and the CPP Board.

The delivery of local outcomes is driven forward through key activity and actions identified in the four Community Plan thematic Action Plans (each of which has a designated lead officer and multi-agency working group) and relevant service/implementation plans, ensuring a clear line of sight from the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement to implementation.

Management arrangements and systems are in place to ensure that the CPP monitors, measures and reviews progress on an annual basis, in particular through the SOA which acts as the performance monitoring framework for the Community Plan. Through this process, progress and changing circumstances can be considered. In addition, Partners can initiate an improvement agenda, where required, which sets out effective actions to be taken forward to improve performance and facilitate delivery of Community Planning/SOA targets and outcomes.

During 2010/11, work was taken forward to align and streamline Community Planning/SOA reporting arrangements, providing Community Planning Partners with an opportunity to report jointly on a focused range of service delivery measures. Going forward, we will continue to ensure that our Community Planning arrangements facilitate the effective delivery of outcome targets.

7. 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?

As intended, our SOA sets out how the identified local outcomes agreed by a range of Partners and key stakeholders will assist to support each of the Scottish Government's National Outcomes, while taking account of local priorities, and provides the performance management framework for the Community Plan. It provides opportunities to:

- further maximise benefits from partnership working;
- deliver continuous improvement based on clear and shared objectives;

- demonstrate better ways of measuring and reporting on our performance;
- reflect progress and impact across communities; and
- deliver better outcomes for local people.

From the outset in 2008/09, all Community Planning Partners in East Ayrshire have been fully involved in the development of our SOA, reinforcing the CPP as the key mechanism for delivering outcomes for communities.

An integrated profile of the social, economic and environmental conditions in East Ayrshire forms the basis of our SOA and presents a sound evidence base for identifying past trends and future challenges and opportunities and, subsequently, the strategic local priorities expressed as local outcomes.

East Ayrshire's three-year SOA is subject to review on an annual basis, providing an opportunity to take account of new and emerging local and national priorities, and builds on the strategic priorities of the Community Plan and ensures progress towards key national outcomes in the National Performance Framework.

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

As we move forward, we require to continue to be clear about the key outcomes for our communities and ensure that our arrangements support the delivery of these outcomes. The current economic climate has sharpened this focus further, highlighting the need to ensure that the reduced level of resources available within the public sector is directed at activity which will deliver real and lasting benefits for local people and communities. Importantly, this approach will minimise the time and resources spent on activity which does not support achievement of identified outcomes.

The current practice of the Council and its public sector partners focuses delivery through discrete services/business units with separate budgets, which makes it difficult to deal with the crosscutting nature of issues such as poverty, health inequalities and regeneration with which we are faced. In contrast, the outcomes based approach requires us to work across organisational and departmental boundaries to achieve identified outcomes through the relevant services across partner organisations. This will necessitate changing not only what we deliver but how we deliver within and across partner organisations. The work of CPPs and their commitment to delivering an outcomes focused approach as set out in SOAs is the key mechanism for delivering change at local level.

9. How can arrangements, processes and accountability be improved?

The development and implementation of SOAs in the context of Community Planning have provided a good starting point for working towards jointly agreed outcomes. However, to move forward and build on what has been achieved to date, a clear commitment by the Scottish Government to SOAs as the key framework for the delivery of outcomes is required to ensure that all partners are focused on one set of key local outcomes linked to national outcomes. This would release the significant resources in all organisations which are necessary to

servicing a range of other organisation specific planning and performance management frameworks and accountability arrangements.

STRAND 2 – BENCHMARKING AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

10. What are the main challenges (cultural, technical, geographical or other) in developing performance measurement and benchmarking systems for local authorities across Scotland?

The main challenges in this regard include the need:

- for better quality assurance around the accuracy and consistency of data collection;
- for greater uniformity of data provision to allow fair comparison of council performance throughout Scotland using quantitative methods;
- even if data were readily available, to recognise the impact of factors such as sparsity (some authorities are geographically remote, which raises the cost of service provision); demographic differences; and quality of services provided on the cost of service provision;
- for greater recognition of the wide variance in the performance of local authorities in relation to service provision in terms of spend to provide a service; the level of service provided; and effectiveness in meeting local needs and national targets;
- to focus on the process behind the numbers, rather than only the numerical data;
- to ensure consistency in relation to indicators and performance measures over time to allow trend analysis; and
- for further resources and better timeframes.

11. 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?

The purpose of the SOLACE/Improvement Service benchmarking project was to provide a collaborative approach to the development of a comparative benchmarking framework for Scottish Local Government in terms of costs, productivity and related outcomes. In East Ayrshire, although we are supportive of activity to develop benchmarking across Scotland's local authorities, we have raised concerns regarding the above benchmarking initiative, in particular in respect of issues regarding consistency and reliability of data as follows:

- **Local Finance Returns (LFRs)** – Significant variations in the calculation of LFRs across local authorities, including in relation to allocation of support costs, management costs and depreciation, highlight issues in respect of the reliability of this information for the purpose of benchmarking service costs. Although it is our understanding that the CIPFA Directors of Finance have agreed to establish a Working Group to work towards providing the level of consistency which is required for comparison of the LFRs, it is anticipated that this will be realised over the longer term.

- **Scottish Household Survey (SHS)** – Results from the SHS are only available every two years for smaller local authorities (including East Ayrshire) and use small sample sizes of around 500 households.

Public reporting of benchmarking results derived from incomparable data and small sample sizes has the potential to lead to confusion and misinterpretation, in particular, if the information is presented as a national league table.

12. What technical or other resources are needed to continue and complete the development of recent work on benchmarking?

In the current financial climate, reliable benchmarking information on cost and service performance is essential if we are to learn from others and adopt best practice. However, it is crucial that benchmarking information is subject to a robust validation process, which ensures consistency, reliability and comparability of data.

It may be useful to further consider the work being taken forward by the Cross Council Budget and Performance (CCBP) Working Group comprising representation from eight local authorities, including East Ayrshire Council (which manages the Working Group), which was established in March 2010 to benchmark comparative spend and performance and use this information to drive efficiencies while maintaining/improving performance. Officers participating in the CCBP Working Group have already undertaken significant work to address variations in LFR data and ensure that reliable comparisons can be made across service areas. To date, a range of reviews has been completed, which include initial analysis of budgets and performance to identify a comparator Council (that is the Council with the best performance/lowest cost). To eliminate differences arising from accounting treatment, detailed analysis includes in depth review of LFRs to ensure consistency and comparability of information, or identify reasons for variance in cost and examine differences in how services are structured and delivered, and identify best practice.

13. 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?

The significant variation in the number and range of local outcomes and indicators included in SOAs will provide challenges for benchmarking across CPPs. In the main, useful comparators are unavailable due to lack of, or inconsistencies in, data provision, therefore weakening opportunities for improvement.

Although work has been taken forward by the Improving Local Outcome Indicators Project to provide a Menu of Local Outcome Indicators for use in Single Outcome Agreements, their use is optional and indicators may not be relevant for measuring progress against local outcomes identified in SOAs.

SOAs were never intended to compare performance across different CPPs and the variability of local outcomes selected means that CPPs' performance cannot

be aggregated to assess their overall contribution to achieving national outcomes. In this regard, it may be useful to consider developing a robust set of core performance indicators that all Community Planning Partnerships require to report on linked to the National Performance Framework.

14. How can the development of benchmarking help improve the performance of local authorities in Scotland?

The development of benchmarking has the potential to facilitate improved performance of local authorities in Scotland by:

- providing greater accountability and transparency of process;
- demonstrating impact, benefit and value for money;
- improving service quality, and efficient and effective allocation of public finances;
- identifying best practice and using this learning for improvement purposes;
- assisting to determine priorities for performance improvement and providing re-assurance in respect of what is working well;
- improving the organisation's credibility and stakeholder satisfaction; and
- identifying potential partners for collaborative working.

Other benefits include using benchmarking to assist with decision making; manage knowledge; identify potential new work areas; improve communication; support organisational learning; and as a tool to assist in highlighting the need to make changes.

In East Ayrshire, we have an appetite for benchmarking, specifically to enable valid comparison of our performance against other authorities to identify the factors which influence differences, to facilitate performance improvement and potentially reduce costs. However, as previously stated, the availability of robust, consistent and comparable data sets would be essential to this process.

15. Should the Scottish Government have a role in providing national impetus to the development of benchmarking and performance measurement?

The Scottish Government could have a central role in supporting the provision of robust data sets to local authorities and CPPs. The availability of robust, consistent and comparable data sets at national, regional and local level within required timescales would further support and enhance outcomes based planning and reporting. In addition, provision of disaggregated data for our communities and neighbourhoods could be utilised to highlight local (more local than local authority level) priorities and further inform targeting of resources within the East Ayrshire area to improve outcomes and efficiency.

STRAND 3 – DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF DELIVERING SERVICES
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16. 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?

Again, clear direction is required from the Scottish Government in respect of its expectations in relation to the integration of services and joint working, as is a joined up approach to priority setting across departments at the national level. Closer integration of NHS and Local Government services needs to be mirrored by relevant Scottish Government departments.

As previously stated, the Change Fund as a model is allowing the development of integrated services and the widening of this approach is welcomed. The additional funding allows services to be redesigned over time and minimises the impact on service users in the short term.

17. 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?

It is recognised that a robust and effective outcomes focused approach will maximise the resources available to all partners and ensure a focus on key priority services to communities. However, the significant reductions in public sector budgets will mean that there will be job losses and reducing the workforce will require appropriate management and support for the staff affected. In this regard, the commitment to Trade Union involvement in East Ayrshire can be evidenced by their routine participation in the individual shared services proposals/teams and in the wider budget consultation process.

In addition, the loss of these mainly local jobs will impact on communities; therefore, the engagement of communities in the process of identifying priority outcomes will be essential to secure their 'buy in' to the change process.

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

See comments at question 3.

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

No comment.

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

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?

Approaches such as Total Place allow the mapping of the totality of public spend and highlight duplication and gaps in provision across services and partners organisations. Where priority outcomes have been agreed, they facilitate the targeting of available resources to these outcomes. However, difficult decisions still require to be taken locally about services which should cease as they do not deliver on the identified outcomes. While it is recognised that early intervention/prevention models are the answer to addressing the deep seated problems facing our communities, resources are required to allow the transition and maintain necessary services to current service users. In this regard, as previously stated, models such as the Change Fund have much to offer.

20. 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?

Within East Ayrshire, the Change Fund is supporting the Reshaping Care for Older People programme. Our focus has been to further progress our successes and address the challenges which face us. Key changes to support service and culture change are outlined below.

- An integrated model of rehabilitation and enablement services established that includes local authority, health, voluntary and independent sectors.
- A shift from hospital based to community based intensive support services for older people, which will include development of housing options that support independence for people with long term health conditions.
- Services developed which sustain independence and promote self management among older people.
- Informal social networks developed which promote the health and wellbeing of older people.
- A reduction in emergency admissions among people over 65 years.
- A reduction in hospital bed days experienced by older people due to delayed discharges and emergency admissions.

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