

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 16 MAY 2013**

**AUDIT SCOTLAND REPORT – IMPROVING COMMUNITY PLANNING IN SCOTLAND**

**REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

This report highlights the key messages arising from the [Audit Scotland report – Improving Community Planning in Scotland](#).

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) Note the key findings arising from the Audit Scotland report into Improving Community Planning.
- (ii) Agree that the key findings for partnerships are considered by the Angus Community Planning Partnership.

**2. BACKGROUND**

Audit Scotland published a report Improving Community Planning in Scotland on 20 March 2013. The report brought together findings from the pilot community planning audits undertaken by Audit Scotland into community planning in:

- Aberdeen City
- North Ayrshire
- Scottish Borders

Audit Scotland now intend to roll out a community planning partnership audit across other local authority areas in Scotland with up to five areas which are yet to be determined in 2013/14. A copy of the Audit Scotland Report – Improving Community Planning in Scotland is available at [http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2013/nr\\_130320\\_improving\\_cpp.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/central/2013/nr_130320_improving_cpp.pdf) and is also available in the Members' Lounge.

**3. CURRENT POSITION**

There is a renewed focus on community planning and partnership work following the Christie Commission report and the subsequent response to that report by government, placing community planning at the heart of public sector reform in Scotland. As part of the new arrangements Scottish Government has established a national community planning group and developed a statement of ambition for partnerships. There is a growing expectation nationally that partnerships need to make a step change in performance.

Within this context, the report Improving Community Planning in Scotland has a number of findings for partnerships to consider as follows:

- Partnership working is now generally well established and many examples of joint working are making a difference for people and communities across Scotland.
- Ten years after community planning has been given a statutory basis, CCP's are not able to show that they have had significant impact in delivering improved outcomes.

- Barriers to community planning need to be removed and all partners need to work together to overcome barriers, for example shifting the perception that community planning is a council driven exercise and not a core part of the day job for other partners.
- That both government and community planning partnerships must show strong and sustained shared leadership to deliver improvements.
- That community planning partnerships have not been clear enough about the key priorities for improvement.
- That partnerships need to clearly set out how local partnership working is making a distinctive and additional contribution to improving public services and improving outcomes for local people.
- That community planning has had little influence over how the significant sums of public money available are used.
- That partners have not been robustly held to account in terms of performance.
- That inequalities are often complex and deep rooted and CPP's can make a real difference if they focus their efforts to bring to bear the full weight of their combined resources, skills and expertise.
- That there is an increasing emphasis on CPP's planning and delivering services in preventative ways.
- That there is a risk that wide ranging reforms to public services in Scotland create tensions between national and local priorities for change.
- That at present it is not clear how important aspects the review of community planning and health and social care integration developments are being integrated.
- That CPP's need to focus more clearly on where they can make the greatest difference in meeting the complex challenges facing communities.
- That CPP's need to ensure that all partners align their service and financial planning arrangements with community planning priorities.
- That CPP's need to significantly improve their governance and accountability and planning and performance management arrangements by ensuring the best use of public resources, showing that partnership working is making a significant difference in improving services and delivering better outcomes, clarifying roles and responsibilities for elected members and non executives and officers, and ensuring that CPP decision making is reflected fully within the governance structures of all partner organisations.

#### **4. ANGUS COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP**

The Angus Community Planning Partnership has recently reviewed its effectiveness resulting in new structural arrangements that will help deliver a step change in performance in community planning in Angus. The development of the new Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement is underway and includes a specific plan for prevention detailing what partners are collectively doing and spending on prevention as far as possible in order to then understand how resources can be best shifted towards prevention.

Six month and annual reporting of arrangements of performance against outcomes have been in place for a number of years and additional information on demonstrating impact for people and communities is being built up.

In terms of our evidence base, we are able to demonstrate through an initial strategic assessment that account has been taken of needs and this evidence has informed the key priorities for improvement across Angus.

With regard to improving governance the Angus Community Planning Partnership has always been clear that the decision making arrangements sit within the context of individual partner organisations.

Robust reporting arrangements through Angus Council are in place, however this could be better developed across a range of other partner organisations.

The most significant area of improvement that is required is the integration of resources, skills and expertise amongst partners to deliver significant change to meet the desired step change in performance.

## **5. RISKS**

There is a risk that community planning does not deliver the desired step change in performance resulting in poorer outcomes for people and communities. There is also a risk that the resources required to improve the performance of partnerships are unable to be shifted towards more preventative work that will impact on improved outcomes over time due to cuts in public sector finance.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with the terms of this report.

## **7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The issues contained in this report fall within an approved category that has been confirmed as exempt from an equalities perspective.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

The Strategic Director – Communities, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

The Audit Scotland report sets out a challenge to partnerships, government and the National Community Planning Group that promotes a step change in partnership work across Scotland.

The Angus Community Planning partnership will be audited in due course but significant progress has been made to date in Angus, with improvement required particularly in understanding and integrating resources, as well as being clearer about our plans to shift resources towards a more preventative approach.

**RICHARD STIFF  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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