

# Community planning: an initial review

Prepared for the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland  
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## The Accounts Commission

The Accounts Commission is a statutory, independent body which, through the audit process, assists local authorities in Scotland to achieve the highest standards of financial stewardship and the economic, efficient and effective use of their resources. The Commission has four main responsibilities:

- securing the external audit, including the audit of Best Value and Community Planning
- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
- carrying out national performance studies to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local government
- issuing an annual direction to local authorities which sets out the range of performance information they are required to publish.

The Commission secures the audit of 32 councils and 35 joint boards (including police and fire services). Local authorities spend over £14 billion of public funds a year.

## Auditor General for Scotland

The Auditor General for Scotland is the Parliament's watchdog for ensuring propriety and value for money in the spending of public funds.

He is responsible for investigating whether public spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management.

He is independent and not subject to the control of any member of the Scottish Executive or the Parliament.

The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Executive and most other public sector bodies except local authorities and fire and police boards.

The following bodies fall within the remit of the Auditor General:

- departments of the Scottish Executive eg, the Health Department
- executive agencies eg, the Prison Service, Historic Scotland
- NHS boards
- further education colleges
- Scottish Water
- NDPBs and others eg, Scottish Enterprise.

## Acknowledgements

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Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000 under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000. It provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Executive and public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

# Summary

## Background

1. Community planning is the process through which public sector organisations work together and with local communities, the business and voluntary sectors, to identify and solve local problems, improve services and share resources.
2. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (the Act) provides the statutory basis for community planning. It requires local authorities to initiate and facilitate community planning, and NHS boards, the enterprise networks, the police, and the fire and rescue services to participate. Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) are now also required to participate. Other public bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups and business organisations should also be involved.
3. The aims of community planning are to promote:
  - community engagement – making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on the public services which affect them
  - joint working – organisations working together to provide better public services.
4. Community planning should support:
  - rationalisation – community planning should be the over-arching partnership framework, helping to coordinate other initiatives and partnerships and rationalise a cluttered landscape
  - connection between local and national priorities – providing a mechanism to balance national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.
5. Community planning is a long-term process and it will take time to achieve improvements in some areas. It is too soon to find much evidence about the effectiveness of individual community planning partnerships (CPPs) in improving public services in their area.
6. In this report we review:
  - the national context within which community planning operates

- local arrangements for community planning
- planning and performance management in CPPs.

## Key findings

### 7. Community planning: the national picture.

- Public services in Scotland are delivered through a network of different organisations. Joint working among these organisations is well-established and widespread. When they work well together there can be real benefits to service users, communities and the organisations themselves. Community planning can add value to existing joint working by providing a local strategic framework and building a culture of co-operation and trust.
- However improving services through partnerships is difficult because organisations have different geographic boundaries, accountability and financial regulations. This limits the flexibility of some partners to respond to local needs and creates administrative difficulties.
- The lack of integration and prioritisation of the large number of national policy initiatives, and the fragmented nature of funding arrangements to support these, make it difficult for CPPs to achieve their potential in meeting local needs and create a further administrative burden.
- All CPPs operate in this complex policy and organisational environment. Some demonstrate real commitment and willingness to work around the problems, but in others these difficulties seem to impede progress.
- In order to help community planning achieve the potential envisaged in the legislation, partner organisations and the Scottish Executive need to agree priorities for community planning.

### 8. Community planning: the local picture.

- While most CPPs have broadly similar structures, there is wide variation in the size and membership of CPP boards and theme groups. All statutory partners are engaged at a senior level. The way the board operates influences the effectiveness of the CPP.
- Community engagement is progressing but it needs to be more sustained and systematic. The introduction of National Standards for Community Engagement<sup>1</sup> provides an opportunity for CPPs to improve the consistency and effectiveness of community engagement.
- The role of elected members in community planning is particularly challenging. Their participation in CPPs is uneven and in some places minimal.
- CPPs have developed highly complex structures to accommodate the large number of policy and service areas covered and the many organisations and groups which need to participate. Community planning has not helped to rationalise the number or complexity of partnerships in any significant way.

### 9. Planning and performance management.

- Community planning is a complex process and CPPs are improving their use of information to inform their planning. However the quality of community plans varies and the links between community plans and partner organisations' corporate plans are generally weak.
- CPPs are improving their use of performance indicators, but progress has been slow and performance management and reporting arrangements could be further developed. CPPs need to move on from developing processes to demonstrate the impact they are having on services and the well-being of local communities, and whether the benefits justify the added costs.
- The governance of CPPs needs to be improved through clarifying their accountability arrangements and developing more effective scrutiny and risk management.

10. The report includes recommendations for action by the Scottish Executive, partner organisations and CPPs themselves. We have also developed an evaluation framework to help CPPs and partner organisations improve the effectiveness of their community planning.

### **About the study**

11. Evidence for our findings has been drawn primarily from interviews with staff involved in community planning across a range of organisations in ten partnership areas, and with officials in the Scottish Executive and other national bodies. This qualitative work was supported by a survey of all 32 CPPs. In three further areas we analysed the management costs associated with community planning. We also examined current community plans and reviewed information from other audit work, including Best Value audits.

1 *National Standards for Community Engagement*, Communities Scotland, June 2005.

## **Part 1. Introduction**

### **Background**

12. Community planning is the process through which public sector organisations work together and with local communities, the business and the voluntary sectors, to identify and solve local problems, improve services and share resources.

13. The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 (the Act) provides the statutory basis for community planning. It requires local authorities to initiate and facilitate community planning, and NHS boards, the enterprise networks, the police, the fire and rescue services, and Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority (now the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport) to participate in the process. The 2005 Transport (Scotland) Act also requires the other statutory RTPs to participate. Scottish ministers (through the Scottish Executive and its agencies) have a duty to promote and encourage community planning.

14. Other public, private and community bodies should also be invited to participate in community planning, including the voluntary sector, community groups, businesses and business organisations.

15. The statutory guidance accompanying the legislation identifies two aims for community planning:<sup>2</sup>

- Community engagement – making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on the public services which affect them.
- Joint working – a commitment from organisations to work together in providing better public services.

16. These aims are supported by two further principles:

- Rationalisation – community planning should be the over-arching partnership framework, helping to coordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary, acting to rationalise a cluttered landscape.
- Connecting local and national priorities – community planning should provide a mechanism to balance national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.

17. This report reviews the early progress made by Scotland's 32 CPPs since the Act was introduced.

18. Community planning is a long-term process and it will take time to achieve improvements in some areas. It is too soon to find much evidence about the effectiveness of individual CPPs in improving public services in their area. We have therefore concentrated on reviewing the processes put in place to deliver community planning, and how CPPs plan to monitor their progress in future. We have developed an evaluation framework, based on our findings, as a starting point for assessing the performance of individual CPPs in future.

19. The Accounts Commission arranges audits of Best Value and Community Planning of individual councils and has a statutory duty to direct councils, police and fire authorities to publish information to help draw conclusions in relation to community planning. Our findings will inform the Accounts Commission's work in this area.

20. Audit Scotland undertook this study on behalf of the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland. The findings in this report are drawn primarily from extensive interviews with community planning partners (statutory and non-statutory) in ten partnership areas and with officials in the Scottish Executive and other national organisations involved in community planning. This qualitative work was supported by a survey of all 32 CPPs and their main thematic groups. We also reviewed information from other audit work, including Best Value audits, and analysed the management costs associated with community planning in three further areas.

21. The rest of this report covers:

- the national picture
- the local picture
- planning and performance management
- an agenda for action listing our recommendations.

# Part 2. Community planning: the national picture

## Key messages

- Community planning can add value to existing joint working by providing a local strategic framework and building co-operation and trust.
- Improving services through partnerships is difficult because organisations have different geographic boundaries, accountability and financial regulations. This limits the flexibility of some partners to respond to local needs and creates administrative difficulties.
- The lack of integration and prioritisation of the large number of national policy initiatives, and the fragmented nature of funding arrangements to support these, make it difficult for CPPs to achieve their potential in meeting local needs and create a further administrative burden.
- All CPPs operate in this complex policy and organisational environment. Some demonstrate real commitment and willingness to work around the problems. In others these difficulties seem to impede progress.
- In order to help community planning achieve the potential envisaged in the legislation, partner organisations and the Scottish Executive need to agree priorities for community planning.

## **Community planning can add value to existing joint working by providing a local strategic framework and building co-operation and trust**

22. Public services in Scotland are delivered through a network of different organisations. Joint working among these organisations is well-established and widespread, covering many activities including joint planning and delivery of services, joint initiatives, shared premises and information sharing networks. Many of our most important public services are characterised by joint working. For example, community care involving health boards, councils and the voluntary sector; joint approaches to regeneration between councils, enterprise companies and the private sector; and community safety developments involving police and a range of other organisations. All of these developments and others were already under way to a greater or lesser extent before the 2003 Act which introduced a statutory duty for community planning.

23. When organisations work well together locally there can be real benefits to service users, communities and the organisations themselves.

24. The community planning legislation was intended to improve joint working. The evidence from our case studies suggests that in some areas the community planning process is adding value to existing joint work by:

- building a shared, strategic framework for services across the area that focuses on the full range of needs in the community
- bringing together organisations that had not previously worked together and identifying areas where joint working could improve services to local communities

- increasing understanding among partners of the services they deliver, the challenges they face, and their ways of working.

25. The process of sharing information and agreeing priorities can be a valuable mechanism for building trust and understanding among partners. It can lead to fundamental changes in the way CPP board members view their role in the community planning process. One board member commented: *“at the first meetings of the CPP, I felt I was there to represent my organisation, but now I think about how my organisation can help this community”*. Exhibit 2 in the main report illustrates the commitment from some of our case study areas to the potential for community planning to improve community well-being and public services.

26. However in some areas these aspirations for community planning are not being met. We found a number of partners frustrated by both the complex public sector environment that community planning has to operate in and the lack of clarity over what community planning should be delivering.

### **Different boundaries, accountabilities and financial regulations in partner organisations make community planning and joint working difficult**

27. The organisation of local authorities and their community planning partners creates challenges for CPPs because:

- the operational boundaries of statutory partners usually differ from those of the local authority, causing delay in decision-making and additional bureaucracy
- partner organisations have different accountabilities, requiring complex negotiations and limiting their flexibility to respond to local needs
- partner organisations have different financial regulations and ways of working, limiting the control of resources by CPPs and creating an administrative burden.

### **Different boundaries**

28. In only two local authority areas (Dumfries & Galloway and Fife) do community planning statutory partners have broadly similar boundaries. In four others (Scottish Borders and the three island councils) the local authorities share some boundaries with their statutory partners. Similar boundaries are seen as a real advantage by all the partners involved.

29. Other parts of Scotland face more complex arrangements. For example, Strathclyde Police is a partner in 12 CPPs; between them, those 12 partnerships encompass five Local Enterprise Companies (LECs) and four NHS boards, one of which is NHS Greater Glasgow. NHS Greater Glasgow itself spans four LECs, is a partner in six CPPs, and is likely to develop eight Community Health Partnerships (CHPs).

30. Boundary issues are seen as a main barrier to progress in a third of all CPPs. Statutory partners involved in more than one CPP (ie, some police and fire services, NHS boards, enterprise networks, and RTPs) face particular challenges. For example:

- the organisation needs to integrate the range of local priorities emerging from each CPP into its own corporate strategy. There is potential for conflict between priorities agreed by different CPPs with the

organisation's own corporate priorities or with targets set for the organisation by the Scottish Executive. Accommodating differing local priorities within one organisation may require local or national negotiation, leading to lengthy decision-making

- the organisation has to make decisions on how to allocate resources between its constituent CPPs, and balance those decisions with other spending priorities relating to national priorities
- demands on senior managers in preparing for and attending all the different CPP meetings in their area can be considerable.

### **Different accountabilities**

**31.** Local authorities and statutory partners have different accountability arrangements. Local authorities, fire and rescue authorities and RTPs are accountable to locally elected members (and ultimately accountable to the community through elected members). NHS boards, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise are accountable through Scottish ministers to the Scottish Parliament. Responsibility for the police service is shared between the local authority, the Scottish Executive and the chief constable. These differences in accountability have practical implications for how CPPs function and can create tensions between community planning partners.

**32.** Many community planning partners have to respond to national priorities but some are more strongly tied to nationally set targets or have regional responsibilities which limit their flexibility to adjust to local needs. For example:

- LECs offer funding and staff time to help deliver community planning priorities which support national targets<sup>4</sup>, but have limited resources for supporting local needs not directly linked to national priorities. This can lead to inconsistencies in contributions to constituent CPPs. For example, Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian is currently progressing major projects such as the Alba Centre at Livingston, and the Waterfront and the Edinburgh Science Triangle in Edinburgh. The organisation is therefore more active in the West Lothian and Edinburgh areas than in Midlothian or East Lothian
- NHS boards are set national targets by Scottish ministers, which may take priority over spending on local priorities.

**33.** There is also variation in the extent to which senior managers in different organisations have delegated authority over the use of resources to meet local needs, and variation in the extent to which they exercise this authority.

### **Different financial arrangements**

**34.** Partnership working is also complicated by different financial regulations and reporting arrangements among partners. For example:

- partners have different practices for financial reporting and may use different definitions to cost activities
- partners have different requirements and methods for reporting performance
- some partner organisations cannot carry funds over from one year to the next, while others have more flexibility

- local authorities can recover VAT but the ability of NHS organisations to do this is limited.

35. These different financial arrangements can cause an administrative burden on partner organisations in developing joint working. For example, there has been considerable progress in recent years in different organisations sharing premises to improve access to front line services and deliver efficiency savings. However, sharing premises can bring financial complications:

- It is difficult to account for owning just part of a building on a balance sheet.
- Partners have different practices with regard to insuring buildings – for example the NHS does not insure buildings while some local authorities do – and this can mean different design standards.
- Staff working alongside each other and doing similar jobs may have very different terms and conditions of employment.

36. Some of these issues are being considered by the Scottish Executive as part of the public service reform agenda, but they will take time to resolve.

37. Community planning legislation has provided a statutory framework to help partner organisations tackle these challenges. The legislation provides for CPPs to become incorporated into independent legal entities if they wish, subject to parliamentary approval. This would enable a CPP to develop its own accountability arrangements and would help to overcome some of the difficulties posed by different accountability regimes. We found little enthusiasm for formal incorporation in the CPPs we visited. Some partners are concerned that it might lead to a loss of control, while others are concerned about losing their focus on other priority areas of work.

38. Recently, however, the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership established Glasgow Community Planning Ltd as a separate organisation to facilitate the delivery of local community planning priorities, in particular those concerned with regeneration. Glasgow CP Ltd is not an incorporated CPP under the terms of the Act. It is an independent organisation reporting to Glasgow's CPP and funded by contributions from partner organisations. This is designed to overcome some of the organisational barriers outlined in previous paragraphs. The company was established too recently for us to review this approach for our study, but it provides an innovative model for the future.

### **The wide range of national policy initiatives and their lack of integration and prioritisation make it difficult for CPPs to achieve their potential in meeting local needs**

39. The Scottish Executive has a wide-ranging and ambitious policy portfolio aimed at improving the lives of the people of Scotland and delivering better public services.<sup>5</sup> Many of these policies require partner organisations to work together. The Executive uses a range of mechanisms to deliver its policy agenda, including:

- requiring local strategies to be developed in support of specific policy initiatives
- ring-fencing funding to support priority policy objectives
- setting targets for partner organisations.

40. The statutory guidance on community planning places a number of duties on Scottish ministers. This includes developing mechanisms within the Executive and its agencies to ensure that they are joined up in:

- developing policies and performance frameworks and indicators
- communicating to agencies and community planning partnerships the means of delivering these policies, whether this is through strategies and plans, sponsorship of its NDPBs, or specific projects, funds and initiatives.

41. However there is a lack of integration and prioritisation between different policy areas. Many national policy initiatives require local strategies to be developed, sometimes in support of funding applications. For example, The Highland Council has estimated that 29 separate plans and strategies are required for different Scottish Executive departments, many of which require input from its community planning partners.

42. The Scottish Executive may also require local strategies in one policy area to be linked with other local strategies. For example, Executive guidance on the Antisocial Behaviour Strategy lists 11 other local strategies which should be taken into account.

43. By acknowledging these links to other strategies, the Executive's guidance on antisocial behaviour is endeavouring to improve coordination with other national policy strands. But developing all these local strategies is resource intensive for partner organisations, and local authorities in particular. Many of the strategies will use similar basic information, which must be presented in different ways, and will have different monitoring and reporting requirements.

44. There is also no clear direction or guidance from the Scottish Executive on which national priorities should have precedence for implementation at local level. If everything is a priority then nothing is treated as a priority. CPPs feel they are constantly responding to new national policy initiatives, reducing the time and resources available to meet local needs.

### **The fragmented nature of Scottish Executive funding streams also creates an administrative burden for CPPs**

45. The range of funding streams to support national policy objectives is complex, with an increasing emphasis on funding intended to be spent either by partnerships themselves or by a lead agency in consultation with other organisations.

46. We estimate that in 2004/05 the Scottish Executive provided at least 39 different funding streams totalling around £581.5 million intended to be spent through partnership working. There was a similar situation in 2005/06, with 42 different streams, totalling £685.1 million (Appendix 1). This was outwith core funding of partner organisations.

47. Each funding stream usually has its own application process, monitoring and reporting arrangements. While it is important to maintain proper control over public funds the current arrangements, often involving quite different processes, increase the bureaucratic workload of partnerships and create an administrative burden on the lead agency responsible for managing the funds.

48. For example, there are a number of different funding streams relating to community safety. These include

funding associated with Antisocial Behaviour legislation, such as community wardens and programmes for ASBOs for under 16s. There is funding for youth justice, such as restorative justice funding, money to support implementation of national standards for youth justice and the Local Action Fund. There is also more general community safety funding, such as the community safety award schemes. While some of this money is distributed through core local authority funding (GAE), some funding streams require separate (and often detailed) application processes. Monitoring arrangements also differ. Monitoring of antisocial behaviour funding has been streamlined through antisocial behaviour outcome agreements, but monitoring for other funding streams may require annual accounts and a general performance report, or more frequent progress reports against specific measures. At a local level, these different funding streams often need to be joined up to deliver an integrated strategy to meet local needs.

49. The most significant source of funding available for CPPs from 2005/06 is the Community Regeneration Fund (CRF). The Scottish Executive is allocating £318 million over three years through the CRF to bring improvements to Scotland's most deprived areas and help individuals and families escape poverty. CPPs were required to develop Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs) to receive their allocation of the Fund. CPPs welcomed the funding, but some, especially those in smaller council areas, found the process of developing ROAs resource intensive and the specific guidance on where resources should be spent not always relevant to their local communities. In some areas, work on the ROA significantly delayed progress on other local priorities.

### **Some partnerships are addressing these barriers**

50. All CPPs operate in this complex policy and organisational environment. Some demonstrate real commitment and willingness to work around the problems. In others these difficulties seem to impede progress. We identified a number of approaches adopted by partner organisations to address some of these barriers. For example:

- developing schemes of delegation that clarify accountabilities and allow representatives from partners to make decisions at CPP meetings on behalf of their organisation. For example, NHS Ayrshire & Arran has a scheme of delegation for its three CHPs clarifying the role of the CHP within the community planning structure, and the decision-making authority of staff involved in CHPs
- allowing flexibility in meeting local needs by both ensuring information from local community plans feeds into the strategic planning of the organisation and including the delivery of local community plans as a high-level objective within the organisation's corporate plan, as is done in Lothian & Borders Police
- developing agreements that plans and reports sent for formal approval to partners may be subject to minor textual changes, without further full ratification by individual partners, as has been developed in East Ayrshire.

51. A number of CPPs are also involved in initiatives to link planning across regions. The statutory guidance states that 'strategic linkages at the regional level should be developed where appropriate by working with other CPPs and/or agencies of that partnership'. For example, the Clyde Valley CPP brings together eight CPPs to plan for the city region and ensure major infrastructure projects which cross different authority boundaries are coordinated effectively. Dumfries & Galloway's community planning links into:

- the South of Scotland Alliance with Scottish Borders regarding European Funding

- the North Channel Partnership with Ireland and the three Ayrshire councils
- Border Visions which looks at joint working initiatives with Scottish Borders, Cumbria, Carlisle and Northumbria councils.

52. There are also a number of national policy initiatives which are intended to be delivered on a regional basis, such as strategic waste management, civil contingency planning, regional transport, and some aspects of rural development. These regional approaches make community planning even more complex.

53. CPPs that have been through the process of agreeing clear priorities for the area find it easier to respond to the range of national policy initiatives and funding streams. For example:

- the 'Promoting Community Learning' section of East Ayrshire's Community Plan formed the basis of the council's submission for the Community Learning and Development Strategy
- West Lothian Council were able to respond quickly to the announcement and application for community warden funding, as the CPP had already agreed this as a priority and had all the background information required for the application.

54. Not all CPPs have reached this stage. Some accommodate the different needs arising from local and national initiatives by allowing different agendas to co-exist or by developing an ever-increasing number of policies and strategies, making monitoring and managing their work more difficult.

### **For CPPs to achieve their potential, partner organisations and the Scottish Executive need to agree priorities for community planning**

55. Despite its difficulties, there is a real need for community planning in some form – radical improvements in community well-being and service delivery cannot be achieved in isolation.

56. For community planning to achieve the potential envisaged in the legislation, the expectations of what should be delivered through community planning need to be clarified. The Scottish Executive, statutory partners and CPPs need to work together, either through individual agreements or collectively, to identify:

- the focus and policy priority areas for CPPs
- which areas of joint working should be outwith community planning
- which policy areas should be delivered by individual organisations
- the extent of CPPs' control over resources – and how these resources can be efficiently administered and accounted for
- how performance should be reported.

### **Recommendations**

57. The Scottish Executive and CPPs should agree:

- a small number of strategic priorities where CPPs can add value through partnership working
- how to measure performance against these policy areas.

58. The Scottish Executive, with executive agencies and other central bodies, should:

- improve coordination and integration among initiatives
- rationalise the different funding streams accessed by partnerships
- develop a more standard approach to monitoring spend against individual funding streams.

59. Nationally accountable partners (eg, Scottish Enterprise, the NHS and Communities Scotland), supported by the Scottish Executive, should set clear guidelines for their local organisations (eg, NHS boards, LECs) on what they expect to be achieved through local partnership working. This should be supported by allowing greater flexibility and autonomy to accommodate local CPP priorities when responding to national priorities.

60. Local authorities and partner organisations should develop schemes of delegation to streamline decision-making within CPPs.

4 Set out in *Smart, Successful Scotland*, Scottish Executive, 2001.

5 *A Partnership for a Better Scotland: Partnership Agreement*, Scottish Executive, 2003.

6 *The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. Community Planning Statutory Guidance*, Scottish Executive, 2004.

8 Audit Scotland has already identified the need for the Scottish Executive to improve consistency and good practice for monitoring initiative funding in our 2005 report, *Scottish Executive: supporting new initiatives*.

## Part 3. Community planning: the local picture

### Key messages

- While most CPPs have broadly similar structures, there is wide variation in the size and membership of CPP boards and theme groups. All statutory partners are engaged at a senior level. The way the board operates influences the effectiveness of the CPP.
- Community engagement is progressing but it needs to be more sustained and systematic. The introduction of National Standards for Community Engagement<sup>8</sup> provides an opportunity for CPPs to improve the consistency and effectiveness of community engagement.
- The role of elected members in community planning is particularly challenging; their participation in CPPs is uneven and in some places minimal.
- CPPs have developed highly complex structures to accommodate the large number of policy and service areas covered and the many organisations and groups which need to participate. Community planning has not helped to rationalise the number or complexity of partnerships in any significant way.

### There is wide variation in the size and membership of CPPs

61. The statutory guidance gives CPPs discretion over the structure they adopt, requiring them to ‘tailor the process to the needs and opportunities of local communities’. Most CPPs have the same broad structures in place, with a partnership board, an implementation group and different theme groups with responsibility for implementing policy priorities. Cross-cutting topics (eg, community engagement) are accommodated in different ways. Exhibit 5 in the main report illustrates these structures schematically for a typical CPP.

62. However the size and membership of partnership boards varies from six to 40 partners with half of these having between eight and 13 members. There is wide variation in the number of theme groups (ranging from two to 14) and in the number and size of the sub-groups that feed into the theme groups.

63. All the main statutory partners (NHS boards, local enterprise companies, police and fire services) are represented on all boards. The majority of CPP boards have voluntary sector representation and over half have community representatives (other than elected members) or business representatives. The national organisation most often included in CPP boards is Communities Scotland. Exhibit 6 in the main report illustrates the range of organisations, in addition to statutory partners, involved in CPP boards.

64. Local authorities have taken a lead in community planning in line with the legislation, with all CPP boards chaired by the authority, usually the leader of the council.

65. The membership of theme groups is even more variable, with a total of 170 different organisations, in addition to the statutory partners, involved in the 147 theme groups identified in our survey. About one-third of all theme groups are chaired by organisations other than the local authority.

### **The way the board operates influences the effectiveness of the CPP**

66. There is no one model for an effective CPP structure; instead structures should be fit for purpose. The purpose of the board needs to be agreed by board members, and the board size and membership designed to enable it to fulfil the agreed remit and responsibilities.

67. In a few of the CPPs we visited there is a strong sense that the board operates as a powerful network of public sector leaders within the area. Those involved are able to offer advice to one another and use their personal relations to push forward initiatives and commit resources. However in other areas the board is seen as more of a formality, *“The board is there because it has to be, and has to be seen to demonstrate strategic buy-in. But the work is all done before the board meets”*.

68. Our case study work showed that CPP boards are most effective when:

- they connect the political and managerial leadership of the different partners
- they are clear about their role in the community planning process
- all board members are committed to delivering improvement through community planning.

69. Partnerships with very large boards can perform only a limited range of tasks. Agreeing specific priorities for inclusion in the community plan and targets for performance measurement then become the responsibility of a smaller group. These larger boards may act as a consultative forum, rather than a decision-making body.

70. The challenge CPPs face is to develop structures and processes which fit their local circumstances and enable partners to be involved in community planning, while not becoming over bureaucratic. In some cases the structures set up initially are not working effectively with a third of partnerships having recently reviewed their structures or are currently doing so.

### **Community engagement is progressing but it needs to be more sustained and systematic**

71. One of the primary aims of the community planning legislation was to improve community engagement, to ensure that the views of service users and local people are taken into account when CPPs are developing their local priorities and making decisions that affect local services.

72. We found that CPPs are putting considerable effort into improving their community involvement. This is being done both formally, through involving community representatives as members of boards and theme groups, and through a range of consultation and communication exercises to inform community planning priorities. Appendix 2 describes the range of ways in which partnerships are engaging with the voluntary sector and with community groups.

73. Reviewing the effectiveness and impact of CPPs' approaches to community engagement was not the focus of this study. However CPPs will need to be able to demonstrate the impact and benefits of their community engagement activities as they develop them.

74. While we found many examples of innovative approaches to consultation and engagement with specific communities or service users, these were often developed in isolation rather than as an integral part of the community planning framework.

75. In several of our case studies we found examples of duplication and overlap in community consultation among different partner organisations. There is considerable potential for CPPs to work more collaboratively in combining resources and sharing information from consultation exercises. In East Ayrshire, for example, community planning partners jointly commission a Residents' Survey, with questions input from all partners. The results of the survey feed into the community planning process and also into partners' plans for specific service improvements.

76. The introduction of National Standards for Community Engagement<sup>10</sup> provides an opportunity for CPPs to improve the consistency and effectiveness of community engagement in informing policy development, within both the partnership and partner organisations.

### **The role of elected members in community planning is particularly challenging**

77. A consistent theme from our case studies was the lack of involvement of elected members, other than council leaders, in the community planning process. In some areas there was minimal participation of members.

78. Elected members have an important role to play in community planning as both civic leaders and community representatives. However this is a challenging area for CPPs and there are a number of issues which need to be resolved:

- How to involve a range of elected members without the partnership being seen by other partners as too dominated by the council.
- Balancing the representative role of locally elected members with a greater emphasis on involving communities and service users in decisions about local service delivery.
- Ensuring community planning structures are aligned with the council's political decision-making structures.
- Balancing the formal operation of council committees with the more informal style adopted by many CPPs.

**79.** There are elected members who are enthusiastic about the opportunities which community planning provide and are involved in the process. Council leaders often play a vital role as chair of the CPP and in a number of areas members are active in theme groups or local community planning work. For example:

- North Lanarkshire Partnership is rolling out local community planning structures made up of Local Area Partnerships, Local Area Teams and community forums. The Local Area Partnerships involve senior police representatives, the fire and rescue service and NHS officers together with local elected members. Local Area Teams involve local area managers from similar partner organisations who are responsible for implementing Neighbourhood Improvement Plans. Community engagement is undertaken through local community forums and a range of other approaches and mechanisms available in each local area.
- In Dundee, local community regeneration forums have been created to make decisions on devolved Community Regeneration Fund budgets. Elected members participate on an ex-officio basis. This allows local discussion between community representatives and elected members before formal recommendations go for approval to the council.

**80.** However some elected members see community planning as a threat to their control of council services and funding. Members have legitimate concerns about allocating funding to bodies without the same direct accountability. The potential of community planning will not be achieved unless partners are willing to commit adequate resources to meet agreed local needs.

**81.** In local authorities decisions can be taken only by the council, a committee, sub-committee or officer under a scheme of delegation. There is no power to delegate formal decision-making authority to a CPP or its constituent groups, or to an individual councillor. The result is that important decisions affecting the council have to be taken by the council, or referred back to the council for confirmation. CPPs therefore need to link community planning structures with the political decision-making structures of the council (and other partner organisations) to ensure proper governance for partnership decisions, as they affect individual partner bodies' policy and expenditure.

### **CPPs have developed highly complex structures**

**82.** The reality of partnership working within authorities is very complex when all the groups and sub groups are included. Exhibit 7 (of the min report) is a typical example of the structure supported by a small council. A recent audit of partnership working by North Lanarkshire CPP revealed 53 different groups within the

CPP, with some supported by further groups.

83. Current structures have developed to:

- provide a forum for joint working on a wide range of different policy areas
- bring together a number of different partnership structures
- provide mechanisms that allow different groups to take part in community planning.

**Community planning has not helped to rationalise the number or complexity of partnerships in any significant way**

84. One of the objectives of the community planning legislation was to help coordinate joint working arrangements and, where necessary, to rationalise a cluttered landscape. There has been limited progress in rationalising structures for a number of reasons:

- The number of partnerships required by statute is increasing. For example, in recent years CHPs and RTPs have been set up through legislation (although CHPs are intended to rationalise the previous partnership approach for health care which was delivered by around 80 local health care co-operatives across Scotland).
- Further partnerships are expected by the Scottish Executive. Exhibit 8 (of the main report) details the partnerships expected in a typical urban local authority.
- New multi-agency groups or partnerships may be formed to respond to national policy initiatives or local events.
- Existing theme and cross-cutting groups may resist moves to rationalise or integrate their work into other groups.

85. Recently CPPs have been concerned with developing links with CHPs. This offers the opportunity for more coordinated planning and more efficient use of resources, but it also poses a risk of increased bureaucracy and duplication of effort if they are badly organised. The CHP guidance clearly advocates a coordinated approach with CPPs, but it is too early to assess the extent to which this is happening across the country.

86. Within CPPs, efforts to rationalise partnerships may not always be successful. For example, recognising the significant impact which formal education and informal learning can have on employment, the Dundee Partnership attempted to combine the strategic themes of Lifelong Learning and Work and Enterprise. However, the agenda for the new group became unmanageably wide. The themes reverted to separate coordinating groups to ensure that each received the attention it required, while making relevant connections to all other strategic and cross-cutting themes within the Dundee Partnership. In East Dunbartonshire an independent review of the community planning arrangements recommended increasing the number of themes from three to five. The original themes no longer reflected local partnership activity, undermining strategic development and delivery of the action plans.

87. The number of groups within partnerships appears to be increasing over time as the workloads of some groups prove unmanageable. One interviewee described their partnership as being “*At the limits of workable complexity*,” with further additions likely to have negative effects on partners’ understanding, ability and willingness to engage in partnership working.

88. While partnership working is often required to deliver national policy objectives, there is scope for rationalisation at both a national and local level. In a report published in 2002,<sup>11</sup> HM Treasury identified a number of questions which central government departments should ask when considering whether local partnerships should be developed for implementing particular policy priorities. These questions cover issues such as:

- whether a partnership approach is appropriate
- the high-level objectives and scope for local flexibility
- funding regimes – including whether funding is proportional to the scale of the problem and the need for stable funding to assist planning
- integrating mechanisms for performance review between departments.

89. The Scottish Executive should consider applying these questions when reviewing the role of partnerships in policy implementation.

90. Individual CPPs should actively seek to rationalise the number of partnerships within their community planning arrangements. In a recent report, the Audit Commission<sup>12</sup> identified a number of questions organisations should be asking about their partnership activity. We have adapted these questions to help CPPs rationalise their partnership arrangements.

91. A number of CPPs have found it helpful to develop protocols which set out the remits, membership and roles of each group within the partnership structure. The process of developing these agreements helps build partnership culture and commitment, and reduces gaps and duplication between groups. The guides themselves increase understanding of how community planning works locally. Typical protocols cover:

- objectives of the partnership
- definition of who takes part in the partnership
- arrangements for making decisions at meetings
- accountability arrangements
- budgets, resources and administrative arrangements
- structure and remit of sub-groups.

### **The level of partnership support varies**

92. Twenty-two CPPs have a full-time coordinator. Smaller areas, such as Midlothian, Orkney, Shetland and

East Lothian, are more likely to have coordinators with other responsibilities. In two-thirds of CPPs the local authority alone covers the cost of the coordinators.

93. There is a great deal of variation in the way in which CPP activities are funded. In 2004/05:

- 14 CPPs received funds from the NHS.
- 13 CPPs received contributions from the Enterprise network.
- Eight CPPs received funds from the police.
- Four CPPs received funds from the fire and rescue services.
- Other occasional contributors included Shell UK, Scottish Natural Heritage and VisitScotland.

94. Communities Scotland offers support resources to each CPP. In addition to direct financial support many partners contribute to community planning in kind, by seconding staff or hosting meetings.

**Supporting community planning can take up considerable staff time – CPPs need to be aware of these costs and ensure they are justified by improved outcomes**

95. Considerable staff time is spent in activities connected with partnership working. In three of our case study areas we estimated the costs of supporting community planning. Working through community planning had not increased the fixed costs of partners (for example, CPPs did not require extra accommodation or services). We therefore measured the costs of staff and elected members' time spent in attending board and theme group meetings and providing administrative support to the CPP. In addition, we estimated the costs of goods and services bought by the partnership such as print, equipment, training and the organisation of seminars. Staff costs made up most of the total (about 90 per cent). The staff time measured was concerned with decision-making and planning, not costs involved in implementing agreed action plans.

96. As CPPs primarily use existing resources for planning and decision-making, the costs identified represent opportunity costs (ie, time that could have been spent differently) rather than additional costs to the partner organisations.

97. We found that different models of partnership working incurred different costs. CPPs with complex structures that place an emphasis on involving partners at all stages of the process incurred a higher cost per head of population – estimated as up to £5 per head in one of our case study areas. More streamlined approaches, with fewer groups and sub groups, restricted membership of groups or limited circulation of policy and strategy papers, reduced the cost to around £2 per head of population. The costs are also influenced by the seniority of the staff concerned with community planning – with those partnerships with extensive senior management involvement having higher costs. The estimates must be treated with caution, but the annual costs per partnership range from £240,000 to £1.7 million spread across up to eight agencies.

98. Partner organisations need to be aware of the costs of supporting community planning when developing structures and administrative arrangements, and ensure these are adequately reflected in budgets and service planning. They need to be clear about how the investment of staff time in community planning and

other partnership working will deliver benefits to local communities or will result in service improvements.

## Recommendations

99. CPPs should:

- ensure the CPP board is clear on its remit and responsibilities, and is structured to fulfil these
- define clearly the role for elected members and members of other partner governing bodies within their community planning arrangements
- ensure that community engagement becomes more sustained and systematic across partners, and champion the use of National Standards for Community Engagement<sup>9</sup>
- review and rationalise structures to focus on delivering services that add value
- consider developing a partnership guide which describes the roles and remits of each element of their structure.

100. The Scottish Executive should review the number of partnerships it requires local authorities and other partner organisations to establish, and ensure there are clear remits and no duplication.

9 *National Standards for Community Engagement*, Communities Scotland, June 2005.

10 *National Standards for Community Engagement*, Communities Scotland, June 2005.

11 *Working together: Effective Partnership Working on the Ground*, HM Treasury, 2002.

12 *Governing Partnerships: Bridging the Accountability Gap*, Audit Commission, 2005.

13 *National Standards for Community Engagement*, Communities Scotland, June 2005

# Part 4. Planning and performance management

## Key messages

- Community planning is a complex process. CPPs are improving their use of information to inform their planning.
- However the quality of community plans varies and links between community plans and partner organisations' corporate plans are generally weak.
- CPPs are improving their use of performance indicators but progress has been slow and performance management and reporting arrangements could be further developed. CPPs need to move on from developing processes to demonstrate the impact they are having on services and the well-being of local communities, and whether the benefits justify the added costs.
- The governance of CPPs needs to be improved through clarifying their accountability arrangements and developing more effective scrutiny and risk management.

## Community planning is a complex and challenging process

101. The statutory guidance requires CPPs to:

- develop and set out a joint vision with agreed objectives for the area, usually in the form of a community plan
- set challenging outcomes of performance for the CPP along with the contributions expected from individual participants in the partnership
- monitor and report on progress against the agreed outcomes.

102. This requires partner organisations to build and share an in-depth understanding of:

- the aspirations of local communities, gained through extensive community engagement
- the profile of local communities and their use of services
- national policy priorities and how these are affecting partner organisations.

103. Planning and agreeing priorities in a partnership is more challenging than service planning within a single organisation. We found a number of partnerships were finding the process time-consuming and often frustrating. The lack of clarity both locally and at a national level about what community planning should be delivering makes the process even more difficult.

### **CPPs are improving their use of information**

104. Significant progress has been made in the availability and use of robust data to inform community planning. For example, at the national level, data provided by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics has informed development of CPP's ROAs. CPPs have also made progress in sharing local data, both within and between partnerships. Examples include the Tayside Research and Information Network (TRAIN)<sup>44</sup> and North Lanarkshire Information Sharing Group.

105. There is also increased sharing of information on service use between partner organisations. For example, in developing priorities for young people, the New Ways Partnership in the Scottish Borders pulled together council data on young people's demand for housing and the affordability of local housing; NHS data on teenage pregnancies and young people's drink and drugs related injuries; data from the Citizen's Advice Bureau on young people's debt problems; and data from their Social Inclusion Partnership on young people's experience of rural isolation, access to education, employability and career pathways.

### **The quality of community plans varies**

106. The strategic objectives, priorities and actions agreed through the community planning process are usually published in the community plan for each local authority area. Eighteen areas are working to their current community plan. In eight of the remaining areas – Aberdeen City, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Orkney, Perth & Kinross, Stirling and West Lothian – partnerships are currently reviewing their community plans and will publish new ones during 2006. The New Ways Partnership in Scottish Borders, Moray CPP and North Ayrshire CPP are finalising their new community plans following

consultation. Argyll & Bute CPP intends to review its community plan this year and East Lothian CPP is currently completely rewriting its plan. West Dunbartonshire CPP produced a draft community plan for consultation in 2000, which has never been finalised.

**107.** Community planning is a long-term process, and as a result some community plans look forward ten to 20 years. The period covered by community plans ranges from two to 18 years (Appendix 3). Community plans should be a vehicle for improving service delivery – not an end in themselves. Such long-term plans require regular reviewing and updating.

**108.** Only a third of the community plans we examined articulated a clear strategic direction with specific objectives, based on an analysis of the challenges facing the area. For example, Dumfries & Galloway's plan recognises the 'specific challenges of [their] rural area, such as a declining and ageing population and fragmented infrastructure' and sets out clearly how the partnership will respond to these needs. In many plans, however, there is only a general vision for the future of the area without specific links to local needs and aspirations.

**109.** Some community plans clearly link priorities and specific actions to the overall strategic direction, and focus on where partnership working adds value. The community plan for North Lanarkshire, for example, links the overall vision to the CPP's five themes. Under these are longer-term aims and more focused four-year priorities. There are a realistic number of between three and six priorities for each theme and it is clear how working towards the priorities will contribute to the long-term aims of the partnership. Dundee's plan identifies five major themes and sets specific targeted outcomes in relation to each.

**110.** In some plans the priorities detailed in community plans either do not provide a basis for action by the CPP, or are simply amalgams of the corporate priorities of individual partner organisations, without any focus on where partnership working is required to improve services. However as plans are being revised, more are starting to focus on the added value of partnership working. For example, Glasgow's new community plan stresses the importance of working in partnership and identifies targets for engaging communities and adding value through partnership working.

### **Community plans do not always link to the corporate plans of partner organisations**

**111.** Priorities and actions agreed by the CPP need to be reflected in relevant partners' corporate plans to ensure they will be properly resourced and delivered.

**112.** In a few areas, including Renfrewshire, East Ayrshire and West Lothian, the community plan is the lead planning document for the council. This ensures that shared priorities are integrated into mainstream service provision and provides a clear signal of the local authority's commitment to community planning.

**113.** Other local authorities, such as Dumfries & Galloway Council, have integrated their community planning and corporate planning processes. The council's annual performance review informs the overall strategic direction of the community plan. The strategic direction, priorities and targets of the community plan then set the parameters of the council's corporate plan and each of the service plans.

**114.** While there is some evidence that community plans and councils' corporate plans are being integrated, CPPs are finding it more challenging to ensure community plan priorities are properly incorporated into other

partners' corporate plans. These organisations are responsible for a wider range of national priorities and targets and may have several community plans to implement. However, to allow community planning to progress in a truly joined-up way, partner organisations must ensure that community planning objectives are fully integrated into their own corporate plans. One option might be for each partner body to provide an annual statement to the CPP explaining how the community plan is reflected in its own corporate plans.

115. The focus of activity in most community plans is on improving community well-being through specific initiatives, rather than integrating front line services or delivering services more efficiently. As a result, community planning may be perceived by some participants as peripheral to their core service delivery.

### **CPPs are helping to drive local action in national policy areas – how they do this varies according to local priorities**

116. One of the key objectives of the community planning legislation was to provide a mechanism to connect national priorities with those at regional, local and neighbourhood level. Many community plans identify the same priority areas as the Scottish Executive: community safety, employment and economy, education and lifelong learning, environment and infrastructure, and health and social care. While there is broad agreement on the overall areas of activity, there is a wide range of different actions to meet local needs within each of these broad themes. For example, a review of the community safety themes in community plans reveals 31 different priorities which are in turn supported by a variety of specific actions to be undertaken within each area.

### **CPPs are improving their use of performance indicators, but progress has been slow**

117. CPPs need to develop performance indicators to track their progress in achieving the outcomes they desire. This is proving a challenging area for partnerships. Effective performance indicators should meet the following criteria:

- Relevant – relating to the CPPs' objectives.
- Results orientated – covering outcomes as well as inputs and outputs.
- Cost-effective – simple to collect and covering appropriate time frames.
- Easy to understand and interpret.

118. By their nature, CPPs are working in cross-cutting areas and identifying indicators that meet all these criteria is difficult. It may also be difficult to attribute improvement in a desired outcome to a particular initiative or change in service delivery, and outcomes may be influenced by external factors outwith the CPP's control. Particular initiatives may also contribute to a number of different outcomes. In addition, changes in the outcomes desired by CPPs are often long term, and the information required to track progress is difficult and sometimes expensive to collect at the local level.<sup>15</sup>

119. Despite these challenges, it is important for CPPs to track changes in their priority policy areas in order to demonstrate direction of travel and build an understanding of how outcomes may be affected by partnership activity.

120. Only about half of CPPs outline in their community plan how they will monitor and report on progress against the measures and indicators detailed in the plan. This reflects the fact that many CPPs have only recently started to focus on performance management and their performance measurement systems are still developing. The process of developing ROAs required CPPs to develop performance indicators based on targeted outcomes in the service and policy areas covered by the funding. Data on progress in achieving these outcomes should be available later in 2006.

121. However, development of outcome indicators in other policy areas is still variable. Some of the performance indicators used by CPPs to track progress across different themes are illustrated in Appendix 4. They include those linked to shorter-term action plans and higher level outcome indicators.

122. Exhibit 12 of the main report demonstrates a practical example of planning and tracking performance in a specific policy area – young people’s sexual health. This exhibit illustrates a number of characteristics – the long-term nature of community planning, the contribution different activities may make to a single performance indicator, and how successful partnership initiatives can contribute to a number of policy priorities. The Corner Young People’s Health and Information Service is a working partnership between Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside, the Scottish Executive and young people.

### **Performance management and reporting arrangements could be further developed in most CPPs**

123. Day-to-day performance management for community planning priorities is usually delegated to theme groups; CPP boards play a key role in holding these groups to account for their progress against action plans. In almost half of CPPs, theme groups report performance directly to the board, usually on an annual basis. In most other CPPs, theme groups report regularly to a steering group or other executive group which will, in turn, report to the board. A number of partnerships, such as Fife, East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire, have developed a system of rolling reporting, with one theme group reporting to each CPP board meeting.

124. The style, content and frequency of reporting progress to the public varies. Annual reviews of progress tend to celebrate success, with minimal coverage of areas which did not achieve the expected performance. Exhibit 13 (of the main report) sets out a good practice example from the West Lothian Partnership.

### **Scrutiny, governance and risk management arrangements in CPPs require further development**

125. Good governance encourages the public trust and participation that enables services to improve. It leads to good performance, good stewardship of public money and ultimately good outcomes.<sup>16</sup> The importance of good governance has been stressed in a number of recent Audit Scotland reports.<sup>17</sup>

126. The principles of good governance and accountability apply as much to partnerships as they do to individual organisations, but they may be more challenging to implement. Working across organisational boundaries increases complexity and creates ambiguity which may weaken accountability.

127. While progress on theme group action plans may be reported to CPPs, there is a clear distinction between managerial oversight of service delivery and good scrutiny. We found little evidence of community planning action plans being subjected to robust scrutiny by CPP boards or other nominated groups within the community planning structure.

128. CPPs boards, as well as the individual partners, need adequate governance arrangements to assess performance and manage risk in areas of CPP activity.

129. Elected members have a clear scrutiny role in relation to council policy and expenditure. Four CPPs reported that elected members played a scrutiny role in relation to community planning. In East Ayrshire, for example, the council's Policy and Resources Committee has responsibility for scrutinising community planning priorities for action.

130. The scrutiny role for members is more complicated when decisions are made collectively through the CPP and involve resources from other organisations as well as the council. While the democratic accountability and scrutiny arrangements in councils are well-developed, CPPs need to consider whether community planning policy and expenditure should be accountable and scrutinised by only one partner, or whether they wish to make other arrangements for scrutiny.

131. We also found little evidence that CPP boards take a systematic approach to risk management. None has yet established joint risk registers related to their community plan. However, South Lanarkshire Council is in the process of developing a corporate risk register for the CPP, and in some areas, such as Angus Council, risks related to community planning have been incorporated into the council's corporate risk register. Adopting a risk management approach could assist CPPs in developing their planning and performance frameworks.

### **CPPs need to review how effectively the partnership is working**

132. Reviewing and assessing their own effectiveness is equally challenging for CPPs. When asked to identify their achievements, most CPPs identified progress in building a culture of partnership working, improved knowledge and relations among partners or better joint working. These are essential first steps in developing a partnership. While partners may demonstrate a high degree of goodwill towards the process, there is very little hard information about the effectiveness of CPPs themselves.

133. A number of self assessment tools are available for partnerships to review their own effectiveness.<sup>18</sup> These have not been used to any great extent by CPP boards, although a few (seven CPPs) have commissioned external reviews of their effectiveness. From our case study areas, CPPs which were working well shared some common characteristics:

- Committed leadership among all partners.
- A citizen focus to their work.
- A shared vision for the area.
- Clearly resourced action plans.
- Clear performance management arrangements.

We have developed an evaluation framework to assist CPPs and partner organisations improve the effectiveness of their community planning, based on these characteristics and recognised good practice.

This can be used as a starting point for assessing the performance of individual CPPs in future.

## Recommendations

134. CPPs should:

- agree a shared vision and a manageable number of priorities for their community plan
- develop processes for managing performance and agree indicators to track progress on key local issues
- develop their arrangements for scrutiny of community plans and expenditure
- develop their approaches to risk management
- review how effectively they are operating as a partnership.

135. Local authorities and local partner organisations should:

- ensure that all relevant priorities and related actions agreed by the CPP are incorporated into their corporate plans
- consider providing an annual statement to the CPP explaining how the community plan is reflected in their own corporate plans
- contribute to joint risk registers related to community planning.

14 Includes Angus, Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils.

15 In 2000, Audit Scotland published *How are we doing? Measuring the performance of community safety partnerships*, which includes general guidance on performance indicators for cross-cutting policy areas, as well as specific guidance on community safety indicators.

16 *The Good Governance Standard for Public Services*, Independent Commission for Good Governance in Public Services, 2004.

17 For example, Overview of the local authority audits 2005, March 2006; Following the public pound: a follow up report, December 2005; Overview of the performance of the NHS in Scotland 2004/05, December 2005.

18 *Assessment of Partnership Toolkits: Final Report, Volume 2, Summary of Toolkits*, Rocket Science UK Ltd on behalf of Communities Scotland and The Community Planning Taskforce, 2003.

## Part 5. Agenda for action: summary and recommendations

136. Community planning has an important role in improving public services and community well-being in Scotland. In these early days CPPs have concentrated on putting structures and arrangements in place to deliver these aims, and there is limited information available about their achievements. It is now time for them to move on to demonstrate improvements for local communities and in service delivery.

137. However in order for community planning to progress significantly, there needs to be agreement nationally and locally about the focus and priorities for community planning, and the extent to which CPPs should exercise control over resources. This would provide the basis for measuring progress in the long

term. The Scottish Executive with its executive agencies and other central bodies need to actively support such an agreement.

138. This study provides an overview of community planning in Scotland and identifies where changes need to happen in order for community planning to progress. Audit Scotland will continue to report to the Accounts Commission results from the audits of Best Value and Community Planning, which will increasingly hold individual councils to account for their performance on community planning.

### **Full list of recommendations**

139. The Scottish Executive and CPPs should agree:

- a small number of strategic priorities where CPPs can add value through partnership working
- how to measure performance against these policy areas.

140. The Scottish Executive, with executive agencies and other central bodies, should:

- improve coordination and integration among initiatives
- rationalise the different funding streams accessed by partnerships
- develop a more standard approach to monitoring spend against individual funding streams.

141. Nationally accountable partners (eg, Scottish Enterprise, the NHS and Communities Scotland), supported by the Scottish Executive, should set clear guidelines for their local organisations (eg, NHS boards, LECs) on what they expect to be achieved through local partnership working. This should be supported by allowing greater flexibility and autonomy to accommodate local CPP priorities when responding to national priorities.

142. The Scottish Executive should review the number of partnerships it requires local authorities and other partner organisations to establish, and ensure there are clear remits and no duplication.

143. Local authorities and partner organisations should:

- develop schemes of delegation to streamline decision-making within CPPs
- ensure that all relevant priorities and related actions agreed by the CPP are incorporated into their corporate plans
- consider providing an annual statement to the CPP explaining how the community plan is reflected in their own corporate plans
- contribute to joint risk registers related to community planning.

144. CPPs should:

- ensure the CPP board is clear on its remit, role and responsibilities, and is structured to fulfil these
- define clearly the role for elected members and members of other partner governing bodies within their community planning arrangements
- ensure that community engagement becomes more sustained and systematic across partners and champion the use of the National Standards for Community Engagement
- review and rationalise structures to focus on delivering services that add value
- consider developing a partnership guide which describes the roles and remits of each element of their structure
- agree a shared vision and a manageable number of priorities for their community plan
- develop processes for managing performance and agree indicators to track progress on key local issues
- develop their arrangements for scrutiny of community plans and expenditure
- develop their approaches to risk management
- review how effectively they are operating as a partnership.

145. The priority which CPPs may wish to give to implementing these different recommendations will depend on their individual circumstances. Using the evaluation framework in Exhibit 14 (of the main report) may assist CPPs in identifying which areas for improvement they wish to prioritise.

## **Appendix 1. Scottish Executive funding intended for partnership working in 2004/05 and 2005/06**

See main report for table

## **Appendix 2. Methods of community engagement**

The chart illustrated in this section of the main report indicates the extent to which different types of community engagement activities are used by CPPs to support the work of some of their theme groups.

Examples of different approaches to community engagement include:

- Protocols detailing the nature of consultation between the CPP and communities. The North Lanarkshire CPP is one of several with a Community Engagement Strategy which includes a 'Schedule of Consultations System' to coordinate and plan community consultation exercises by individual partners or the CPP as a whole.

- Community planning conferences to provide a public forum for debating community planning issues and to celebrate achievements. Angus CPP has run conferences annually since 2003.
- In Stirling, staff promoted the involvement of young people in local community planning by recruiting six of them to act as agents. They organised an event for over 100 young people where they planned for the future and worked with the CPP to secure resources for youth services in the area.
- Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire, with assistance from the local authority's community workers, has held events on regeneration and community involvement in community planning. The aim was to raise awareness of community planning among voluntary organisations and volunteers and to begin to look at how they can work together to shape, implement and monitor community planning.

## **Appendix 3. Publication dates of community plans and period covered**

See table in main report

## **Appendix 4. Theme performance indicators**

See table in main report

## **Appendix 5. Study advisory group members**

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