

Date: 8 September 2022, 2.00 pm.

Location: Via Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Councillor C. Cochrane (Chair), Ms. A. Hall, Ms B. Francis, Ms C. Paton, Mr D. Dunlop (TSI), Mr R. Davidson, Mr S. Fletcher, Ms J. Grant (Borders College), Cllr J. Greenwell, Mrs K. Hamilton (NHS Borders), Cllr S. Hamilton, Mr R. Hill (RSLs), Mr K. Langley (Scottish Fire & Rescue), Mr C. McGrath (SBCCN), Mr R. Noble, Cllr E. Thornton-Nicol.

Also in attendance: Director Resilient Communities, Director Social Work and Practice, Strategic Planning and Policy Manager, Participation Officer, Communities and Partnership Manager, Democratic Services Officer (W. Mohieddeen) (all SBC).

MINUTE AND ACTION POINTS

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Due to technical issues experienced by Cllr Cochrane, Cllr Hamilton assumed the Chair and welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Cllr Jardine.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 June 2022 and associated action tracker. With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Minute, Mr McGrath asked that the Community Planning Partnership (CCP) being more visible be discussed in the meeting and, reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute, that consideration be given to renaming the Third Sector Interface.

DECISION

AGREED:

(a) to approve the Minute for signature by the Chair; and,

(b) to approve the action tracker.

3. COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP – IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE INCLUDING WORK PLAN

3.1 With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of 16 June 2022, copies of an update paper on the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Task Group Improvement Plan had been circulated. SBC Director Resilient Communities, Mrs Jenni Craig, gave a presentation on an update on the Improvement Plan, highlighting its key points:

- The Community Planning Strategic Board agreed the CPP Improvement Plan on 3 March 2022 with three main areas of action: prioritise, governance and performance, and it was agreed a CPP Task Group be formed to progress the plan.
- The Task Group had met to look to refresh the Community Plan (LOIP) to account for significant changes in the operating landscape as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic including a rapid review of the existing community plan and reduce it to a few key, manageable priorities, a strong community engagement piece needed with communities and for a clear framework for discussion for community engagement.
- The Strategic Board had agreed four themes on 16 June 2022: enough money to live on; access to work, learning and training; enjoying good health and wellbeing; a good place to grow up, live in and enjoy a full life. The Task Group was asked to draft a work plan with key priorities and what actions needed to be taken to achieve positive outcomes for communities in the Borders.
- The Task Group noted that a further report on a CPP governance structure and performance framework which reflected the Work Plan should also be considered by the Joint Programme Board in August 2022 and onwards for approval to the Strategic Board in September 2022; that in parallel to the Work Plan, a full review of the Community Plan would be undertaken in 2023-24; and that this could require formal agreement of individual partners through their own governance arrangements.
- The Task Group met on 5 July, 2 August and 6 September to consider key priorities, the public consultation and what actions needed to be taken. While the public consultation was not significant in numbers, it gave early indication of what was important to communities: making sure everyone had enough money to live on; feeling well – both physical and mentally; and increasing the range and availability of sustainable transport/creating better employment opportunities. This was in alignment to the four themes that the Strategic Board had agreed, but it was recognised that further community engagement would be required in order to ensure a 'bottom up' approach when refreshing the Community Plan.
- The themes and leads for each were discussed and the Task Group agreed that they would be: Theme 1 – Enough Money to Live On, a focus on the current cost of living crisis and community wealth building, lead – Scottish Borders Council; Theme 2 – Access to Work, Learning and Training, sharing data more effectively to identify gaps in education, employment and training, lead – to be confirmed, lead - Skills Development Scotland/Scottish Borders Council; Theme 3 – Enjoying Good Health and Wellbeing, a commitment to health in all policies was proposed, with partners acting as champions to reduce health inequalities, lead – Public Health; Theme 4 – A Good Place to Grow Up, Live in and Enjoy a Full Life, a commitment to the Climate change Route Map, increasing the range of sustainable and greener transport, supporting Place Making and enhancing referral pathways to support early intervention and prevention, lead – Police Scotland.
- 12-month CPP Work Plan – the short-life Work Plan enabled work to be undertaken in a timely manner in relation to the actions within it. The Work Plan gave an opportunity to respond to emerging issues in a more flexible and efficient way. It also allowed other work that was taking place in parallel to be taken into consideration, including The Promise, Place Making and the creation of local Place Plans, IJB Health Needs Assessment and Review of Area Partnerships. Furthermore, the Work Plan gave an opportunity for medium to longer-term requirements to be developed for the refreshment of the Community Plan.
- Next steps for the CPP Task Group – the Task Group would continue to meet on a monthly basis to progress the CPP Improvement Plan: Item 1 – progressing the actions within the Work Plan (a timetable which set out required project resources, key actions, strategic assessments, community engagement and milestones to enable the refresh of the CPP Community Plan); Item 2 – CPP Governance and Structure including the delivery landscape and the relationship of Area Partnerships

to the Community Planning Partnership; Item 3 – CPP Performance Framework including standard reporting mechanisms for the four themes.

CHAIR

Councillor Cochrane joined the meeting at 2.30 pm and assumed the Chair.

- 3.2 In discussion of the contents of the report, Ms Karen Hamilton advised that Dr Sohail Bhatti had been appointed Public Health Director at NHS Borders and may be involved in public health-related work in the Work Plan. Community empowerment in decision-making was considered as a possible theme and would be reflected upon as part of the governance theme.

DECISION

- (a) **AGREED the draft Work Plan detailed at Section 4 which presented the key priorities and actions for the partnership over the next 12 months;**
- (b) **NOTED:**
- (i) **that in parallel to the Work Plan, a full review of the current Community Plan was being proposed to be undertaken in 2023-24, including a refreshed Strategic Assessment and the Health Needs Strategic Assessment, which would provide an evidence base for future changes to the Community Plan;**
 - (ii) **the further actions and timetable requirements within the draft Work Plan in relation to the CPP Structure and Performance Framework; and,**
 - (iii) **that this may require formal agreement of individual partners through their own governance arrangements.**

4. CHILD POVERTY PROGRESS REPORT

- 4.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director Resilient Communities that presented the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Report for 2021-22 and Action Plan for 2022-23 for endorsement before submission to the Scottish Government. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 required Local Authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report and an Annual Progress Report. This report provided the Community Planning Partnership and Scottish Government with an update on progress made in the Scottish Borders against activities within the Action Plan for 2021-22 and sets out planned actions in 2022-23. Mrs Janice Robertson gave a presentation on the Child Poverty Report Update, highlighting its key points:

- The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 required local authorities and Health Boards to jointly prepare a Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report and Annual Progress Report.
- The Scottish Government published in March 2022 a national delivery plan called Best Start, Bright Futures which set out how to deliver on Scotland's national mission to tackle child poverty. Best Start, Bright Futures was a plan for all of Scotland and recognised that all parts of society must deliver change needed for children and families. The Local Child Poverty Report and Action Plan aligned with the approach of Best Start, Bright Futures.
- Best Start, Bright Futures set out Scotland's offer to families in three parts: Part A – providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work; Part B – maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs; Part C – supporting the next generation to thrive including actions in early years education and post-school transitions.

- National targets – fewer than 18% of children living in families in relative poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 10% by 2030; fewer than 14% of children living in families in absolute poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030; fewer than 8% of children living in families living in combined low income and material deprivation in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030; fewer than 8% of children living in families in persistent poverty in 2023-24, reducing to fewer than 5% by 2030.
- Scottish Borders headlines – Children in low income families (before housing costs) had dropped from 18.2% in 2019-20 to 14.7% in 2020-21. This was similar to the national trend. One in five Scottish Borders children lived in poverty (after housing costs); in 2021, the gross weekly full-time workplace-based wage in the Scottish Borders was £96 less per week than the average level for Scotland, this was the 2nd lowest of the 32 Scottish local authorities; in 2020, 24.6% of employees aged 18 and over earned less than the living wage in the Scottish Borders; the cost of living crisis was affecting the area with more families struggling to heat their homes or feed their children; 29% of adults in the Scottish Borders had no savings as at 2019 which was before the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis; and in 2021, 25% of those in employment in the Scottish Borders were in 'lower-paid' occupations.
- 2021-22 Progress Report highlights – 20 families had engaged with the Intensive Family Support Service over the year and as a result, five adults had entered employment; the total number of clients assisted in the year by Citizens Advice Bureau in the Scottish Borders was 4,327, and the total financial gain relating to these clients was approximately £3.5m; the Borders Housing Network dispersed funds to Housing Associations in the Scottish Borders to support tenants in fuel debt; summer activity camps averaged 80% occupancy with 62% of places free of charge for targeted children and young people; £85,000 from the Council's Financial Hardship Fund was dispersed to local foodbanks/Fareshare, food growing projects, community cafes and the Low and Slow Project; and there were 510 referrals for financial inclusion of mothers and pregnant women from the Health Visitor and Family Nurse Partnership, which resulted in £1.25 million in gains.
- 2022-23 Actions highlights – Ensured funding of Early Learning Centre (ELC) was free at the point of delivery for parents; ran summer camps and volunteering for young people, which allowed parents to be able to work a full day; continued to seek solutions to workforce challenges for employers and employees in the third sector where a low wage economy contributed to in-work poverty; developed a plan to transform whole family support services using funding from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund; reviewed and updated the Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in order to prevent families from becoming homeless; and continued to offer Modern Apprenticeship opportunities across a range of services.

4.2 Members discussed the report and recognised that many factors affected child poverty. Mrs Robertson advised that national data was relied upon and that sometimes there was a time lag in reporting data. Work was undertaken to develop a dashboard which displayed up-to-date data. With regards to transport allowances for Modern Apprentices, Ms Jane Grant advised that this would depend on the employer and day release availability, however many students were eligible for free bus travel and there also may be support available through Borders College for those with a college apprenticeship. Members asked that the report reflect the provision of sanitary products across Scottish Borders education alongside Borders College. The teaching of savings and personal finance was discussed by members that may be added to the Action Plan. Cllr Thornton-Nicol advised that there was an element of exclusion to the summer camp programmes if children were not able to travel to attend. Mr Easingwood, Director Social Work and Practice, advised that uptake on bus passes for young people was high but conversations were taking place with Lesley Munro, Director Education and Lifelong Learning, and David Robertson, Acting Chief Executive, with regards to improving uptake rates.

DECISION

AGREED to endorse the Scottish Borders Local Child Poverty Report for 2021-22 and Action Plan for 2022-23 for submission to the Scottish Government.

5. THE PROMISE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

5.1 There had been circulated copies of a report by the Director Social Work and Practice which outlined the proposed governance for Scottish Borders Council to deliver The Promise. The Promise was based on five priority areas and five fundamentals – what matters to children and families, listening, poverty, children’s rights and language. The five priority areas were:

- A Good Childhood – Support, A Right to an Education, Relationships, Brothers and Sisters, Youth Justice, Advocacy, Moving on, and Physical Intervention;
- Whole family support – Family Support, Peer and Community Support, Service Integration, and Family Therapies;
- Planning – Planning, Investment, and Information Sharing;
- Supporting the Workforce – Workforce Values, Trauma Informed, and Relationships, Workforce Support; and,
- Building Capacity – Legislation, Children’s Hearing System, Inspection and Regulation, Policy Coherence, Data Mapping and Collection, and Governance Structures.

5.2 Mr Easingwood advised that The Promise would be a significant policy driver over the next decade and the Scottish Government would be measuring children and young people’s services using the plan. The Promise was not to detract from excellent work that was taking place but to provide a governance platform to deliver on The Promise. The Promise was not solely focused about care-experienced young people as the plan had at its heart an approach of shifting the balance of care away from acute delivery to early intervention using a multi-agency approach. There would be regular updates to the Community Planning Strategic Board on updates on The Promise and the governance structure would function as the strategic corporate parenting board of the Scottish Borders and have the voice of lived experience built into it from the outset. The proposed governance structure would provide a forum with a single overview of services for children, young people and families in the Borders and would align with Scottish Government policy. Scottish Borders Council was one of three pilot areas for delivering The Promise so there would be some input from the Scottish Government. The proposed governance structure featured a Champions Board as part of a number of forums where the voices of children, young people and families were listened to. A young person would also be present on the proposed Strategic Forum. In response to a question from Councillor Thornton-Nicol, Mr Easingwood advised strategic corporate parenting would be part of the role of the Scottish Borders’ Children and Young People’s Promise Oversight and Leadership Board.

DECISION

AGREED:

- (a) to approve the implementation of the Strategic Partnership outlined in the report (which was agreed in principle at the Children and Young People’s Leadership Group (CYPLG) away day on 30th June 2022);**
- (b) that the Promise Strategic Lead Officer, Promise Operational Lead Officer and Promise Implementation Officer be directed to continue to work with the current members of the CYPLG to finalise and implement the new governance structure;**
- (c) that additional partners, including AHSCP and ADP, were made aware of the re-organisation of CYPLG in order to identify areas of cross partnership working in**

relation to The Promise; and,

- (d) that strategic corporate parenting be part of the role of the Scottish Borders' Children and Young People's Promise Oversight and Leadership Board.**

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Minute of the Meeting held on 16 June, Mr McGrath highlighted that the Community Planning Partnership was regarded as not as visible as it could have been and that during August and September, NHS Borders had drop-in sessions throughout the Borders which had been regarded as having poor uptake. Mr McGrath suggested that Community Councils should be used more to communicate services with people to improve uptake.

The meeting concluded at 3.25 pm.