

Local Government and Regeneration Committee  
Public Service Reform – Strand 3

SUBMISSION BY THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP

**Introduction**

1. The National Community Planning Group welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Local Government & Regeneration Committee's inquiry into public sector reform and local government in Scotland.

2. As the report of the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services made clear, Scotland's public services face major challenges. The report called for substantial reform of how public services are delivered, aimed at achieving four key objectives:

- public services are built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience;
- public service organisations work together effectively to achieve outcomes;
- public service organisations prioritise prevention, reducing inequalities and promoting equality; and
- all public services constantly seek to improve performance and reduce costs, and are open, transparent and accountable.

3. In response to the Christie report, the Scottish Government and COSLA reiterated their commitment to the outcomes-focused and partnership-based approach to the delivery of public services they had agreed in 2007, and agreed that the existing framework of community planning and Single Outcome Agreements should remain at the heart of this approach. They subsequently agreed to conduct a joint review of that framework to identify how it could be strengthened and developed. That review was carried out in early 2012 and was led jointly by the Minister for Local Government and Planning and the then President (Pat Watters) and Vice-President of COSLA, supported by a group of senior officials from the Scottish Government, COSLA and other community planning partners such as the NHS and the police.

4. The review produced a [Statement of Ambition](#) for community planning and SOAs that was endorsed by Ministers and COSLA and published on 15 March 2012. The Statement put effective community planning arrangements at the core of public service reform. It said that they will drive the pace of service integration, increase the focus on prevention and secure continuous improvement in public service delivery, in order to achieve better outcomes for communities. It also said that community planning and SOAs will provide the foundation for effective partnership working within which wider reform initiatives, such as the integration of health and adult social care and the establishment of single police and fire services, will happen.

5. The Statement of Ambition set out an ambitious shared vision for the future of community planning. The challenge has therefore been to give practical effect to these ambitions by coming together, for and with communities, to improve outcomes and focus on place, prevention, integration and performance improvement. This is a bold aspiration, requiring commitment and cooperation across the public sector and it follows that delivering a step change of that order is needed some reassessment of the current infrastructure.

6. The review therefore sought to create the conditions in which Community Planning Partnerships can flourish, and soon after the review the Scottish Government and COSLA set out proposals to ensure that CPPs can operate effectively and focus on the local actions needed to deliver the aspirations set out in the Statement of Ambition. These proposals for a 'triple lock' were described in a [joint letter](#) published on 10 May 2012:

- **strengthening duties on individual partners** through a new statutory duty on all relevant partners to work together to improve outcomes for local communities through participation in CPPs and the provision of resources to deliver SOAs;
- **placing formal requirements on CPPs** by augmenting the existing statutory framework to ensure that collaboration in the delivery of local priority outcomes via community planning and SOAs is not optional and is made as effective as possible; and
- **establishing a joint group at national level** to oversee and drive the development of community planning across Scotland, including by providing strategic leadership and guidance to CPPs.

7. The aim has been to bind all parts of the public sector, in both central and local government, more effectively into the Community Planning framework and maximise their contribution to the delivery of priority local or national outcomes. Importantly, that approach is set out in ways that do not alter or undermine existing lines of accountability for any partner, or compromise the accountability of a Community Planning Partnership to itself. Rather, the intention is to reinforce and make the focus of existing accountabilities as effective as possible by ensuring that relevant partners have a clear requirement to deliver an effective contribution to Community Planning Partnerships and to the outcomes agreed within SOAs.

8. Therefore, while community planning covers all public services that have a role to play in improving outcomes, the CPP itself does not run services such as schools or hospitals. While education and health outcomes are agreed in SOAs, that takes place within the context of relevant and appropriate national requirements and standards. Therefore partners deliver services and hold the resources for doing so, but the CPP is there to ensure that those decisions, resources and structures focus on addressing the priorities that are agreed in partnership.

9. The creation of the National Community Planning Group implemented the third of the proposals arising from the review by bringing together leaders from across local and national government to focus on the strategic leadership needed to drive the community planning process forward, mobilise resources and expertise,

and find appropriate balances between local and national priorities in the content of SOAs.

### **Remit and composition of the Group**

10. Establishment of the Group began on 12 June 2012 with the announcement by the Minister for Local Government and Planning, after agreement with COSLA, that it would be chaired by Pat Watters CBE. The other members of the Group are drawn from strategic leaders in public services and the wider community including Ministers and COSLA political Leaders as well as leaders from the NHS, other public bodies and the Third Sector. Almost all of our members are political leaders or Chairs of their respective bodies rather than officials, since the purpose of the Group is to provide leadership at strategic rather than operational level. A list of our current members is at Annex A to this submission. The Group is supported by a secretariat made up of Scottish Government and COSLA officials.

11. The Group's [Terms of Reference](#) are attached as Annex B to this submission. They summarise the purpose of the Group as being to enable the conditions for success required to deliver the overarching vision for community planning and SOAs, by providing strategic leadership and by mobilising resources and expertise to support local CPP capacity-building. The Group thus provides a good opportunity to coordinate the programme of practical help and support to local partnerships that is a prerequisite of the change process itself. Importantly, CPPs are not formally accountable to the national group, and our work does not restrict local decision making, which is properly delivered through CPPs.

12. We met for the first time in August 2012 and have met 3 times since then, most recently on 10 April 2013. Our [papers and notes of our meetings](#) are published on the Scottish Government's website.

### **The work of the Group**

13. The Group was established to play a pivotal role in implementing and communicating the overarching vision for community planning and Single Outcome Agreements, identifying and addressing issues that have a national dimension and building the skills and capacity of partnerships.

14. Our focus is very much on driving forward at a strategic level the step change in community planning that the review identified as being needed. That includes working to secure the commitment to community planning by all public sector partners that is needed if our aspirations for community planning are to be realised. As well as the actions at a strategic level that we as a Group will be looking to drive, we want to create an authorising environment across the public sector within which partners feel able to develop and deliver new ways of working in a partnership context. We also aim to provide strategic leadership and direction for, and add value and impetus to, the detailed work being undertaken to help deliver the Statement of Ambition, which is being taken forward by a Project Board of senior officials led by the Scottish Government and COSLA.

15. We began our work by considering the challenges facing community planning, building on the review and the Statement of Ambition. We agreed that the

challenges and aspirations described in the Statement of Ambition require all CPPs to outperform highest current standards. The scale of that change is a political and governance challenge, and requires a concerted, consistent and sustained effort across all Scotland's public services, and all spheres of government. Expectations are justifiably high: we do not under-estimate this challenge, and we recognise that an effective response will require concerted and sustained effort locally and nationally.

16. We have identified cultural issues and new ways of working as being at the heart of the agenda, and our own role in providing leadership and mobilising resources to help local partnerships to be successful. We have also agreed that the ambitions should be translated where possible into practical steps and actions to create momentum and a shared definition of success. At our first meeting, we therefore agreed that:

- the Group has a key role in providing collective political and managerial leadership and commitment to the type of step change and focused, sustained effort across all public services that is required;
- we also have a critical role in leading and driving significant leadership and behaviour change across all partners at all levels so that, for example, CPPs can act as genuine boards;
- we should define and deliver strong, simple and consistent leadership messages about what successful community planning means and delivers in practice; and
- we need to satisfy ourselves that the right organisational architecture is in place to deliver effective community planning.

These principles have provided the basis for our initial work, and are expected to continue to underpin our work going forward.

17. A key point to note is the importance attached to Group members acting not only in that capacity but as individual leaders. We are all expected to promote the reform agenda and drive change within our respective organisations and to champion the agenda across the sectors we represent and our wider networks so that they will play their part in delivering the vision for the future of community planning and the changes to public services more generally that we all agree are needed.

### **New Single Outcome Agreements**

18. All of these building blocks are essential, but on their own they do not deliver our ultimate goal of a step change in community planning across Scotland. The challenge now is a concerted and sustained effort locally and nationally to improve impact. An early focus for the work of the Group has therefore been the future shape of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).

19. Over the last 5 years, SOAs have provided an important focus for partnership working and the planning and delivery of better outcomes for communities.

However, the community planning review identified a strong consensus that while the local outcomes approach embodied in SOAs is the right one and should continue, they need to be made much more hard-edged and drivers for improvement in performance and service delivery. The Statement of Ambition therefore included a description of what future SOAs should look like, and in particular that they should be explicit and binding “plans for place” that all partners should be jointly accountable for delivering.

20. The Scottish Government and COSLA had agreed following the review that new SOAs reflecting the Statement of Ambition should be put in place. Guidance to CPPs on the preparation of those new SOAs was therefore required.

21. We agreed at our first meeting in August 2012 that this guidance should reflect the post-Christie agenda; highlighting the importance of true partnership working to deliver outcomes and drive performance, and the need for a sharper focus on a small number of key national priorities. At our subsequent meeting in October 2012 we then considered and agreed proposals for the approach to new SOAs that reflected and built upon that earlier discussion. That approach was then developed by Scottish Government and COSLA officials to produce the [guidance](#) that was sent to CPPs on 5 December 2012. That guidance is attached as Annex C to this submission.

22. The guidance is in the joint names of the Scottish Government and COSLA and reflects the approach agreed by the National Group, including requiring the new SOAs to show CPPs’ plans for delivering prevention and the other pillars of public service reform. It asked CPPs to submit draft new SOAs to the Scottish Government by 1 April 2013 for agreement by 28 June 2013.

23. In terms of the guidance, these new SOAs are to:

- use an evidence based approach, underpinned by disaggregated data, to drive improvement in meeting the differing needs of local populations;
- include clear performance commitments that will lead to demonstrable improvements in people’s lives;
- focus on reducing outcome gaps within populations and between areas, and promote early intervention and preventative approaches in reducing outcome inequalities; and
- identify priorities for interventions and include plans for prevention, integration and improvement in order to promote better partnership working and more effective use of resources.

24. In particular, for the first time CPPs are being asked to have a clear strategic focus on 6 key priorities, and to allocate resources in pursuit of these based on a preventative approach. Those key priorities are:

- Economic recovery and growth;
- Employment;

- Early years;
- Safer and stronger communities, and reducing reoffending;
- Health inequalities and physical activity; and
- Outcomes for older people.

25. The intention behind this approach to priorities is that at a Scotland-wide level that there are key priority issues where, through working together and consistent use of the evidence base, a real difference can be made to improve outcomes for people and communities and reduce inequalities. This is not intended to replace the local work going on to focus and target outcomes locally, but it should ensure that the ability of CPPs to deliver them is enhanced by a “whole systems approach” to outcomes. CPPs should identify and focus on those areas where partnership activity is thought to be the most critical to success.

26. The SOA guidance also recognises that making an impact on outcomes is a medium to long term project that requires the combined resources of all relevant partners. Rather than being constrained to short term targets and activities, CPPs are illustrating what will be different for communities in 10 years, what will be done to secure those improved outcomes on a rolling basis, and how the SOA will be kept under review.

27. The new SOAs are currently being collated so that they can be considered against the expectations set out in the guidance. The intention is that this work will be led by Scottish Government and COSLA officials with input from other community planning interests. We have agreed that the Group will carry out a stocktake after the new SOAs have been agreed, to assess whether they have met our expectations.

28. It is important to note that the reaching of agreement on new SOAs is in many ways only the beginning of the process. We expect that there will be an ongoing process of continuous improvement to SOAs to reflect changing circumstances and developing experience, including the sharing of knowledge and experience amongst CPPs. We will need to ensure that the expectations set out in the new SOAs are being met; and there will be a continuing need to promote the community planning reform agenda and secure effective contributions from the full range of partners.

### **Accounts Commission work on scrutiny of CPPs**

29. On 20 March 2013 the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland published a report on “Improving Community Planning in Scotland”. This followed work they undertook, at the request of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance Employment and Sustainable Growth, to develop an audit framework designed to strengthen the accountability of CPPs and supporting improved performance.

30. The report referred to the high expectations and challenging programme of improvements in the Statement of Ambition and stated that it is clear that there is an appetite among CPPs for progressing this agenda. It found that there is now a renewed focus on Community Planning which provides a clear opportunity to deliver

a step change in performance, and that there are many examples of good joint working which is making a difference for specific communities and groups across Scotland. However it also found that overall CPPs are not able to demonstrate that they have had a significant impact in delivering improved outcomes across Scotland.

31. The report made a number of recommendations for improvement at both national and local levels, under five categories:

- creating strong shared leadership;
- improving governance and accountability;
- establishing clear priorities for improvement and using resources more effectively;
- putting communities at the heart of community planning and public service reform; and
- supporting CPPs to improve their skills and performance.

32. The report was considered by the Group at our most recent meeting, on 10 April, when we received a presentation from the Chair of the Accounts Commission. We welcomed the report, which we recognised as presenting some strong messages about the improvement agenda and the challenges that have to be overcome if we are to achieve our ambitions for community planning. We then discussed how we should provide leadership and support for CPPs in taking forward the improvement agenda identified through the audit work.

33. In that discussion we recognised that a key message from the report was that there is not yet evidence that genuine joint resourcing of agreed outcomes within CPPs is taking place; that partners are truly working together to make the best use of their collective resource; or that partners are considering the collective impact of their budget and resource decisions on each other and on communities. This inevitably constrains the capacity of CPPs to be as ambitious as they need to be in developing and delivering their SOAs, in making the shift to prevention and in driving forward public service reform at the local level.

34. This was seen as being the kind of high-level critical issue that the Group, with its strategic leadership role, ought to address. We therefore agreed that the Group should take this as the main focus of our initial activity in response to the report. In particular, we:

- emphasised that to meet the expectations placed on them by the Statement of Ambition, community planning partners need to be able to focus their total resources on the priorities agreed within CPPs; and
- agreed that to ensure that this happens in practice, SG and COSLA officials should lead work to develop a methodology for use by CPPs and individual partners that will mean that from 2014-15 the collective total resources of CP partners are determined in line with locally agreed community planning priorities.

## **Conclusion**

35. We believe that there is a strong shared consensus that effective community planning has a crucial role to play in enabling Scotland's public services to meet the challenges they face while meeting the expectations of local communities.

36. However, there is also a general recognition that community planning and SOAs need to be considerably improved in both their scope and delivery if that role is to be fulfilled. That task stretches across the public sector. Our role as a national group is to help make that change happen and to bind public services effectively into community planning and maximise their contribution to the delivery of priority local or national outcomes. All of our members in their roles as public service leaders, individually and collectively, are committed to achieving this.



**NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP: MEMBERS**

<b>Pat Watters CBE</b>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>Nicola Sturgeon MSP</b>	Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities
<b>Alex Neil MSP</b>	Cabinet Secretary for Health and Well Being
<b>John Swinney MSP</b>	Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth
<b>Michael Russell MSP</b>	Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning
<b>Kenny MacAskill MSP</b>	Cabinet Secretary for Justice
<b>Derek Mackay MSP</b>	Minister for Local Government and Planning
<b>Cllr David O'Neill</b>	President, COSLA
<b>Cllr Michael Cook</b>	Vice President, COSLA
<b>Cllr Drew Henry</b>	Leader of SNP Group, COSLA
<b>Cllr Jim McCabe</b>	Leader of Labour Group, COSLA
<b>Cllr David Parker</b>	Leader of Independent Group, COSLA
<b>Cllr Ivor Hyslop</b>	Leader of Conservative Group, COSLA
<b>Cllr Martin Kitts-Hayes</b>	Leader of Liberal-Democrat Group, COSLA
<b>Cllr Maggie Chapman</b>	Leader of Green Group, COSLA
<b>Cllr Aileen Collieran</b>	Chair, Glasgow CPP
<b>Cllr Gary Robinson</b>	Shetland CPP
<b>Sandy Watson OBE</b>	Chair, NHS Tayside
<b>Andrew Robertson OBE</b>	Chair, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
<b>Vic Emery OBE</b>	Chair, Scottish Police Authority
<b>Andrew Thin</b>	Chair, Scottish Natural Heritage
<b>John McClelland CBE</b>	Chair, Skills Development Scotland
<b>Dr Lena Wilson</b>	Chief Executive, Scottish Enterprise
<b>Alison Elliot</b>	Convener, Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations
<b>Prof John Baillie (as observer)</b>	Chair, Accounts Commission

## NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Introduction

1. This paper, prepared by officials in Scottish Government and COSLA, sets out terms of reference for the new national community planning/SOA group to be created following the recent review of community planning.

### Background and context for the group

2. The Scottish Government and COSLA remain committed to the outcomes focussed and partnership-based approach to the delivery of public services agreed in 2007. The findings of the Christie Commission found that this approach had made substantial impact to date and should be built upon to meet the significant cost and demand pressures upon public services.

3. However to accelerate the pace of change, a review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements was initiated in January 2012. This joint Scottish Government and COSLA review produced a Statement of Ambition for Community Planning which was published on 15 March. This set out clear, shared aspirations for Community Planning to be a cornerstone of public service reform and set out how the existing framework needed to develop to meet these aspirations.

4. Scottish Government Ministers and COSLA Leaders subsequently agreed core proposals to give the Statement of Ambition practical effect, including the creation of a National Group. These proposals were set out in the joint letter to CPPs and appropriate partners from the Scottish Government and COSLA dated 10 May 2012. These three key elements comprised:

- Strengthening duties on individual partners through a new statutory duty on all relevant partners to work together to improve outcomes for local communities, whether acting nationally, regionally or locally, through participation in community planning partnerships and the provision of resources to deliver the SOA;
- Formal requirements of Community Planning Partnerships to ensure they operate as genuine Boards in order to facilitate more effective partnership working and planning, resourcing and delivery of local priority outcomes through the SOA; and
- Establishment of a joint group at national level to provide political and strategic leadership and guidance to support effective delivery and the building of capacity at a local level.

### Purpose and Remit of the Group

5. The National Group will provide the strategic leadership needed to drive the step change in Community Planning that has been set out in the Statement of

Ambition for Community Planning agreed by COSLA and Scottish Government. It will consider opportunities and challenges, including finding appropriate balances between local and national priorities, and set associated expectations and requirements in order to create an environment in which community planning will flourish.

6. Once constituted, it will be for the National Group to determine and agree the arrangements it will require, including the production of work plans to focus activity over time. However, in broad terms it will focus its actions on the following areas:

- Ensuring that the vision and key principles for community planning set out in the Statement of Ambition are embraced and given practical expression in community planning partnerships throughout Scotland;
- Ensuring that actions, cultures and resources across public services are in place to enable an effective framework for community planning to take place within, including the production and reporting of SOAs,
- Ensuring that the CP/SOA framework promotes, contributes to and is embedded within the wider PSR agenda, including proper engagement between CP and other policy initiatives/areas;
- Building and maintaining the capacity of CPPs, including knowledge sharing and best practice, including identifying performance issues that have a national dimension; and
- Brokering and resolving any tensions between national and local priorities and providing an authorising environment within which the arrangements for Scottish Government sponsorship of public bodies can be used to help secure effective engagement by appropriate bodies in community planning and the production of SOAs.

7. In summary, by providing strategic leadership, and by mobilising resources and expertise to support local CPP capacity-building and SOAs, the Group will enable the conditions for success required to deliver the overarching vision for community planning and SOAs, whilst guarding against any prospect that these national arrangements become prescriptive or interventionist.

8. However, CPPs will not be formally accountable to the new National Group, nor should these arrangements restrict the focus on localities that is properly delivered through CPPs. Such arrangements should instead help focus the efforts and resources of relevant partners consistently and over time to improve outcomes for communities including in relation to priorities such as early years, health inequalities, youth unemployment or economic growth. The Group will therefore support the efforts of partners, particularly in relation to agreed national priorities, alongside, and in support of, relevant national groups such as the Early Years Taskforce and the Ministerial Strategic Group for Health and Community Care.

9. A key initial output of the Group's activities will to enable the development and issue, accompanied by appropriate awareness and engagement activity, of guidance for CPPs on new SOAs. The expectation is that such guidance will be produced by

early autumn 2012 to enable new SOAs to be in place for 1 April 2013 as has been agreed by the Scottish Government and COSLA.

### **Group Membership**

10. As announced on 12 June 2012, Pat Watters CBE, immediate past President of COSLA and co-chair of the community planning/SOA review, will chair the Group. Membership of the Group will be drawn from strategic leaders in public services and the wider community including:

- **the Scottish Government's Cabinet Sub-committee on Public Service Reform;**
- **the COSLA Presidential team and political group Leaders;**
- **two Chairs of NHS Boards;**
- **an appropriate public body Chair;**
- **a Chair of a Police and a Fire Board respectively;**
- **a senior 3<sup>rd</sup> sector representative; and**
- **chairs of two community planning partnerships.**

11. The Group will be supported by a secretariat provided jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

12. It is envisaged that the Group should normally meet quarterly, with the first meeting taking place in August. Some additional meetings are expected to be required in the initial phase of implementation, in particular to ensure that appropriate timescales for putting new SOAs in place are met.

### **Relationship with Community Planning Project Board**

13. The Group's work will inform and complement the work of the Community Planning Project Board, which reports to the COSLA President and Minister for Local Government and Planning and is tasked with overseeing the delivery of the review proposals. The National Group's decisions will provide strategic direction to the Board and it will receive reports on the activities and progress of the Board. The National Group will adopt relevant workstreams once these are initiated, in order to assume its role as the body responsible for directing community planning and providing leadership and guardianship going forward. The relationship between the Project Board and the National Group will remain under review to ensure that appropriate cascading of work items and priorities takes place.