



COMMUNITY PLANNING UPDATE

Board Meeting – 28 September 2006

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board on developments in respect of Community Planning.

2. FOUR YEARLY REVIEW PROCESS - PROGRESS

- 2.1 Since the inception of Community Planning, Community Planning Partners have articulated their commitment to carrying out a review of the Community Plan and related thematic Action Plans on a four-yearly basis. The first such review requires to be carried out over 2006/07 to ensure that an updated Community Plan and revised set of Action Plans are ready for full implementation by 1 April 2007.

Review of the Community Plan

- 2.2 It is essential that the Community Plan continues to be 'fit for purpose', reflecting both current and emerging local and national priorities relevant to the broad Community Planning agenda, therefore the existing text is currently being reviewed to highlight where alterations/additions are required.

Revised Thematic Action Plans

- 2.3 Lead Officers and thematic Action Plan Working Groups, supported by Tribal Consulting, are in the process of developing the actions corresponding to the revised Aims of each thematic Action Plan.
- 2.4 The proposed actions will be circulated to Core Partners for consideration and endorsement by 12 October 2006, which will subsequently form the basis for consultation with Partners, communities and other key stakeholders during November/December 2006.

Launch of the Community Plan

- 2.5 As previously stated, an updated Community Plan and revised set of Action Plans require to be ready for full implementation by 1 April 2007.
- 2.6 It is proposed that the opportunity afforded by the launch of the updated Community Plan and new Action Plans for the period 2007/2011 be utilised to celebrate the significant success and achievements of Community Planning in the first four years and raise public awareness. It is proposed that developments in respect of this matter will be presented to a future meeting of the CPP Board and the Board is asked to give consideration to how it could show case its activity during this time.

3. COMMUNITY PLANNING: AN INITIAL REVIEW

- 3.1 Community planning: an initial review was published in June 2006 by Audit Scotland.
- 3.2 The study was undertaken on behalf of the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland, with evidence drawn from interviews with staff from a range of organisations in ten partnership areas and with officials from the Scottish Executive and other national bodies. This qualitative work was supported by a survey of all thirty-two Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs).
- 3.3 The report acknowledges community planning as a long-term process, which will take time to deliver improvements in some areas. The study, therefore, concentrated on reviewing the process in place to deliver community planning, and plans to monitor and evaluate progress over time.
- 3.4 The report reviews the following areas and under each identifies a number of key findings, a summary of which has been included for information:
 - the national context within which community planning operates;
 - local arrangements for community planning; and
 - planning and performance management in CPPs.

The National Context

- The study found that community planning can add value to existing joint working by providing a local strategic framework and building co-operation and trust.
- The significant challenges facing organisations in addressing the potential conflict between local priorities and responding to nationally set targets, and accommodating the differing local priorities across CPPs are highlighted.
- The lack of integration and prioritisation of national policy initiatives creates additional work for CPPs, which have to prioritise national policy objectives and reconcile them with local priorities.
- The report recognises the fragmented nature of funding to support national policy objectives and the requirement for each funding stream to have its own application process, and monitoring and reporting arrangements, which creates an administrative burden.
- It was noted that where CPPs have been through the process of agreeing clear priorities for the area, it was easier for them to respond to the range of policy initiatives and funding streams. In this regard, the fact that the Promoting Community Learning Action Plan of East Ayrshire's Community Plan forms the basis of the Council's submission for the Community Learning and Development Strategy is highlighted.

The Local Context (National Overview)

- The report states that case study work identified that CPPs are most effective when they connect the political and managerial leadership of the different partners; there is clarity of role; and there is commitment to delivering improvement through community planning.
- The considerable effort which CPPs are putting into improving community involvement is recognised. However, the need for engagement to be both sustained and systematic, and for the impacts and benefits to be demonstrated,

is stressed. The opportunity provided by the National Standards for Community Engagement to improve the effectiveness of community engagement is noted.

- In the course of the study, instances of overlap and duplication had been found and the potential to work more collaboratively in combining resources and sharing information from consultation exercises was stressed. In this regard, East Ayrshire's joint commissioning of the 2005 Residents' Survey and the subsequent use of the results in the community planning process and partners' plans for specific service improvements is highlighted.
- It is advocated that CPPs require to link community planning structures with the political decision-making structures of the council and other partner organisations to ensure proper governance for partnerships.
- The report advocates that CPPs should actively seek to rationalise their partnerships arrangements and suggests that CPPs require to ensure that the costs of supporting community planning are adequately reflected in budgets and service planning.

Planning and Performance Management

- The study found that there is some evidence that community plans and council's corporate plans are now being integrated but noted that CPPs are finding it more challenging to ensure that community plan priorities are incorporated with other statutory partners' corporate plans. In this regard, the fact that the community plan is the lead planning document for the Council in East Ayrshire and West Lothian is highlighted, with this seen as a mechanism for ensuring that shared priorities are integrated into mainstream service provision and providing a clear signal of the local authority's commitment to community planning.
- The report stresses that CPPs require to move on from developing processes to demonstrating the impact they are having on services and the well-being of local communities.
- The report states that in four CPPs, elected members have a scrutiny role in relation to community planning. East Ayrshire's Policy and Resources Committee, which has responsibility for scrutinising the community planning priorities for action was specifically cited and the decision-making authority of staff involved in NHS Ayrshire and Arran's Community Health Partnerships, is highlighted in respect of governance.

3.5 The report highlights that CPPs, which were found to be working well, shared common characteristics, as follows:

- committed leadership among all partners;
- a citizen focus to their work;
- a shared vision for the area;
- clearly resourced action plans; and
- clear performance management arrangements.

3.6 Based on these characteristics and recognised good practice, Audit Scotland has developed an evaluation framework to assist CPPs in improving the effectiveness of their community planning, which strongly resembles the Partnership Assessment Scorecard currently being utilised in East Ayrshire for this purpose.

3.7 In addition, the report includes recommendations for action by the Scottish Executive, nationally accountable partners, local partner organisations and CPPs.

3.8 East Ayrshire's action in this regard is currently being progressed. Out of the ten recommendations, East Ayrshire has made significant progress against the majority and action to address any outstanding issues will be included within the Community Planning Joint Officers' Group (JOG) Workplan.

4. AUDIT OF BEST VALUE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING 2006

4.1 The Board will be aware of the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning carried out by Audit Scotland in respect of East Ayrshire Council's performance.

4.2 The independent Auditor's report was released on 6 September 2006 and highlights the Council's commitment to Best Value and "the enthusiastic and innovative ways the Council works with its range of partners in delivering valued local services through Community Planning and joint working".

4.3 The overall conclusions contained in the Audit Scotland report, in respect of Community Planning, are as follows:

- "through...effective working with its Community Planning Partners, the Council is well placed to deliver on its long-term vision for the area";
- "joint working is a key strength in Community Planning";
- "the council demonstrates innovation and is making an impact on Community Plan and strategic priorities through a range of projects. Evidence from customers, staff and community partners indicated significant levels of satisfaction with the council and its work"; and
- "effective leadership is building a positive organisational culture in East Ayrshire. There is a strong focus on celebrating success and an enthusiasm to be 'best in class', which contributes to the council's achievements".

4.4 Fourteen improvement actions have been identified for the Council in the Improvement Agenda and each area of activity is currently being progressed. A report on this matter will be presented to a Special Meeting of the Council on 20 September 2006.

5. NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5.1 The National Standards for Community Engagement (National Standards) were launched by the Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland in May 2005, and provide measurable performance statements, which can be used to improve the quality and process of community engagement.

5.2 The Board will recall that, as part of the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) development process, Community Planning Partners agreed to ensure that the National Standards are achieved, as a minimum.

5.3 The CPP Board re-affirmed its commitment to achieving the National Standards at its meeting of 9 March 2006 and to ensure that respective agencies/organisations are aware of the content of the National Standards.

Support Programme

5.4 Communities Scotland has been tasked by Scottish Ministers with providing a support programme to ensure an understanding of, and commitment to, the use of the National Standards.

- 5.5 East Ayrshire was allocated six consultancy days for implementation of phase one of the support programme. A range of events and awareness raising sessions were organised as part of the consultancy programme.
- 5.6 Communities Scotland has approved an extension to the National Standards Support Programme to be delivered by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC).
- 5.7 As part of phase two of the Support Programme, East Ayrshire has been allocated a further four consultancy days, which require to be utilised by 31 March 2007.
- 5.8 It is proposed to implement two of the following options for the consultancy allocation:
- an event which will focus on raising awareness of the National Standards;
 - an in-depth training session, which will focus on how the National Standards link to existing planning and evaluation tools such as LEAP; and
 - identification of projects to pilot the National Standards.
- 5.9 It is anticipated that an event will be held late in 2006, with the other option being implemented early in 2007.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The CPP Board is asked to:
- i) note the progress in respect of the Four-yearly Review;
 - ii) note the findings of 'Community Planning: an initial review';
 - iii) note the publication of the Accounts Commission's Audit of Best Value and Community Planning Report and the positive conclusions contained within the report;
 - iv) endorse the proposals for phase 2 of the support programme in respect of the National Standards;
 - v) otherwise, note the content of the report.

Gwen Barker
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14 September 2006