LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SUBMISSION FROM GRAMPIAN POLICE

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.

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?

Planning partners are undoubtedly committed and acclimatised to a partnership-based approach to achieving outcomes. Good practice of this exists at many levels and demonstrates that there is a cultural shift towards partnership-based outcomes. More work needs to be carried out to challenge cultural barriers to improve the synergy between senior leaders 'cross agency'. More focus on joint leadership/management training at all levels to develop and enhance a common focus and understanding of the challenges and potential solutions/options for improvement.

It also follows that part of the outcome of any reform needs to deliver on Community Planning as the principle partnership forum for outcome-based agreements between partners and a path of continual improvement in the quality and consistency of any outcome from that forum. This also needs to be linked to the outcome based budgets, shared resources, more tangible 'buy in' to SOA with a more robust and accountable governance regime, both locally and nationally. Core budget allocated to LA/Partners with consideration for performance/output to receive SG incentives in terms of additional budget/funding linked to positive and sustainable high quality service delivery.

The Council are effectively the bankers for much of the community planning partnership and distribute monies to a variety of partner agencies, albeit all feed back in small amounts to support the community planning partnership itself. However, there is a view, however inaccurate it may be, that some of the partners are treated on a second tier with the final arbiters always being the local authority. Reducing this perception may increase partners' belief that all have an equal say in the process.

At the operational level there are a number of partnerships in existence, some adhoc for specific matters and others more formal such as Community Safety Groups. Dependent upon the leadership and management of these groups, they can compete for the time, attention, and outcomes of the partners diluting their commitment to Community Planning. Whilst those partnerships, which are effective, have every right, and an obvious need, to exist they need to be visibly positioned below Community Planning in order to avoid their competing with Community Planning, both for resource as well as outcomes. Such clarity would assist the leadership of the Community

Planning group, and remove blockers to partners' full and complete commitment to a meaningful Community Planning process.

For Community Planning partners to have evidence that the outcomes of their engagement in the partnership provide the correct benefit it is important that Community Planning can demonstrate it's achievements. Whilst this should already be in place across all Community Planning Groups, it would undoubtedly be of greater reassurance and benefit to the partners and the wider community if every effort was made for these achievements to be updated dynamically and not a 2 or 4 year rolling cycle as can be the case.

Co-location of agencies and services at a local level has been shown to work and there is scope for scaling this up a level as it would enable relationships to be formed between individuals built on mutual trust.

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

Government 'compelled' SOA as opposed to the current 'light touch' model, with delivery via agreed joint risk assessed Strategic Assessment and business delivery model with key objectives/focus which bind partners in terms of integrated working/outcomes, SOA needs to have rigour and governance at all levels.

As we generally accept, networks and trust between partners is vital to successful outcomes. Close physical working can be a key enabler of such networks and a continual drive towards co-locating partners, sharing services should be encouraged, at the least. While some degree of shared budgeting would be desirable it is recognised that this is something that might not be appropriate from the outset and might need to evolve once other, underlying barriers have been overcome

However a truly and completely integrated delivery of all services could suggest a single service and the loss of the individual identity of individual service providers. Such as shift would be a bold consideration, but elements of what such a service would look like provide the roadmap to what real, integrated working could reflect.

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

As alluded to, overarching Strategic Assessment with a business delivery model. Allocation of core budget, any extra resource linked to success/ outcomes/value/compliance with best practise and sanctions to follow with some form of audit process which has 'teeth'. Similar manner to National Child Protection Audit, real scrutiny where partners are assessed in a balanced and methodical manner and recommendations are made. Simple philosophy should be 'Listen, not ignore, act and deliver'.

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?

As for the need to integrate partners in the process, the third sector and communities should be seen as full partners and not merely consultants in the process. It therefore follows that the challenges facing current partners will be similar for the third sector and communities, specifically competing partnership based outcome focussed groups. Resolving that duplication of effort for partners will undoubtedly assist ensuring a more fulsome and resilient engagement from communities and the third sector.

A Strategic 'Map' of services to avoid duplication of effort/waste which includes the voluntary sector to ensure there is a clear menu of options cross sector where agencies can call on support to ensure that the public/key service users are able to receive the most professional and effective service. Service need cannot be dealt with in isolation, service provision requires to be truly cross sector and via high quality partnership working.

It is important that engagement with communities is made from the stand point of a single Community Partnership, thus delivering efficiencies and providing the public with a single approach. It will also ensure that communities in particular are fully involved in the Community Planning process and that the process is community focussed as has been pioneered through the Grampian Police 'Local Policing - Closer to You'. This has ensured greater trust is achieved and barriers broken down between partner agencies and the community. If the community identify individuals rather than a faceless organisation then they are more likely to engage in the knowledge that their views will be listened to and acted upon.

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

Overarching Strategic Assessment, with appropriate Business Planning Model, linked to SOA which has clear focus on Prevention. There is a requirement to have a clearer more defined understanding of cost in its widest sense with linkage to business benefits.

There must be an acknowledgement that one individual organisation's actions always affect or link to another's in some way. In this way the possibility of developing truly collaborative and preventative approaches is maximised. The same holds true for outcomes-based approaches, albeit the idea of outcomes-based budgeting is not yet feasible as the mechanisms to measure the baseline costs are not sophisticated enough.

Reinforcing the outcomes-based approach to Community Planning. This could be achieved through the partners ensuring that matters are understood and articulated as objectives that are SMART. Such objectives can be published and dynamically updated so that all partners, including the community, recognise the direction and achievements of the group, which therefore, promotes the approach being sought. In addition, a tasking and coordinating style of managing the objectives identified would

assist in recognising and reporting progress, or blockers, of outcomes identified whether they are preventative or otherwise.

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?

Thus far the delivery of Single Outcome Agreement outcomes is effectively managed and coordinated by a themed group, the Community Safety Partnership in relation to 'safety', though now it has moved to a 'Safer and Stronger' theme to mirror the Government's Strategic Objectives. However, the reality is that the Community Safety Partnership focuses on the priorities within their Strategic Assessment, which largely mirror the SOA, and the latter is only resurrected annually when it comes to develop the next one or report on the previous year's activities. Accepted that it is a maturing process, there requires to be more robust governance locally and nationally with rigour/teeth to ensure delivery and accountability. Key services should be outcome focused and not solely driven by at times seemingly meaningless KPI

The SOAs could be improved if there was a greater obligation on partners to reflect the actions of others in their priorities, thus collectively delivering a more holistic outcome. Again, this falls back to effective objective setting and monitoring whereby objectives can be measured against relevance to the SOAs so as to ensure they are either relevant, and where they are not the objective is considered when reviewing SOAs.

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 Single Outcome Agreement should define an agreed vision that provides an overarching framework upon which outcome-based partnerships should sit and all partners work towards. They should sit above Strategic Assessments at a community planning level and be informed by strategic priorities and national risk\threat assessment but they must also reflect local priorities and local risk/threat assessment, in effect being community-focused visions of the strategic priorities.

Whilst a Single Outcome Agreement must be refreshed, it is less dynamic than Community Planning outcomes. Partnership based outcomes, whether they be Community Planning or other, should measure their proposed objectives against the SOA to ensure that they are relevant and support the SOA. Where they are not, careful consideration should be given as to why the objective is being pursued. If the objective remains an appropriate objective, this should then inform the next review of the SOA.

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

Whilst there is an obvious need to continue to drive towards more deep-seated and outcome-based partnerships, it is vitally important to recognise that the best

partnerships outcomes will not be of value unless they deliver meaningful benefit to the community it is intended to service. The identification of objectives and the measures of success, or failure, must be informed by and communicated to communities. This community focussed model, already pursued by Grampian Police, needs to be reflected across all partners. There are numerous benefits to such a model, not least of which is community buy-in and part-ownership of matters important to them.

In addition, by working more closely together, exercising leadership and strong governance and co-operating on tasks from the outset, enabling links to be established at that time, thus delivering a more cohesive intervention with greater options for efficiencies, though to the benefit of the customer.

How can arrangements, processes and accountability be improved?

The success of the community planning process is largely driven by the benefits the delivery of its objectives creates. Community Planning Partnerships need to be dynamic with their delivery and should look to a method of communicating objectives and reporting progress with final outcomes that are easily digestible by the community and partners. Identification of such a process will inform the arrangements required to deliver it and will naturally make the partnerships more accountable.

Overly bureaucratic systems should be avoided, as these will inevitable lead to the partnership serving the system and not the community.

Stronger and more effective leadership, direction and a break down of cultural barriers perceived or otherwise. Leaders should have appropriate aaccountability in terms of outcomes/service delivery or lack of same.

There is a need for adequate governance when using any business model or framework and the SOA is no exception. However, too often the necessity of these documents or policies is seen as a barrier to hide behind rather than one to overcome to enjoy the benefits that lie beyond. Clarity and something more than a light touch' approach at a Governmental level would be of assistance.

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.

No comment made on this strand.

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.

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?

Closer linkage and understanding within SG directorates where there is a perception by Community Planning Partners, true or otherwise that they are steadfast in their siloed thinking. There are some excellent examples across Scotland of whole systems approach, where partners have truly embraced collaborative outcomes/budgeting, for example The Youth Justice Development Programme 'pilot' led by Grampian Police and involving a cross sector spread of stakeholders within Aberdeen City.

This type of approach should by Government direction be mainstreamed. Our experience from visits to 'Pathfinder' Boroughs in London has shown that whilst much work has been done in this vein there are still significant areas of weakness that threaten to undermine the sustainability of such thinking/projects, primarily around Culture, Leadership and Governance.

The co-location of organisations or services is one proven method of assisting change but over and above this one aspect there needs to be accompanied by consistent support at all levels of the organisation. This applies irrespective of the nature of any policies or systems between agencies. There is generally support at CEO and Head of Service levels, however, this support can sometimes dissipate as it moves down to those delivering the service to the customer, particularly when it passes through the perceived 'bloated' middle management structure.

Some cultural blockers are as a result of organisations being protective of their priorities and not wishing to dilute those with the priorities of partners. The reality is, of course, that the priorities should be driven by the community and not be the assessment or context of individual service providers

A fully community focused Community Planning Partnership would identify those priorities, removing the suggested protectionism of individual partners priorities. Such a joined up, top to bottom, approach requires a good and evidenced understanding of communities needs and that requires a considerable commitment by communities to engage at the right stages of the process.

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 summary, one will never eliminate tensions, especially where job losses and role insecurity is involved, however, strong and effective leadership from individuals who have a history of change management and high quality service delivery in the chosen fields and are comfortable leading beyond their authority and influencing stakeholders. A clear and effective two way communication strategy and a focus on value/outcome based services.

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

A clearly defined model supported with evidence and accepted by the community and the services would allow legislation to be crafted to support and not hinder such partnerships. This would likely be a long-term objective, which in the meantime would leave a void of shared services. In the short and medium term, services need to continue to build trust and respect for each others roles, from which will follow shared service delivery. However, without meaningful shared priorities there will always be barriers to fully developed shared service delivery models. Fundamentally, services working to common community focused priorities are needed as a start point for shared service delivery. These need to be the fundamental priorities of the services and not "bolt on" compromises to their true priorities.

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

Yes. The Fire Service and Ambulance Service have a great deal of activities in common and there is scope for them to be more closely aligned with each other. There is already joint procurement throughout Scotland for much of the public sector.

There is scope too for the sharing of services at a local level involving all public sector and some third sector partners. The co-location of Police Offices within NHS surgeries or local authority schools has proven to be very popular with staff, partners and the public alike.

Whether this is the right model would require cost/benefit analysis.

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

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approach should by Government direction be mainstreamed.

Our experience from visits to 'Pathfinder' Boroughs in London has shown that whilst much work has been done in this vein there are still significant areas of weakness that threaten to undermine the sustainability of such thinking/projects, primarily around Culture, Leadership and Governance. There are still real challenges regarding Leadership, Culture and Governance that almost impede the desired outcomes. This is the reality and it is not sustainable.

Much has already been learnt from Total Place or whole area approach models in England. In all cases progress has been made through the work of individuals rather than at an organisational level, raising questions about sustainability. All the English pilots – and there was criticism of a constant cycle of pilots that always promised much but never delivered due to shifting political priorities at local and national level – relied on some pump priming at the outset or some form of external funding during their initial phases.

Birmingham's Total Place pilot was examined and there was a view from one or two of those spoken to that it was perhaps concentrating on too many themes, albeit there was linkage between them. Interestingly, the Birmingham pilot was very much health-orientated and this, if was able to deliver hard outcomes, would augur well if health professionals, who are traditionally reticent at information sharing due to Caldicott Principles, could be persuaded to take a more risk positive approach.

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?

Shared collaborative services is intended to deliver economies, but it is without doubt the case that communities receiving what they perceive as a single response from "the authorities" will improve outcomes for the recipient. At present multiple engagement from multiple services can create either confusion for the recipient or an opportunity to disappear between the layers of response being delivered – whether willingly or not.

Communities have a desire to see results once issues have been identified and accepted. There is a loss of confidence in the service providers if agreed solutions appear tardy in the delivery of effectiveness, so the financial efficiencies of collaborative arrangement can also be translated to efficiencies of timescale when tackling problems. Social problems embedded in communities are more likely to have their causes driven to the surface if solutions to individual problems are more rapidly dealt with, therefore undermining the reasons why complex problems are embedded in the first instance. The fact that such approaches are defined by geographical area is an advantage as it allows a community-focused model to be identified for that community and not a national approach that looses effectiveness when translated across the country.

As alluded to there are a number of very effective delivery models already in use within Scotland and locally in Aberdeen City, we should focus on using what already exists and is working and focus on People, Governance and achieving Cultural 'buy

in'.

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?

Collaborative service delivery gives a single point of contact for the recipient. It reduces duplication and confusion for the provider and recipient, ensuring the most direct service is provided. This should naturally create a personalised service as the collaborative response is based upon the needs of the recipients and not the needs of individual service providers.

More focus on 'Whole Systems' 'End to End' thinking offering an integrated wrap around service to the customer. The most obvious way of achieving this is by the merger of Health and Social Care functions.

Whilst it is generally accepted that such a collaborative response will provide a better service at the point of delivery, it is not necessarily a given that it will require less resource at the back end. In effect, we can assess that there may be an argument to accept that we can provide the same with less, more with the same, but not more with less. Being able to provide the same with less goes a long way to mitigating the shrinking resource, particularly on our most vulnerable, but fundamentally a more personalised service will improve the standard of service a recipient receives.

Grampian Police
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