

## REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS



### IMPLEMENTATION NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 1

This is the first of a series of reports on progress in implementing actions arising from the review of community planning and Single Outcome Agreements, led by the Scottish Government and COSLA, that was conducted earlier this year.

At the heart of the review has been the desire to establish a genuine step change in the outcomes approach and partnership working across public services in Scotland. Expectations of the process are therefore justifiably high and all those with a direct or indirect interest in community planning, including of course community planning partnerships and their members, will be keen to remain up to date with the developments that are taking place following the review.

This bulletin is intended to provide the first step in that process. We hope that you will find it helpful and informative, but would welcome any suggestions for improvement, comments or queries.

#### Background

Public services in Scotland face unprecedented challenges: to improve outcomes for the people of Scotland and reduce inequalities at a time of increased demand, by ensuring the best use of increasingly limited resources.

As the report of the Christie Commission made clear, many of the answers to these challenges are to be found in public agencies focusing on communities and working more effectively together to reduce demand pressures through a significant shift to prevention, early intervention and a stronger and much more integrated focus on 'place'.

Both the Scottish Government and COSLA have clearly endorsed that message, and recognised that the building blocks of that approach already exist through the framework of community planning partnerships and Single Outcome Agreements.

The Scottish Government and COSLA therefore agreed to carry out a joint review aimed at improving the ability of community planning partnerships and SOAs to respond to and deliver the Christie recommendations and the objectives of the public service reform programme. This included agreement that new SOAs would be put in place after the local elections in May 2012.

The review was conducted earlier this year and produced a Statement of Ambition setting out a vision and key principles for the future of community planning, which was endorsed by the Scottish Government and COSLA and published on 15 March. The Statement of Ambition can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/CP/soa>.

The Scottish Government and COSLA subsequently agreed a set of proposals to implement the review's conclusions, which were published on 10 May and are at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/CP/cpreview>.

Those proposals are:

- *a new statutory duty on individual partners to work together to improve outcomes for local communities through participation in community planning partnerships and the provision of resources to deliver SOAs;*
- *placing formal requirements on CPPs to ensure that collaboration is made as effective as possible; and*
- *establishment of a joint national group to provide strategic leadership and guidance to CPPs.*

This set of practical measures is designed to significantly strengthen community planning as a core part of the public service reform agenda.

Ensuring that the conclusions of the review are fully delivered therefore presents major opportunities to achieve a real step change in the outcomes approach and partnership working across the public sector.

### **What's happening now**

As the review moves from the design to the delivery stage, the main priority has been to begin to put in place structures to drive the process forward, resolve any remaining issues, and assess the progress that is made. The actions that have been taken so far are described below.

#### National community planning and SOAs group

The review has recognised that appropriate coordination and collaboration at a national level can have an important role in bringing partners together to deliver the Statement of Ambition locally, and that a new national group should be formed to take that work forward.

It was announced on 12 June that the national group will be chaired by Pat Watters, immediate past-President of COSLA. Its membership will be drawn from strategic leaders in public services and the wider community, including local government political leaders and relevant Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers, as well as senior leaders from public bodies, including local government and the NHS, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector. Two community planning partnership chairs will also be invited to join the group. The group's detailed terms of reference are in the final stages of preparation, and will be published once they have been finalised.

The group is expected to have its first meeting in August and is set to have a pivotal role in implementing and communicating the overarching vision for community planning and Single Outcome Agreements, identifying and addressing issues that have a national dimension, and building the skills and capacity of partnerships.

An early priority for the group will be the development and issue of fresh SOA guidance. The expectation is that this guidance will be produced by autumn 2012 to enable new SOAs to be in place for 1 April 2013, accompanied by appropriate awareness and engagement activity. Scottish Government and COSLA officials will work closely across local and national government, the NHS, public bodies and the third sector to help develop proposals for consideration by the national group.

### **Community Planning Project Board**

A Project Board of senior officials, led by the Scottish Government and COSLA and also including members from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, Audit Scotland, the Improvement Service, the NHS and the Third Sector, has been set up to oversee implementation of the proposals arising from the review. The Project Board's remit is set out in its Terms of Reference, which can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/CP/communityplanningreview/projbrdtr>

The Board had its first meeting on 19 June, at which it discussed how it will manage the implementation project, including an outline work programme, and identified priorities for early action. The most immediate priorities were agreed to be developing and implementing activity for effective communication and engagement with stakeholders – of which this Newsletter is one example – and work to establish the new national group. Other work streams that will be developed and taken forward as part of its work programme include:

- *deepening and extending community engagement;*
- *leadership and culture change to secure more effective partnership working;*
- *embedding partnerships with the Third Sector;*
- *developing the proposed new duties on partners and CPPs;*
- *facilitating development of new SOA guidance by the national CP/SOA group;*
- *scrutiny of CPPs (around the proposals developed by the Accounts Commission);*
- *guidance for public bodies on the importance of engagement with community planning and SOAs;*
- *analysis and use of evidence by CPPs in the preparation of SOAs and wider community planning activity;*
- *building capacity of CPPs to make a decisive contribution to delivery of better local outcomes; and*

- *the interface between community planning and other public service reform initiatives, to ensure that they are mutually supportive and do not cut across each other.*

The Board will have its next meeting on 25 July.

### **Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill**

Although progress to address the Statement of Ambition can of course be made without legislative change, new statutory duties will be required to fulfil the recommendations of the review.

On 6 June the Scottish Government launched an initial public consultation on its proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill. Although no final decision has been taken, the Bill is seen as a possible vehicle for the proposed changes to the statutory duties on community planning that emerged from the review. The proposed Bill covers a wide range of issues, including a number of questions on community engagement with community planning. The consultation can be viewed at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/06/7786>.

It was recently announced that the deadline for responses to the consultation has been extended: it will now run until 19 September 2012. As part of that process, COSLA and the Scottish Government are scheduling a series of road shows to help frame views. Responses to the consultation will then be considered to inform preparation of the draft Bill, which is expected to be the subject of formal consultation in Summer 2013.

### **Next Steps**

It is believed that the recommendations of the review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements can be implemented reasonably quickly, especially as they do not involve restructuring, and do not cut across existing governance and accountability arrangements across the public sector. Given the pace of the review, and that the agreed ambition for Community Planning stretches across the public sector, CPPs will of course have questions about what the proposals mean for them. We are therefore developing a set of frequently asked questions and answers, which we will publish shortly. We will continue to update and develop these as the implementation of the review progresses.

### **Your views**

In the meantime, we would welcome any comments, questions or suggestions that would help shape the programme of engagement with CPPs and other stakeholders that will now be taken forward. You can provide these by emailing the team at: [cpimplementation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cpimplementation@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)