
THE FINDINGS OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP AUDIT IN SCOTTISH BORDERS

Report by The Chief Executive, Scottish Borders Council

Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board

13 June 2013

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This reports present to the Scottish Borders Community Planning Strategic Board the findings of the Accounts Commission in respect of the Community Planning Partnership Audit in Scottish Borders, and the improvement plan addressing these findings.**
- 1.2 Aberdeen, North Ayrshire and the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnerships agreed at the end of June 2012 to participate in three early audits to assist the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland test the CPP Audit Framework. The audit process commenced in July 2012 and the final report was published in March 2013.
- 1.3 The recommendations and areas of improvement contained within the report are consistent with the outcomes of the review which was undertaken by the Community Planning Partnership in 2011 and are detailed at Appendix A under five key strategic headings:
- Strategic direction and leadership
 - Performance management
 - Use of resources
 - Governance and accountability
 - Community engagement

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that the Strategic Board:-**
- a) **Accepts the Account Commissions findings of the Community Planning Partnership Audit in Scottish Borders**
 - b) **Approves the improvement plan addressing the findings and areas of improvement identified in the audit and agrees that this improvement plan is implemented.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Community Planning was given a statutory basis by the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (the Act). Under the Act:

- a) Councils have a duty to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning
- b) NHS boards, the police, the fire and rescue services and the enterprise agencies (Scottish Enterprise and Highland and Islands Enterprise) have a duty to participate in community planning. This duty was later extended to Regional Transport Partnerships
- c) Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) are required to engage with communities, report on progress, and publish information on how they have implemented their duties and how outcomes have improved as a result
- d) Scottish ministers, through the Scottish Government and its agencies, have a duty to promote and encourage community planning
- e) They can invite other bodies such as colleges, higher education institutions, business groups, voluntary organisations and community groups to take part in community planning, although these are not statutory partners
- f) All councils are required to establish a CPP to lead and manage community planning in their area. CPPs are not statutory committees of a council, or public bodies in their own right. They do not directly employ staff or deliver public services. Under Section 19 of the Act, it is possible for the CPP to establish the partnership as a legally distinct corporate body
- g) The structures of CPPs and the areas they cover varies considerably, depending on the size and geography of the council area, social-demographic factors, the local economy and local political priorities

4 THE CHRISTIE COMMISSION AND THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND COSLA REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

4.1 The Christie Commission report on the future of public services highlighted the need for a new, more radical collaborative culture throughout Scotland's public services. It called for a much stronger emphasis on tackling the deep-rooted persistent social problems in communities across the country to enable public bodies to respond effectively to the future financial challenges.

4.2 The Scottish Government's response to the Christie Commission included a commitment to review community planning. That review led to the publication of a Statement of Ambition for community planning which stated that effective community planning arrangements will be at the core of public service reform.

4.3 CPPs will drive the pace of service integration, increase the focus on prevention and continuously improve public service delivery to achieve better outcomes for communities. The Statement of Ambition also emphasises the need for all partners to have collective accountability for delivering services. This includes being accountable for their own contribution to community planning.

5 THE AUDIT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS

- 5.1 The role of community planning in improving Scotland's public services has become increasingly important. The Scottish Government therefore asked the Accounts Commission to lead development work to prepare an audit framework on how external audit and inspection might hold CPPs to account for their performance and assist them in delivering better outcomes.
- 5.2 The Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland worked with their scrutiny partners (Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS), the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland as well as the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Scottish Government to develop a CPP Audit Framework.
- 5.3 Aberdeen, North Ayrshire and the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnerships agreed at the end of June 2012 to participate in three early audits to assist the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland test the CPP Audit Framework.
- 5.4 The audit process started in July 2012. The following broadly sets out the timetable and process followed:
- Discussion with Scottish Borders CPP to share draft audit scope in July 2012
 - Draft interview schedule agreed at the beginning of August 2012
 - Detailed on site audit work commences at the end of August 2012 and continues through September 2012
 - Emerging findings presented by Audit Scotland to Scottish Borders CPP in October 2012
 - Draft report received in December 2012
 - Factual accuracy checking and discussion on draft report takes place in January 2013
 - Final report considered by Accounts Commission 14 February 2013
 - Audit report published 20 March 2013
- 5.5 As a statutory requirement under the Local Government (Scotland) Acts, Scottish Borders Council is required to consider the Accounts Commission's findings at a meeting of the Council within three months of receiving them or within such longer period as the Commission may specify in writing. These findings must be considered by the full Council and not by a committee, sub-committee or officer. However, the Accounts Commission has agreed a longer period in order to gain approval of the findings and the action plan by the CPP Strategic Board.
- 5.6 The formal procedural requirements of the audit process are set out under section 102 of the Local Government (Scotland) Acts but do not apply to our Community Planning Partners, who have their own legislation.
- 5.7 Following the Council meeting, the Accounts Commission must be advised of the Council's response. A draft summary of the response, approved by the Commission, must then be published in a local newspaper circulating in the area of the Council.

6 THE FINDINGS OF THE ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

- 6.1 The findings of the Accounts Commission are contained in the final Audit Report. Overall, the report acknowledges that the partnership has shown a good level of self-awareness and has made many significant changes in

recent months and now has many of the fundamental structures and processes in place.

- 6.2 However, the audit also states that the partnership has set itself a demanding improvement agenda and much still needs to be fully established before it can demonstrate clearly how it is improving outcomes for its communities.
- 6.3 The report identifies a number of recommendations and areas where improvement is required by the Scottish Borders CPP, and will be taken forward by the Partnership as follows:
- 6.4 **Strategic direction** – lead by Tracey Logan, CEO Scottish Borders Council. New governance arrangements and accountability arrangements have been established for the Partnership, with an ambitious vision which builds on the good outcomes already in place. The partnership has now identified key priority areas for the Scottish Borders, and the delivery teams can now start to consider how to best demonstrate the resources and budget that are aligned to these priorities.
- 6.5 **Governance and accountability** – lead by Liz McIntyre, Principal, Borders College. Work is already underway to ensure partners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and to clarify and agree the mechanics through which partnership decisions will be reflected in the formal governance arrangements of partner organisations.
- 6.6 **Performance management** – lead by Calum Campbell, CEO, NHS Borders. Performance management arrangements will now be strengthened to enable the Community Planning Partnership to evidence and monitor performance and outcomes against the identified key priority areas, and to drive and demonstrate continuous improvement.
- 6.7 **Use of resources** – lead by David Robertson, CFO, Scottish Borders Council. A group has now been established to consider a methodology for identifying and realigning resources including revenue and capital budget to the agreed SOA outcomes.
- 6.8 **Community engagement** – lead by Morag Walker, Third Sector Representative, Chief Inspector Andrew Clark, Local Area Commander for the Scottish Borders, Police Scotland and John Mallin, Local Senior Officer, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service. The audit had acknowledged that there is a strong commitment to engaging with local communities but the Community Planning Partnership now needs to strengthen this approach and clarify how this helps to inform communities.
- 6.9 These areas of improvement are consistent with the Community Planning Partnership's own identified areas of improvement following a review of community planning in 2011, and are detailed within **Appendix A**.
- 6.10 In light of the above, it is considered that the Scottish Borders CPP Strategic Board accepts the finding of the Accounts Commission in full.

7 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.4 There is a risk if the Scottish Borders CPP does not fully address the findings and areas of improvement then it will not fulfil its duty to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning.

8 SUMMARY

- 8.4 This report presents to the Scottish Borders CPP for consideration the findings of the Accounts Commission in relation to the audit of Community Planning in Scottish Borders.

Attached: Appendix A

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Background documents:

Community Planning in Scottish Borders: Audit Scotland, March 2013