



## DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING INDICATORS

### PROGRESS NOTE 2

August 2004

This second Progress Note is issued as part of Audit Scotland's commitment to keeping stakeholders informed of progress in the development of Community Planning Indicators and to invite comment.

#### INTRODUCTION

There are two different aspects of community planning about which we need to gather information to facilitate the Accounts Commission to 'draw conclusions'. These aspects relate to the key processes behind community planning and the impact for communities. We are considering the possibility of assessing these two aspects separately.

#### Summary of Approach

The proposals are summarised as follows:

- **National menu CPI set** – Existing indicators satisfying the criteria of cross-cutting more than one partner agency, being attributable and measuring impact, listed against each of the 5 national priorities (Building a Better Scotland). Choice for partnerships to select a number of indicators (2 or 3) from each heading to reflect local issues as described in their Community Plan
- **Local menu CPI set** – existing indicators grouped under the 5 national priorities from which partnerships select indicators to support their community plan priorities. These indicators to be reported by each partnership according to their local reporting arrangements
- **A Statement of Intent** – submitted alongside the national indicators detailing which national and local indicators have been selected, the rationale for selection and arrangements for reporting the local indicators
- **Review of the key processes** - In addition to developing indicators to measure service impact, a review of the processes which underpin the effectiveness of community planning, specifically Partnership Working; Community Engagement; and Performance Management, will be undertaken in the autumn.

#### PROGRESS TO DATE

There are two key success factors for the project; achieving a balance between allowing Community Planning Partnerships to reflect local priorities and ensuring

national objectives are covered; and securing ownership of the proposed indicators by Partnerships.

We have sought to achieve these success factors by working closely with Partnerships to reach a consensus on the most appropriate indicators and audit/reporting arrangements. To this end, we have consulted directly with 23 individual councils and representatives of their partners as part of an ongoing consultation programme.

### **Issues Arising From Consultation**

Consultation with council and partner representatives to date indicates:

- Support for a ***two tier model*** consisting of an annually reported national set and a local menu set to support local performance management and reporting arrangements
- Support for a ***menu approach to the national set*** with no mandatory or fixed indicators
- Support for ***measuring the closing of the gap*** between the area average and the worst performing locale or client group, over time (see below)
- ***Little support for very high level indicators*** e.g. mortality rates etc included within the national CPIs due to long lead-in times, availability of data (in terms of frequency of reporting and timing in year), macro-influences and lack of influence by partnerships
- Support for ***single collection and reporting*** of national data. Partnerships are keen to avoid double submission of information to the Scottish Executive and Audit Scotland

During consultation it became apparent that reporting national indicators over a Community Planning Partnership area could be masking the detailed local picture. For example, educational attainment may be increasing on average but in SIP areas and for looked after children it may be deteriorating. By definition, Partnerships are about identifying and resolving 'local' issues together. If we measure the council wide information, then we wouldn't necessarily be measuring the impact of the Partnership in particular localities or for particular client groups.

We are considering suggesting that partnerships measure and report on the differential between the average and the worst performing locale or client group for each indicator. Measuring the changes of this gap over time would provide an effective assessment of the impact of the Partnership and, to an extent, alleviate the problem of performance data being used (misused) as performance absolutes.

Measuring differentials over time would also align with the Scottish Executive's themes, capturing the hitherto 'missing' cross-cutting theme of closing the opportunity gap (Building a Better Scotland). There is no other national framework for attempting to assess this Scottish Executive priority.

Discussions with the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) Unit have determined that the geography by which national data will be provided to Audit Scotland or CPPs will be based on 'data-zones', which have been formally adopted by the Scottish Executive as the consistent geography for data reporting to ensure robustness, data confidence and to satisfy confidentiality requirements.

## **PROPOSED NATIONAL INDICATORS**

Draft national indicators were circulated in July prior to the first meeting of the Reference Group. This group has been helping us select appropriate existing national indicators to populate the CPI national set. The group has concentrated on identifying truly cross-cutting indicators which capture all the main areas of activity, found in the 32 Community Plans, under each of the 5 main headings. Written comments were received from 10 Partnerships and these comments have been used to refine the content of the national set.

The Group slightly expanded the 5 theme headings, under which the indicators are grouped, to better capture the work of Partnerships. We have worked hard to identify which indicators should be included as part of the national menu to ensure appropriate coverage of activities whilst rejecting indicators which are beyond the influence of the Partnership or relate to the activities of only one agency.

Attached is the second draft of the proposed indicators for inclusion in the national 'core' menu. We would welcome your informal views on these revised indicators. Please note that these are still only proposals, and everyone will have the opportunity to provide formal comment on them during the Commission's consultation period.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The second draft national set will be discussed with the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics Unit to identify where data is currently not available at the data-zone level.

A detailed proposal paper will be submitted to the Accounts Commission in October.

Formal consultation will then follow prior to the development of a formal Direction to be issued in early 2005 for collection of data from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005.

A draft project brief for the review of key community planning processes will be submitted to the Accounts Commission in October, along with the CPI proposals. If the Commission decides to proceed with such a review a report would be published in 2005.

In the meantime if you have specific comments you would like me to feed into the preparation of the proposals to go to the Commission in October, please send them to me by Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September:

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16 September 2004

Dear Ms Calder

**Development of Community Planning indicators**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the developing work on community planning indicators. We have followed the progress of this debate with interest and would make the following comments as a contribution to your submission to the Accounts Commission. These comments follow a brief discussion at our most recent Management Group meeting on 11/8/04.

***How to accommodate diversity across Scotland?***

Argyll and Bute is a diverse area covering 10% of the land area of Scotland; 20% of the population do not live in settlements; 16% of the population live on the 25 inhabited islands; there is 4500km of coastline – longer than that of France; and most of the population have to travel significant distances to access services. The mix of island and mainland communities is a unique feature of Argyll and Bute.

With this as a backdrop, we do not feel that a menu of indicators would benefit the community planning process locally. The value in making comparisons across Scotland comes from sharing good practice, which implies more detailed dialogue between partnerships rather than comparison of headline figures.

In order to gain some idea of the scale of diversity across Scotland you could refer to the recently published “Annual Rural Report 2004”, by the Scottish Executive, July 2004. The “Summary of Key Facts on Rural Scotland” on pages 27-28 suggests that whilst some aspects of rural life are worth promoting throughout Scotland such as levels of community involvement there are some serious downsides to living in “remote rural” areas into which classification much of Argyll falls! As described below we need to measure our progress against other rural areas as well as against national priorities but there really also needs to be a set of agreed national standards against which we can judge our service delivery.

***How to measure progress?***

The key to this process for us is the ability to demonstrate that progress is being made – whether with local priorities or for contributions to national priorities. The challenge should be for us to be able to demonstrate this using locally determined measures that reflect local and national priorities. The reporting process then focuses on trends rather than actual data.

We welcome the suggestions for measuring the closing of the gap. This reflects the need to show our contribution to national priorities, but also is something that is

important locally. We would expect this to be a common benefit across all community planning partnerships.

***How to highlight issues?***

One aspect of our discussion locally that does not appear to be reflected in the national discussion is the need for a mechanism to highlight issues locally that need wider support. For instance, there are issues locally that will need regional or national support to be resolved, because local agencies do not have the resources or power to deal with them effectively.

Development of indicators to facilitate this process is something that would have to happen locally.

***Is there a use for the menu of indicators?***

Whilst we would not support a national obligation to use the menu of indicators as a library of measures from which we were forced to choose measures, there is potential benefit from the menu locally.

Any debate to develop local measures will be facilitated by examples of indicators, with commentary on the benefits or limitations with respect to data collection, reporting and use of the indicators. The menu of indicators would be a valuable input to any debate we would have on measures to report progress on local and national priorities.

I am sure our Partnership would be happy to engage in further dialogue with you to ensure that any Indicators adopted really do reflect the efforts being made in Argyll and Bute to improve services and “close the gap” as well as realistically reflecting our geography and current state of infrastructure development.

Yours sincerely,

**Andrew Campbell**

Chair

Argyll and Bute CPP Management Committee