
Report to: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 20 May, 2010

Subject: Community Planning

Report by: Head of Strategy & Customer Services

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 A Scrutiny Focus Group led by Councillor Campbell met to consider community planning and a report was produced further to that Group's deliberations.
- 1.2 That report to the Scrutiny Focus Group made some general points about community planning and raised five specific issues for further investigation. These were:
- democratic deficit
 - governance arrangements
 - communication with elected members
 - consultations with local people
 - finance.
- 1.3 This paper provides a commentary on the various issues raised in the Focus Group's report.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) notes this paper as a contribution to its deliberations on community planning in Clackmannanshire;
- b) provides any specific feedback or recommendations for the review of community planning which is being carried out by the Alliance.

3.0 Community Planning - General Background

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Focus Group report highlights one aim of community planning as being, "*making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them.*"
- 3.2 In addition to this, national guidance describes another main aim of community planning as being to ensure a commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.

- 3.3 The national guidance further describes two main principles of community planning as providing:
- *the key over-arching partnership framework helping to co-ordinate other initiatives and partnerships and where necessary acting to rationalize and simplify a cluttered landscape; and*
 - *the ability to improve the connection between national priorities and those at regional, local and neighbourhood levels.*
- 3.4 Local authorities have a duty under section 15 of the *Local Government In Scotland Act 2003* to initiate, facilitate and maintain the community planning process. Other partners, including the NHS, police and fire, have a duty to participate in community planning and are also responsible for facilitating the process by which the community planning partnership:
- *develops and sets out a joint vision with agreed objectives for the area, normally in the form of a Community Plan*
 - *sets out challenging performance outcomes for the Community Planning Partnership (as a whole), along with the contribution expected from individual participants in the partnership towards delivering these key outcomes*
 - *identifies and allocates the resources necessary to achieve the agreed outcomes*
 - *monitors progress with regard to the agreed outcomes and regularly evaluates progress*
 - *streamlines the arrangements for the planning and delivery of services*
 - *develops processes which maintain a regular and effective means of communication between participants in the partnership*
 - *develops processes for the sharing of appropriate information between partners.*
- 3.5 The introduction of Single Outcome Agreements has bolstered many of the above tasks.
- 3.6 It would be fair to say, however, that locally (and possibly nationally), there has potentially been greater success in community planning in developing partnership working at organisational level than in engaging communities in decisions which affect them. This is discussed further in Section 8 of this report.

4.0 Community Planning In Clacks

- 4.1 Community planning in Clackmannanshire has evolved over a number of years and began long before the statutory duty which came into being from 2003. This is now established in a formal structure which encompasses a number of mechanisms for partnership working and community engagement.
- 4.2 The formal community planning structures are set out in the Alliance's Memorandum of Understanding, which also sets out partnership ethos, general operating framework and partnership code of conduct.
- 4.3 According to the Memorandum:

In carrying out their functions, members of the partnership should recognise and give effect to the following principles:

- *all partners have committed to the principles of Community Planning and decisions reached should reflect this commitment.*
- *each partner member should take decisions in his/her capacity as a member of the partnership in such a way as he/she considers will best further the interests of Clackmannanshire and/or the community planning partnership.*
- *partners should commit effort and resources to facilitate and promote community planning*
- *partners should support partnership development and capacity building.*

Partners have shared accountabilities to support the achievement of the priority outcomes contained in the Clackmannanshire Community Plan and the Clackmannanshire Single Outcome Agreement.

Although members of the partnership, partners bodies remain autonomous organisations and membership of the partnership does not alter individual accountabilities or functional responsibilities of each member organisation.

- 4.4 It can be helpful to bear in mind that community planning is more than just the grouping of the Clackmannanshire Alliance. While important as the strategic core of community planning, the Alliance is supported by a range of other structures and mechanisms (formal and informal) which contribute to partnership working and community engagement at a range of levels and link to service delivery.

5.0 Democratic Deficit

- 5.1 The report of the Scrutiny Group points out that there are two elected members on the Clacks Alliance and that some other Councils have greater councillor representation on the overarching community planning forum.
- 5.2 Initially when the Alliance was established, the only elected member on the group was the Council Leader. This was increased to two elected members (Council Leader and Leader of the Opposition) in 2007 at the suggestion of the Council.
- 5.3 Elected members are also represented on some other community planning structures. For example, the Community Health Partnership Committee (which is an Alliance Partnership Team) formally has two councillors as members; and, in our case, the Committee happens to be chaired by an elected member in his capacity as member of the NHS Board. In addition, some elected members have opted to attend community planning meetings in the capacity of observer.
- 5.4 It is certainly the case that some community planning partnerships have more elected members on their Alliance equivalent and there is no set template for partnerships to follow; rather, structures develop in response to local requirements.

5.5 Currently, the Council has the greatest voting representation at the Alliance as can be seen from the membership list below (extracted from the Memorandum of Understanding):

Council (4)

- Leader of the Council
- Opposition Leader of the Council
- Council Chief Executive
- Council Head of Strategic Policy

Central Scotland Police (1)

- Clackmannanshire Area Commander

NHS Forth Valley (1)

- General Manager Clackmannanshire CHP

Central Scotland Fire & Rescue Service (1)

- Head of Community Safety

Forth Valley College (1)

- Associate Principal, Forth Valley College

Business Community (1)

- Representative of Clackmannanshire Business

Voluntary & Community Sectors (3)

- Representative of Clackmannanshire CVS
- Representative of the Joint Community Councils' Forum
- Representative of the Clackmannanshire Tenants & Residents Federation

5.6 After the Council, the community and voluntary sectors have the greatest numerical representation.

5.7 In considering the membership balance of the Alliance, it may be helpful to bear in mind that the Alliance is a partnership of many agencies and interests. While the Council is charged in law with leading the partnership, it is also one of many agencies with legitimate interest in promoting and supporting Clackmannanshire.

5.8 The current membership has been agreed by the Alliance and any changes would also be subject to partnership agreement. However, it remains open to any partner to put forward proposals for change. Some issues which might come into play in any review of membership might be:

- the potential for the politicisation of Alliance working should the number of elected members increase and the potential impact of that on partnership working
- the possibility of Alliance membership from the statutory agencies coming from Board members rather than appointed officers

- the overall balance in terms of numbers of Alliance members
- ensuring the membership is able to deliver its remit (set out in para 3.4 of this paper and in the Memorandum of Understanding).

6.0 Governance Arrangements

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Group report highlights that there does not seem to be any formal Council mandate given to elected members serving on the Clacks Alliance and also that these elected members do not seem to have any authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council.
- 6.2 The two elected members were formally appointed to the Alliance by the Council at its meeting on 24 May, 2007. This appointment gave the elected members the authority to represent the Council and to take decisions on its behalf at meetings of the Alliance.
- 6.3 The remit elected members on the Alliance are working to is clearly set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

7.0 Communications With Elected Members

- 7.1 The Scrutiny report suggests that it might be helpful to have a regular (potentially quarterly) schedule of meetings between the Alliance and elected members.
- 7.2 A joint event held in November 2009 to review the SOA was a useful initial meeting and it is proposed that more of these sessions are held. Certainly, periodic briefings for elected members should not be problematic to arrange. It would be of assistance to get a sense from elected members of the sort of information/discussion topic which would be of most assistance to them in any such briefing and whether the proposed meetings would be with all Alliance members or with a selection.
- 7.3 Alliance agendas and papers are posted on Clacksweb, Alliance meetings are open to the public and interested parties to attend and a newsletter is posted on COIN shortly after each Alliance meeting, as well as being distributed to partners and other organisations (e.g. community councils). In addition, each representative on the Alliance is expected to report back to their constituent organisation on community planning activity.
- 7.4 That said, there is no doubt that communications around community planning could always be improved. As already alluded to in this report, something to bear in mind is that community planning activity is much more extensive than just the forum which is the Alliance and frequently communications although not badged "community planning" are the product of community planning activity.

8.0 Consultation With Communities

- 8.1 The Scrutiny report states that a "top down" rather than "bottom up" seems to be the current preferred method of conducting community planning.

- 8.2 The community and voluntary sectors are represented on the Alliance (currently through CVS, the Joint Community Councils' Forum and the Tenants & Residents Association; the business sector is represented by Clacks Business on a number of forums, too) and there are also a range of community and voluntary sector interests represented on the various Partnership Teams as follows:
- Clacks Alliance Executive Group - CVS
 - Clacks Community Health Partnership Committee - CVS, Public Partnership Forum
 - Community Safety Partnership Team - CVS, Vacancy (one of Joint Community Councils' Forum, Tenants & Residents' Federation)
 - Economic Development Partnership Team - Clacks Business, CVS
 - Environment Partnership Team - Community Councils (x2), CVS, Youth Council (x2)
- 8.3 In addition, the Community Learning & Development Partnership Team has a specific remit around community engagement at a range of levels.
- 8.4 The community planning partnership operates the Clacks 1000, which gathers the views of 1000 Clackmannanshire residents on a wide range of issues. The results and findings of various Clacks 1000 surveys are reported to the Alliance and issues picked up by partners and fed through their business planning processes.
- 8.5 The Alliance has also now established a Clacks Business Panel on the back of the Imagine Alloa project and this will provide a more direct mechanism to engage and consult directly with the business community.
- 8.6 It is accepted that these methods of community engagement are more "top down" than "bottom up". Having said that, it is important to reflect that Council services, as well as partners, consult and involve residents, customers and stakeholders quite extensively on a wide range of issues and that the input from those consultations inform service development and delivery on an ongoing basis. In this regard, community involvement in community planning (if defined as the Alliance) is the tip of a very large iceberg.
- 8.7 Certainly, what we do not have in Clackmannanshire is "bottom up" local community planning in the sense that community representatives in a local geographic area derive a local community plan which sets out the community's and the partners' ambitions and actions for that geographic area. The general reason for this is that partners have felt that the size of Clackmannanshire as a county is a more appropriate geographic area than smaller settlements in terms of effective and efficient targeting of resources. That said, there are examples of local plans through partnership work which has been carried out over the years in areas such as Alloa South & East and Tullibody.
- 8.8 The Alliance, however, recognises the need to continue to make efforts to engage communities at appropriate levels and welcomes any specific proposals from partners to support this.

9.0 Finance

- 9.1 The Scrutiny report raises questions about the future of the Fairer Scotland Fund from April, 2010, (when it has been rolled up into the Council's budget) and states that it will be important to put in place arrangements to allow the Alliance to continue to operate.
- 9.2 Between 2008-2010, the Fairer Scotland Fund was routed via the Council for the community planning partnership to allocate to support people overcome barriers to employment to allow them to access and sustain employment opportunities. The ring-fence was removed from 2010-11 and the allocation to the Council made as part of block allocation via RSG: the 2010-11 allocation which was rolled up in the Council's budget was £2.263m.
- 9.3 The Alliance has been aware since 2008 of the position in relation to this roll-up and limited the amount of resource it allocated beyond March 2010 until there was clarity about what resource would be available in 2010-11. At its meeting on 28 January, 2010, the Council agreed to allocate £1.8M from its 2010-11 budget for distribution by the Clackmannanshire Alliance to programmes which support the criteria and principles of the Fairer Scotland Fund.
- 9.4 It is not yet known whether or not there will be an allocation similar to the Fairer Scotland Fund beyond March 2011. There are no other discrete, ring-fenced funding streams available to the Alliance and it seems unlikely that there will be in future. The key challenge for partners will be to target existing resources on joint priorities.

10.0 Conclusions

- 10.1 The Scrutiny Focus Group has raised pertinent issues about community planning which are under active consideration by the Alliance via a review of its operations. The feedback from the Scrutiny Committee will provide valuable input to that ongoing review which is expected to result in a greater streamlining of community planning structures and a greater focus on key priorities within the Single Outcome Agreement.

11.0 Sustainability Implications - N/A

12.0 Resource Implications

Financial Details - there are no implications for the Council's budgets arising from this report

Staffing - there are no implications for the Council's establishment arising from this report

13.0 Exempt Reports

Is this report exempt? No

14.0 Declarations

- 14.1 The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

Our Priorities 2008 - 2011 (Please tick)

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment
- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

Council Policies (Please detail)

The Council's Corporate Plan is based on the SOA.

15.0 Equalities Impact

Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations? N/A

16.0 Legality

14.1 In adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

17.0 Appendices - none

18.0 Background Papers

1 - Clacks Alliance Memorandum of Understanding

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	TEL NO/EXTENSION
Elaine McPherson	Head of Strategy & Customer Services	01259 452013

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Elaine McPherson	Head of Strategy & Customer Services	Signed: E McPherson
Angela Leitch	Chief Executive	Signed: A Leitch