

## **NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP**

### **NOTE OF MEETING ON 2 DECEMBER 2014**

#### **Present:**

Pat Watters, Chair  
John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution & Economy  
Alex Neil MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities & Pensioners' Rights  
Marco Biagi MSP, Minister for Local Government & Community Empowerment  
Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Public Health  
Cllr Michael Cook, Vice President, COSLA  
Cllr Drew Hendry, Leader of SNP Group, COSLA  
Cllr Angus Campbell, Leader of Independent Group, COSLA  
Cllr Allan Wright, Leader of Conservative Group, COSLA  
Cllr Peter Barrett, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, COSLA  
Sandy Watson, Chair, NHS Tayside  
Andrew Robertson, Chair, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde  
John McClelland, Chair, Skills Development Scotland  
Shulah Allan, Convener, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations  
Dr Lena Wilson, Chief Executive, Scottish Enterprise  
Douglas Sinclair, Chair, Accounts Commission (as observer)

#### **In attendance:**

Rory Mair CBE, Chief Executive, COSLA  
Caroline Gardner, Auditor General for Scotland  
Prof James Mitchell, University of Edinburgh and What Works Scotland  
Fiona Garven, Scottish Community Development Centre  
Alasdair Grimes, Rocket Science  
Kenneth Hogg, Director for Local Government and Communities, Scottish Government  
Elinor Mitchell, Deputy Director for Public Bodies and Public Service Reform, Scottish Government  
Kathleen Bessos, Deputy Director for Integration and Reshaping Care, Scottish Government  
Angela Campbell, Deputy Director for Health Analytical Services, Scottish Government  
Alasdair Mckinlay, Public Bodies and Public Service Reform Division, Scottish Government  
David Milne, Public Bodies and Public Service Reform Division, Scottish Government

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed Maureen Watt MSP, Marco Biagi MSP and Cllr Peter Barrett to their first meetings of the group. He also welcomed the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities and Pensioners' Rights to their first meetings in their new roles.

1.2 Apologies were received from the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport, Councillor David O'Neill, Councillor Gary Robinson, Councillor Rhonda Geekie, Vic Emery and Barbara Lindsay.

## 2. Note of Last Meeting

2.1 The Group noted that members agreed the minute of the last meeting (10 June 2014) in correspondence. This was now publicly available on the Scottish Government website.

## 3. Community Planning: Turning Ambition into Action

3.1 The Chair welcomed Douglas Sinclair, Chair, Accounts Commission and Caroline Gardner, Auditor General for Scotland, to present findings from their national audit report on community planning. The report describes sustained commitment to improvement since their first national report in March 2013. Partners and CPPs are, for example, now sharing ownership of resourcing, improving their understanding of resources available to them, and recognising the importance of prevention and community empowerment.

3.2 Even so, the report finds significant further progress is required at both local and national levels for community planning to be truly effective in making a positive difference for local communities. While there has been some good practice, overall leadership, scrutiny and challenge remain weak. Many CPPs are still not clear about what they are expected to achieve. There is confusion over whether community planning should focus on local or national priorities. Greater realism and clarification in the Statement of Ambition is needed, for instance on what the role of CPP boards should be and how much emphasis CPPs can and should place on devoting resources to prevention. There is no framework for assessing the performance and pace of improvement of CPPs. More focused and targeted improvement support is needed.

3.3 In discussion, Mr Sinclair and Ms Gardner welcomed recent work by the NCPG to issue a clear set of key principles that are intended to set out an ambitious but realistic improvement agenda for community planning (as agreed at the last NCPG meeting in June). They also emphasised the different cultures of the various organisations round the CPP table and the importance of partners building mutual trust as a precursor to effective leadership, scrutiny and challenge within the CPP. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill provides a clear framework for these expectations. NCPG members considered the impact of these findings for the Group's ongoing priorities and how it ensures it provides effective national leadership on these.

3.4 **DECISION:** The Group:

- welcomed the report and agreed its findings.
- agreed the following next steps in light of the national audit report:
  - updating the Statement of Ambition, to ensure expectations on CPPs and partner bodies are clear and place appropriate emphasis on where CPPs should make the greatest impact.

- improving understanding of how CPPs are performing, so greater effort can be placed in driving improvement where that is needed most.
- reviewing its structure, so it is nimbler and more action-focused (including an enhanced role for the NCPG sub-group).

3.5 The Group will schedule a full discussion on this at its next meeting.

#### **4. Role of Third Sector in Community Engagement and Co-Production**

4.1 The NCPG previously agreed to commission work to identify current practice, barriers to progress and key characteristics of good practice in community engagement and co-production. The Chair welcomed Prof. James Mitchell, What Works Scotland, Fiona Garven, Scottish Community Development Centre and Alasdair Grimes, Rocket Science to present the key findings from their paper.

4.2 The authors discussed the executive summary of the report which covers 3 main areas:

- enhancing the role of the Third Sector in helping to shape and influence community planning priorities and actions;
- enabling small community and voluntary groups to thrive and contribute – and connecting people and services with those groups; and
- improving approaches to commissioning and procurement.

4.3 In discussion the authors evidenced how the benefits of community engagement and co-production were widely understood and welcomed. However, they considered that progress in each of these areas was often at project or community level rather than embedded across the CPP, although evidence of improved structures and processes to support this work is beginning to emerge.

4.4 The authors indicated that challenges to embedding this approach include cultural barriers and a lack of trust amongst participants, however they consider that the reasons require further analysis. They also noted a disconnect between aspirations of leaders in public bodies for community engagement and co-production and how that is translated into action at a local level. They noted a perceived lack of clarity from CPP level about whose role it is and what supports are available to improve community led activity.

4.5 The NCPG discussed the report and considered next steps, including the role that What Works Scotland in showcasing successful CPP led approaches to community engagement and co-production, and the importance of effective capacity building and support for communities. The Group noted links between the procurement thread and the work of the Public Procurement Reform Board, which provides strategic direction, support and monitor progress on the procurement reform agenda and on which the Third Sector will be represented. They also discussed the duties that the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill will place on CPPs and partners to secure the engagement of communities throughout the community planning process.

4.6 **DECISION:** The Group

- welcomed the report
- agreed to ask senior officers supporting the Group to consider how recommendations in the report should be taken forward.

5. **AOB**

5.1 The Chair notified the Group that this was Councillor Allan Wright's last meeting, as he was standing down as Leader of the Conservative Group at COSLA. The Group expressed its gratitude to Allan for his helpful and constructive contribution to its work.

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

6.1 The Secretariat will explore dates for future meetings in 2015.

**NCPG Secretariat  
December 2014**