

Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee

Inquiry into Community Planning: Post-legislative scrutiny of the Community Empowerment Act 2015

Summary of responses to call for views

To help provide an evidence base for the Committee's inquiry we asked organisations directly involved in Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) about their experience of community planning, and the impact that it has had.

A call for views was open between the 7th November 2022 and the 13th January 2023, and was aimed at members of CPPs (organisations or individuals). It asked a number of detailed questions about how the partnerships operate.

53 responses were received from a range of organisations, in particular CPPs or local authorities, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Third Sector Interfaces, local authorities, and community councils.

The summary below describes the main themes which emerged from those responses, which can be viewed online at [Community Planning inquiry - Scottish Parliament - Citizen Space](#)

1. Public awareness and communication

The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) believes that there are low levels of public awareness when it comes to community planning partnerships (CPPs). In their experience most community members, and many community groups and organisations, are unfamiliar with CPPs:

“Some have told us that they have never heard of community planning and CPPs, others that they do not know what they do, how they work and how they fit in with other planning and decision-making structures.”

For those individuals and groups who *are* familiar with the CPP concept, there is often a lack of awareness about how to get involved and how to influence decisions. SCDC states:

“Few of those we are working with in communities are aware of the statutory expectations that they should be able to influence the agenda and implement solutions in communities alongside CPPs which is envisaged under Part Two of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act (CE Act).”

Some responses from individuals and community councils believe that the communication between CPPs and the wider public is not good and should be improved. One individual makes the point that communications from CPPs tend to be in digital form and not everyone has access to computers. Calton Community Council makes a similar point:

“Often consultation documents and plans are not shared in plain English and do not offer the opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to take part. Further, engagement is often online which excludes a number of groups.”

Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership highlights a lack of visibility of the CPP in the wider community. They state that decisions are not communicated beyond partners or understood well and there is a lack of clarity about purpose:

“The structures can lend themselves to a small number of people having a loud voice and this is not always representative of the views of everyone. There could be wider involvement from communities.”

According to Culter Community Council, this lack of clarity and communication extends to Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs) and associated Locality Plans. And Angus Council proposes a national effort, presumably driven or funded by the Scottish Government, aimed at improving awareness of community planning and what it can deliver. This may not just be for the benefit for the public, but also for staff within partner organisations, with South Lanarkshire Councils stating:

“We are also working to demystify community planning for our staff, local communities and organisations through participation, engagement, listening and acting on feedback, simplifying plans and communications.”

2. Impact of the Act on community participation

The majority of CPP submissions state that the 2015 Act has led to improvements in how public bodies seek the participation of communities of place (and occasionally communities of interest) in decision making. Renfrewshire CPP, for example, believes that the 2015 Act has been a “key milestone” in developing and deepening community planning. Most submissions describe various examples of new participation processes introduced after the 2015 Act, such as:

- Argyll and Bute CPP using the Place Standard Tool bi-annually to understand community needs and shape work on outcomes.
- Community led Priority Neighbourhood Partnerships in Aberdeen.
- Local Action Partnerships across Perth and Kinross, chaired by community representatives and involving community/third sector groups, local councillors and supported by a Lead Officer from the CPP.
- The “Lived Experience Forum” comprising 20 parents and 40 school age children from across Aberdeenshire.
- Citizen Panel and Young People’s “Hackathon” which directly influences and informs the annual community planning conference and its priorities for community planning in Midlothian.
- Renfrewshire’s Alcohol and Drugs Commission which involved over 200 local people, staff and stakeholders, leading to a 2020 report.
- A panel of volunteer ‘Experts by Experience’ recruited to provide additional scrutiny of anti-poverty activity in West Lothian.

Nevertheless, there is still a view expressed by some individuals and smaller organisations that much more can be done in this area. For example, the Brigdale

Complex in Castlemilk states “there is not enough consultation with local people that ensures that the voice and needs are heard or even met”. Inshes & Milton of Leys Community Council finds that a challenge locally is the failure of the CPP to connect with local communities in any way.

CPPs may also be failing to engage with some of the poorer communities in their areas, with SCDC stating “we have seen scant evidence that many CPPs are making meaningful efforts to support engagement of disadvantaged and marginalised groups in community planning”. Furthermore, engagement with communities of identity and interest (as required by the Act) appears to be particularly challenging. SCDC suggests that the 2015 Act’s “focus on socio-economic inequality of place means that the needs of communities of identity are probably not always being met”.

With experience of participating in four different CPPs, NHS Lothian are concerned that the voices of children and young people are not always incorporated into the work of CPPs. NHS Lothian stresses that successful community participation can only take place if it is properly resourced. They argue that local authorities should lead on community development and capacity building, and they need to be adequately resourced to do so. Otherwise:

“As with any type of community engagement, unless resources are provided to support capacity building, older, more affluent interests have louder voices”.

As well as communities of place – i.e. people living in the same local area – the Act and subsequent guidance stressed that CPPs should encourage “communities of interest”¹ to participate in decision making. A small number of submissions referred to such communities, for example Aberdeenshire CPP confirmed that they “look to engage with communities of interest within Aberdeenshire” and Dumfries and Galloway CPP work with a good growing community of interest.

Scottish Enterprise’s submission confirms that SE is a statutory partner as set out in the Act, however its customer base is “the business community” and therefore the “overlap between our area of responsibility and the priorities of individual CPPs is, usually, somewhat limited”.

3. Collaboration and partnerships at a local level

Most submissions highlight a range of recent policies, programmes and partnerships which CPPs have been central in delivering. For example, Glasgow provides details of the following:

The City Food Plan; Mental Health and Well-being (including the Socially Connected Strategy) through Flourish Glasgow; Gambling Related Harms Multi-Agency Group; Police Scotland and Public Health Scotland Public Health Approach to Policing; Glasgow City Suicide Prevention Plan, etc.

¹ **community of interest** - one that shares a characteristic or interest. This could include people affected by a particular illness or disability, faith groups, sports clubs etc (see [DTAS](#))

Likewise, Angus CPP, Edinburgh CPP, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Argyll and Bute all listed recent work done by CPPs in the fields of community justice, food growing, mental health and adult skills.

It is unclear from submissions whether these initiatives would have taken place *anyway* or if, as the CPP submissions suggest, they exist as a result of CPP efforts. Some community councils and third sector organisations present a more sceptical view, with Campbeltown-based social enterprise, Inspirealba, stating that many successful third sector partnerships “happen despite of rather than because of CPP”.

Perhaps the most cited success has been in how CPPs have led to partner organisations having a better understanding of what each other does, resulting in genuine efforts to collaborate and reduce duplication. Police Scotland summarise the benefits of CPP involvement for their organisation:

“Involvement in the CPP structure as a statutory partner has enhanced our professional relationship with other organisations. This connection has also allowed a wider understanding of the communities we are serving by seeing them from different perspectives. The Act has definitely required partners to be more involved in addressing community issues together, which has been a benefit to all with a greater understanding of services leading to opportunities for joint working.”

4. Challenges faced by CPPs

When asked about the challenges facing CPPs, many submissions highlighted the reduced budgets of partner bodies, increasing operational costs, recruitment issues and increased demands due to COVID and the cost of living crisis. The latter two issues are having a particularly negative impact on inequalities and poverty, which CPPs were set-up to address. However, CPPs stress that the biggest drivers of inequalities are out-with the control of CPPs, with Highland stating:

“Local partners can take action to mitigate the impact however the causes e.g. energy sector challenges, are not within the control of the partnership.”

Furthermore, the CPP’s role in identifying and pursuing longer-term, strategic objectives has been somewhat compromised in recent years by the need to respond to the “here and now” problems arising from the COVID pandemic and cost of living crisis. The preventative aims of the Act may be more difficult to achieve if partner organisations are constantly reacting to crises, with Renfrewshire CPP concluding that “there has undoubtedly been an impact on some of the gains that may have been achieved over the past 5-10 years”.

Ensuring the active engagement of *all* statutory partners was raised as a challenge by a number of CPPs, whilst expressing some sympathy with certain national agencies. Orkney CPP, for example, states:

“The principal challenge for CPPs is securing the active engagement of all statutory partners. Partner agencies may be regional or national rather than local, and may be pulled in different directions by Ministerial directives relating to their agency individually and the local priorities of the multiple CPPs within which they are statutory partners.”

Likewise, Perth and Kinross CPP believes that the extent to which national bodies with a statutory role in Community Planning engage in CP at local or regional level “is highly variable and local partners including Councils cannot compel them to participate”. At a very local level, Dowanhill, Hyndland and Kelvinside Community Council describe how members of the Sector and Area Level groups attend (eg Police, Fire, Health reps) but are not bound to come:

“These partners will frequently attend the meeting and give their own report then leave immediately, and do not generally contribute to general discussions. We think they need to stay on, and are encouraged to contribute to the wider topics of discussion especially for the benefit of community representatives.”

Inverclyde CPP recognises that while the majority of statutory partners listed in Schedule 1 of the 2015 Act may actively participate in Community Planning Partnerships there are some who have limited/no involvement:

“This could be because they do not have the organisational capacity/officers aligned to local authority boundaries to facilitate this or the work of their organisation is not as strategically relevant to the work of the CPP”.

National policy developments can lead to new priorities and statutory reporting requirements for CPPs which add to the burden of partnership planning. This may be particularly challenging when national priorities and policy drivers are introduced within the lifespan of existing CPP plans.

Funding for national priorities may not always align with those priorities identified by local communities with South Lanarkshire Council arguing that this “can present competing demands for the partnership”. Scottish Fire and Rescue states that the competing priorities of partner agencies and the associated funding challenges can be potential barriers to the effective planning of CPPs.

Other submissions highlighted challenges relating to the governance and accountability of CPPs. Highland TSI is concerned by what they view as a “seeming lack of accountability”. And Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) states that CPP ambitions may be “stifled” by lack of defined budgets and lack of clarity around expectation of CPP partners. To them it can be unclear what decisions CPPs can make and where governance lies. This is particularly challenging in the relationship between the CPP and the HSCP:

“...there are no lines of accountability in either direction. An example of the parallel nature of this exists in the area community planning groups (required by the Community Empowerment Act) and the locality planning groups (required by the Joint Working (public sector) Act for health and social care providers), this has the potential for duplication and lack of clarity within communities.”

Perth and Kinross CPP believe that performance frameworks and accountability lines for individual CP partners remain complex “despite previous Audit Scotland recommendations to Scottish Ministers that these could be streamlined”. They believe that the inspection and scrutiny regimes for CPPs have not substantially

evolved to ensure evidence is gathered, assessed and triangulated to understand local partnership working in the round

However, the most common challenge mentioned by CPP partners is the impact of financial constraints, with Aberdeen University, Aberdeen CPP, Midlothian, North Ayrshire and many others arguing that financial and staff availability are key barriers to the effective planning and delivery of CPP outcomes. West Lothian observes that CPPs do not have their own dedicated budgets for partnership initiatives so “it is increasingly difficult to deliver, as organisations themselves are operating under increasingly constrained budgets”.

5. Whether the Act has changed the way partners make decisions, spend budgets and deliver services?

Submissions from local authorities, and those from national bodies such as Police Scotland and Fire and Rescue, highlight various ways in which working practices have changed as a result of involvement in CPPs and those changes introduced by the 2015 Act. For example, Fire and Rescue Scotland believe that where a clear positive community outcome is identified “partners are willing to support and share resources to ensure this is achieved”.

Data sharing is one concrete example of organisations collaborating to help improve outcomes. For example in Midlothian, planning partners share their data to inform the community planning priorities through the Midlothian Profile.

Argyll and Bute CPP states that the Act increased the number of partners in community planning and took the emphasis away from community planning being the sole responsibility of local government. Nevertheless, the 32 CPPs are organized by local authority area and much of the CPP budget comes from local authorities. Glasgow City Council remains the “dominant partner” in the CPP process and concludes that “we have not yet achieved the shared leadership model as set out in the Act”.

Aberdeen CPP notes that the 2015 Act states that statutory partners are jointly responsible for facilitating community planning and must contribute such funds, staff and other resources. However, they have found that the resources deployed by each partner to community planning varies significantly across the CPP. This can be “challenging when planning for collective delivery of improved outcomes”.

In practice, involvement in CPPs may not always change how (non-local authority) partners spend their money. For example, Argyll and Bute HSCP tells the Committee that “there is little influence on HSCP budget and decision making. Some topics occasionally receive budgetary contributions (e.g. CPP climate change group) however this is rare and ad hoc”. Likewise, Highland CPP also believes there has not been the progress hoped in shifting mainstream budgets towards joint partnership or preventative work. Perth and Kinross point out that joint resourcing at a local level “remains a significant challenge when all partners face significant budget pressures and have different accountability lines for delivering national and local targets”.

Police Scotland notes that policing does not have devolved local budgets that would enable them to contribute to a shared post or initiative without central agreement. As such, direct financial support tends to come from Local Authorities or HSCP/IJBs.

Nevertheless, some submissions included examples of non-council partners contributing considerable sums to joint CPP projects. For example, Angus CPP described how NHS Tayside contributes £20,000 per annum to delivery of the community health initiatives; Police Scotland contributing £10,000 to youth projects which aligns to the Reducing Child Poverty work and Macmillan Cancer Support providing £120,000 of funding over a period of three years to support partners in developing a sustainable pathway for anyone living with cancer with help to be physically active.

Taking a national perspective, Scottish Community Development Centre believes there is still a tendency for local authorities to be viewed as the 'lead agency' in CPPs. Local authorities contribute the most resources and staff "while retaining overall control and oversight of community planning". According to SCDC this makes it more difficult to work in a more holistic, and therefore preventative, way:

"This can lead to a lack of co-ordinated proactive effort between community planning partners to promote and support participation from disadvantaged and marginalised groups".

CPP staff based in local authorities – for example community learning and development teams – have expressed to SCDC the desire to see other CPP partner organisations step up their efforts to:

- take an active role working with communities;
- understand, and take more seriously, their role in relation to working with communities;
- upskill their staff in community development and community engagement; and
- commit to continuous improvement and following best practice.

Crucially, SCDC concludes that:

"It would appear on the surface that inclusion as a planning partner under the Act has not yet had the desired effect of encouraging organisations to commit resources and change their thinking in regard to improving services collaboratively and with communities."

Likewise, the Scottish Community Planning Network in their submission believes that the contribution of some partners may be less than others, depending on the range of their interest in different community planning outcomes. As such, there is a danger that participation in community planning arrangements for some partners may not be seen as critical to their regular business. They conclude:

"Councils still lead on community planning arrangements, with limited evidence of shared responsibility in the organisation and delivery of Partnership activity; and very little, if any changes since the Act."

This is a view shared by the Stirling CPP who believe that the 2015 Act did not change the nature of community planning to any great extent... "the reality is that local government continues to play the largest role in facilitating, developing and managing the CPP".

South Lanarkshire CPP mentioned interesting developments of collaboration between two or more CPP areas. For example, they describe recent work started with North Lanarkshire CPP, North and South Lanarkshire Colleges, Lanarkshire Larder and a local supplier to support families and individuals living across the whole Lanarkshire area to eat well and learn new skills. Scottish Enterprise also mentioned existing guidance for CPPs which include a consideration for multiple CPPs to look at collaboration across CPP boundaries. The Committee did not specifically ask about this in its call for views, however this is an area the inquiry may seek more information on.

Public Health Scotland describe how they have established a new team consisting of staff allocated to work with each CPP across Scotland. According to their submission, this will "support effective whole system working between the national and local public health workforce and improve access to the specialist services and public health knowledge and skills".

6. The role of the third sector and community bodies in CPPs

The 2015 Act, and indeed a number of submissions from CPPs and statutory partners, acknowledge the importance of the third sector in community planning. This recognition grew during the COVID pandemic. However Highland TSI believe the third sector is "an afterthought": "our role to be tacked on to the end of planning, our value is only in what we can bring gratis to the group".

SCDC states that communities are not formal partners in the process for a variety of legal and other reasons. However, they point out that the Act envisaged a central role for them in the process. SCDC argue that an engagement plus model is needed to bring communities into a much more meaningful relationship with CPPs. This is required in order to make the fundamental tenets of involving communities in setting the agenda, codesign and delivery of solutions, and impact assessment of service responses meaningful for communities.

However, some individual CPPs have made changes to ensure the third sector is seen as an equal partner. For example, Renfrewshire CPP created a Forum for Empowering Communities which puts the contribution of the community and voluntary sector in Renfrewshire on an equal footing with other community planning groups. The Forum is chaired by the Chief Executive of Engage Renfrewshire (Renfrewshire's Third Sector Interface) and has, according to the submission, successfully increased the role and influence of the third sector in developing solutions to community issues in Renfrewshire.

7. Evidence of tackling inequalities and prevention

Every submission from planning partnerships emphasises that CPPs have a specific focus on reducing socio-economic inequality. However, not all submissions provided

evidence of CPP activity actually reducing inequalities. Indeed, a high number merely listed a number of policies, programmes and partnerships without setting out what impact they are having. At a very local level Downhill Hyndland and Kelvinside Community Council believes it is “very difficult to assess whether there has been any kind of preventative approach as there is a lack of communication and engagement with us on this aspect... we never seem to hear how funded projects impact on the statistics of the issue they are intended to address”.

NHS Lothian acknowledge the prevention must be a partnership priority. They note that there are many examples of programmes and plans, but outcomes and successes are harder to track: “While all partners have engaged with community planning in a genuine way with community empowerment and tackling inequalities as key objectives, delivery and action on shared priorities is harder to evidence albeit the drivers of poverty and inequality are beyond most CPPs’ control”.

Tackling inequalities through preventative approaches is the key role of CPPs. However actions and strategies require a long-term approach. East Ayrshire CPP believes that its longstanding commitment to prevention and early intervention was somewhat constrained by the need to “firefight” due to the Covid pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis. Furthermore, there is an acceptance/frustration in many of the submissions that the main drivers of inequalities in their communities relate to external factors, with East Ayrshire CPP listing Brexit; Covid; UK/Global Economic context; Ukraine; Cost of Living. This means that progress that was previously being made, for example in relation to child poverty, has been undone by external structural factors beyond the gift and influence of local community planning partners.

There may be considerable difficulty in providing data at a local level which shows progress in meeting outcomes. Argyll and Bute CPP believes that the lack of data at an appropriate scale and level of detail is one of the main challenges to effective planning. This is particularly the case when it comes to understanding impacts on the protected characteristics of the Equality Act:

“Having quality data to inform how life is being experienced in a place, based on protected characteristics, would enable an approach to addressing inequalities to be data led and informed. This requires nationally led data sets to be of a suitable quality.”

Highland CPP notes the particular challenges of identifying and measuring inequalities in remote and rural areas where traditional indexes (such as the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) “do not adequately describe inequalities”.

On the other hand, Aberdeen CPP’s submission included a full list of improved outcomes, for example relating to uptake of unclaimed benefits and increased numbers of employers paying the real living wage. Likewise, Dumfries and Galloway CPP publishes annual report setting out progress towards eight outcomes. Reports comprise both quantitative data drawn from local data and national comparisons and qualitative data in the form of case studies and personal testimonies.

Midlothian CPP’s submission referred to the use of the “Pentana” performance management software system. This system, which is used by over 50% of Scottish Local Councils, helps produce a scorecard which has been used to develop the

Single Midlothian Plan. This covers a number of indicators at a local level including those relating to community safety, improving opportunities, economic development and housing. South Lanarkshire also appears to be doing important work in this area, for example in relation to their Neighborhood Planning areas:

“We monitor progress through statistical profile reports which set out the differences between when we first started working in the area and what they are now. The communities that lead on this work also review their priorities and produce their own annual reports.”

Argyll and Bute CPP introduce an interesting interpretation of inequality in their submission as they highlight the importance of addressing *equality of opportunity* and *equality of access* (particularly in relation to digital). The inequality of access to services in remote rural communities is particularly pressing for their CPP area.

8. Community planning and COVID

SCDC state that information they received from community groups indicates that the response of CPPs to Covid-19 was a very mixed picture across Scotland. For example, public sector responses took longer to get off the ground and SCDC note that in some areas CPPs stopped meeting altogether during lockdown (whether in person or online). Nevertheless, they are also aware of examples of positive collaboration between public sector partners and community organisations during the pandemic. For example, in North Lanarkshire and Argyll and Bute local emergency responses have been supported by effective partnership between different public sector agencies.

Orkney CPP notes that the Scottish Government’s emergency planning guidance for councils [Preparing Scotland](#) makes virtually no reference to community planning:

“CPPs have a ready-made multi-agency structure, robust governance and the capacity to lead and facilitate recovery, but had no assigned role in the emergency response. CPPs across Scotland therefore had to make ad-hoc arrangements as to how they could best contribute to the Covid response and to post-Covid recovery and renewal programmes and this resulted in a great deal of duplicated effort and a variety of different approaches, some of which have worked better than others.”

NHS Lothian note that during 2020 and most of 2021, CPP activity was secondary to pandemic response. Some CPP work happened during the COVID-19 pandemic but it was mainly information sharing or intelligence work. They conclude by saying that “it is not entirely clear how the pandemic has influenced community planning in part because the cost of living crisis followed on so soon after”.

Nevertheless, various submissions highlight areas where the existing CPP networks and relationships were crucial to effective responses to the crisis. West Lothian CPP, for example, notes that the pandemic significantly demonstrated the value and resilience of local networks, with East Ayrshire CPP going even further:

“The pandemic response effectively mainstreamed community planning – the default response in East Ayrshire is to look for a partnership solution. The

pandemic response assisted to break down perceived barriers to closer working because of scale and immediacy of need, demonstrated how effective the partnership response can be. Covid impact assessment was undertaken at CPP level, and the CPP response complemented the existing Ayrshire Local Resilience Partnership.”

This view is not universally shared, however, with one submission from a community council stating that their CPP “played very little part in response to Covid. Most of the responses came from local people / groups working together”.

9. Impact of Local Outcome Improvement Plans and locality plans

Part 2 of the Act requires CPPs to prepare and publish Local Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIPs) which sets out outcomes the CPP will prioritise for improvement. A number of submissions stressed the importance of their LOIP to the work of the CPP, with Aberdeen stating that their Plans had “secured the explicit commitment of partners to divert resources towards the achievement of these priorities by agreeing 15 stretch outcomes”. Likewise, Dumfries and Galloway CPP stresses the importance of the original LOIP and the annual reports charting progress towards the improved outcomes. East Ayrshire CPP sets out the benefit of the LOIP for them:

“The LOIP is helpful in providing a shared set of high level priority outcomes which all partners are committed to achieving; and supporting effective scrutiny of this activity through our related annual performance reporting framework.”

North Lanarkshire CPP explains how local people, community groups, and community organisations all played a significant role in working with partners to establish the priorities for their areas and co-produce the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs).

Locality plans

The Act also requires CPPs to identify smaller areas within the local authority area which experience the poorest outcomes, and prepare and publish locality plans to improve outcomes on agreed priorities for these communities. West Lothian CPP believes that the locality planning process has allowed CPPs to work with local communities and local community-based organisations to target activity specific to the needs and requirements of certain areas. However, few submissions set out whether locality plans are having any impact on prevention and inequalities. Rather most submissions focused on how locality plans have led to better relationships and more focused interventions.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise notes that the focus on Locality Plans in predominantly small remote rural areas was not working well in the Highland CPP area, where significant resources were being used to facilitate 25 individual Plans. The CPP was particularly conscious that communities were not fully engaged in the process, so partners have refocused plans based on the geographies of sub-regional area CPPs (eg Caithness, Sutherland, Lochaber etc).

One partner organisation in the west of Scotland expressed concerns about locality planning in their area. They claim that plans were created within a short timescale, haven't been updated in years, were cut and pasted across many of the locality areas and are therefore not really a true reflection of the local area needs. Moreover, they argue that the locality plans require more field work staff to support the plans at a local level.

Cluttered landscape

The Scottish Community Planning Network warns that "local place planning is becoming a cluttered landscape" with the introduction of the statutory Place Plans. West Lothian CPP makes a similar point, stating:

"there are numerous plans and strategies that often focus on very similar client groups and have similar outcomes, and the challenge (and opportunity) is around further joining up and streamlining the planning landscape."

NHS Lothian makes some specific points relating to the introduction of Local Place Plans:

"The introduction of local place plans as part of The Planning Act does not necessarily sit easily with Locality Plans or LOIPs. Many of the actions in Locality Plans and LOIPs are about place changes or improvements. Local Place Plans are not really incorporated into the CPP framework. The community engagement and consultation for Local Development plans does not seem well integrated into CPP activity either."

SCDC states that many of these plans do not necessarily link with each other and the sheer number of plans may be confusing community groups who do not know what different plans are for nor how to engage with them. Nevertheless, a number of submissions confirmed that the LOIP is the *key* strategic document for each area and other plans, strategies and policies have to demonstrate how they will impact the LOIP. For example, in Argyll and Bute the Outcome Improvement Plan is viewed as the overarching plan for the area and others strategies and plans are to take recognition of the priorities identified in the LOIP.

Looking specifically at impact on health outcomes, anti-smoking charity, ASH Scotland, believes that robust action in LOIPs and Locality Plans to reduce smoking rates can play a vital role in delivering positive outcomes for communities' and influencing the key indicators of health. They provide some examples of where ASH has worked with CPPs to tackle tobacco-related harm and conclude that "partnership action with a coordinated cross-sectorial approach is the most effective way to address smoking and reduce health inequality".

10. Does the statutory membership of Community Planning Partnerships need revisiting?

The majority of responses from CPPs state that the statutory membership set out in the 2015 Act is adequate and needs only minimum amendments, if at all. For example, Perth and Kinross CPP believe that the current focus on cost of living and climate change would suggest Social Security Scotland, the DWP and Scottish

Water should be included. Renfrewshire CPP also believe that Public Health Scotland could be considered. Other public body suggestions include HM Prisons and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

The most common response to this question was a call for inclusion of third sector bodies in CPPs, whilst also recognizing that legally the Act cannot compel a private or third sector body to participate. However, the Act could be amended to include a duty on the statutory partners to *invite* specified bodies from the private or Third sector. For a number of organisations submitting responses, Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) are the most obvious omission at present.

Likewise, Orkney CPP states that the Act could place a duty on facilitating partners to invite Chambers of Commerce (where they exist) or Housing Associations, whilst noting that in many cases these bodies may already be on CPP Boards (but without having a statutory right of attendance). Inspiralba suggest the inclusion of development trusts and other local stakeholder organisations “to support focus on community needs and aspirations, rather than top down with focus on strategic priorities of public sector”. SCDC concurs, arguing that the role of community organisations within CPPs needs to be strengthened.

NHS Lothian make the point that any review needs to look at some of national bodies included in the existing list of statutory bodies:

“CPP partners need to be local. For example, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Enterprise are key partners. But their ability to contribute can be constrained by national decision-making and budget constraints. It may be useful to consider CPP membership in the context of Anchor Institutions and Community Wealth Building.”

Likewise, South Lanarkshire CPP explain that not all of the national organisations who are statutory partners contribute to Community Planning in South Lanarkshire.

“It can be challenging for these organisations to deliver on local priorities when their focus is on delivering high level national priorities and there may be difficulties in seeing where they fit in. There are also a range of local partners who are key to the effective delivery of Community Planning however are not acknowledged as statutory partners.”

VisitScotland’s view supports this position with their submission making the point that tourism is not an important sector in every 32 CPP area. Aberdeen CPP points out that Aberdeen CPP since 2016, the Chair of Community Planning Aberdeen has extended an invitation to all statutory partners to become a member of the CPP:

“It is noted that the following partners have not responded to previous invitations to become members: Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Sports Council and Visit Aberdeenshire. On this basis we would seek a review of the status of these organisations as statutory partners.”

In their submission Historic Environment Scotland confirm that they became a statutory partner with a duty to participate in the community planning process as a result of the 20145 Act. They identified a number of partnerships where given our

significant impact and involvement in the community, it was appropriate to participate more fully:

“For example in Orkney, given the extent of heritage assets and the benefits these derive both in terms of wellbeing and the economy, our participation was both welcomed and appropriate. Another consideration was where we could learn from other partners working in communities where multiple and complex challenges prevailed and to this extent we, for example, have participated in the executive group of the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership.”

11. Does the existing guidance for Community Planning Partnerships need to be updated?

There were no calls for any *major* changes to the guidance and most acknowledged that the 2015 guidance is detailed, relevant and useful. However, responses also recognised that, six years on, some review and updating may be required. For example, Inverclyde CPP believe that:

“the policy landscape has developed and this impacts on how Community Planning Partnerships are and operating. Themes such as Community Wealth Building and Wellbeing Outcomes could be reflected in new guidance, along with the how it is anticipated the National Care Service implementation will interact with Community Planning”.

Guidance on how LOIPs and community planning more generally should align with other plans (local place plans for example) and partnerships would be appreciated. Fire and Rescue believes some additional clarity would be helpful on the relationships between CP and Community Justice Partnerships (CJPs) to avoid potential duplication of effort:

“CPPs and CJPs tend to involve the same agencies and people attending both groups, focusing on similar communities of interest.”

Scottish Enterprise would like to see guidance take account of developments in the areas of regional economic development such as City and Growth Deals. Existing guidance for CPPs included a consideration for multiple CPPs to look at collaboration across CPP boundaries “where this would contribute to improved outcomes or greater efficiency”. SE believes this section should be strengthened to take account of the regional economic development structures that have formed in recent years.

Inverclyde CPP believes there are aspects of the guidance which remain very difficult for CPPs to realise, particularly effective shared resourcing/budgeting:

“with serious budgetary pressures across partners, and very limited local financial flexibility for national partners it is difficult to envisage how this could be fully achieved in line with the guidance”.

Nevertheless, Midlothian CPP would like the guidance to make roles and statutory responsibilities more explicit in terms of securing improvements and resources. For

example, guidance could be clearer on shared goals, accountability and evaluation of impact. SCDC's key suggestions for change in this area include:

1. Support to develop outcome measures as part of a framework to implement the Community Empowerment Act – we need to be able to measure and evidence impact of the benefits of community participation in community planning.
2. The development of a community participation/skills framework (and associated quality standards) to be embedded in induction, job roles across the board.
3. Support for CPPs to take risks and learn from this – again this reflects the actions outlined in previous sections.
4. Community and CPP views, experiences and information to influence decisions at national (and international) level – this reflects a broad concern about the potential for community planning to be disconnected from wider decision-making processes.

Greig Liddell
Senior Researcher
SPICe
February 2023

Annex: List of named respondents

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership
Aberdeen University
Aberdeen CPP
Aberdeenshire CPP
Angus Council on behalf of the Angus CPP
Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership
Argyll and Bute HSCP
Brigidale Community Centre
Calton Community Council
Culter Community Council
Dowanhill Hyndland and Kelvinside Community Council
D&G CPP
East Ayrshire Council (on behalf of CPP)
East Dunbartonshire Council
Edinburgh CPP
Glasgow CC
Highland TSI
Highland CPP
HIE
Historic Environment Scotland
Inshes & Milton of Leys Community Council
Inspiralba
Inverclyde Council
Largo Communities Together
Midlothian Council
Moray CPP
NHS Lothian
North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership
North Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership
Orkney CPP (Orkney Partnership)
Perth and Kinross Council
Police Scotland
Renfrewshire CPP
RTPI
SCDC
SCP Network
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
South Ayrshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
SoSE
Stirling Council
University of the Highlands and Islands
UHI Perth
VisitScotland
West Lothian CPP