



OUTER HEBRIDES COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minute of Meeting held in Committee Room 3, Council Offices, Stornoway and through Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 26 March 2025 at 2.00pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Paul Steele, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Chair)
Ms Alannah Logue, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament
Mr Chris Smith, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Ms Dolina Smith, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Elaine Mackay, NHS Western Isles
Cllr Gordon Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr John Maciver, Hebridean Housing Partnership
Ms Jemma Macvicar, Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn/ Galson Estate
Ms Kirsty Walker, Scottish Government
Ms Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Malcolm Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Niall Houston, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Mr Ranald Robertson, HITRANS
Ms Sheena Stewart, Third Sector Interface Western Isles

APOLOGIES

Mr Colum Durkan, NHS Western Isles
Mr David MacLennan, NatureScot
Ms Dena Macleod, Hebridean Housing Partnership
Cllr Duncan MacInnes MBE, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Ms Ealasaid Dhòmhnaillach, Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Ms Gillian McCannon, NHS Western Isles
Ms Joanna Peteranna, Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Mr Joe MacPhee, UHI North, West and Hebrides
Ms Susan MacPherson, SEPA
Ms Susan Macrae, Skills Development Scotland

MINUTES

Welcome and
Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and the above apologies were noted. The Chair ruled item 2 as urgent to allow the matter to be considered before the next meeting of the Board.

Minute of Meeting of 18 December 2024 1.

The Minute of the Meeting of 18 December 2024 was approved.

Community Planning Resources and LOIP Review 2.

With reference to item 7 of the Minute of the Meeting of 18 December 2024, Mr Malcom Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar submitted a Report which detailed progress on the proposals for a review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-27 and the development of a refreshed LOIP and Performance Management Framework for 2027 onwards.

It was noted that following discussion at the OHCPP Board meeting on 18 December 2024, Mr Burr had issued an email to all members of the Board on 20 December 2024, and again on 13 January 2025, which detailed the Statutory, and Local Partners to the Partnership, the job remit of the newly appointed Strategy Officer (0.4fte) and requesting comment on the availability of resources from partners to support the work of the Community Planning Partnership, including the review of the LOIP 2017 – 2027, and the development of a refreshed LOIP and Performance Management Framework for 2027 onwards.

The Report noted that to date, three responses have been received: Highlands and Islands Enterprise have offered £5k per annum for three years; Hebridean Housing Partnership have offered senior officer input to support the work on a revised LOIP; and NatureScot had noted that no resources can be identified at present. It was noted that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had previously provided one-off funding to support the work of the Community Planning Partnership. The Report further noted that while these identified contributions are indeed valued and appreciated, they do not by themselves provide the level of support required for a shared vision that ensures partners' strategic aims are reflected through the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

The review of the Community Planning Partnership structure and groups would ideally have partner agency involvement to ensure the priorities and performance measures are within a framework that meet community needs. Given the limited resource commitment from statutory partners, it is therefore proposed that the Comhairle, working alongside those who have offered support, lead the review process.

With regard to the Annual Report 2024/25, which is required prior to developing a new LOIP, it is proposed that partners submit an update on their performance against the targets set out in the LOIP by 30 April 2025. This information will be collated into the Annual Report and presented to the Board for approval later in 2025. It is imperative that partners provide the relevant data and information within the required timelines to ensure that their organisation is represented in the Report.

In discussion, it was recognised that a Special Meeting of the OHCPP Board may be required to consider and approve information as part of the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the resource allocated by partners to support the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership, detailed at paragraph 2.3 to the Report, following the request by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for strategic and/or financial support;**
- (2) to note the resource capacity indicated cannot support the current Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership structure;**
- (3) that each organisation represented on the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership would submit an update of their organisation's performance against the targets set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017 – 2027 by 30 April 2025 to inform the Annual Report 2024/25;**
- (4) that a review of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership structure be led by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and reported back to the Board in due course;**
- (5) to note that the development of a new Local Outcome Improvement Plan will commence following completion of the Annual Report 2024/25; and**

(6) that if required, a Special Meeting of the of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Board would be convened to consider and approve information as part of the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Single Authority 3.
Model

With reference to item 9 of the Minute of the Meeting of 18 December 2024, Mr Malcolm Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar noted that consideration of radical public sector reform was now moving at pace, with the Scottish Government now recognising the merit of reform.

Mr Burr noted that Public Sector Reform, and the establishment of a Single Island Authority was not being fully explored on the basis that this would create financial savings, but there is a recognition that this could be achieved, but was about improving services, or at least preventing a diminution of services in the islands, and ensuring that there is a sustainable public sector in the island in the medium to long term. It was noted that the Public Finance Minister, Scottish Government had convened a Public Service Reform Summit of local authorities, public bodies, third sector organisations and business figures calling for systemic change in the delivery model for public services. The Summit had considered options and opportunities to make the public sector as efficient and effective as possible within existing available finances.

Mr Burr noted that the Comhairle will consider a Report in relation to the Single Island Authority as part of its April 2025 Committee Series, and that this would be shared with the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Executive Group, and Board for consideration and information thereafter. Mr Burr noted that a number of models for delivery for a Single Island Authority are being explored, including an option to deliver this through the Community Planning Partnership, although this is not recognised as a preferred model for delivery by the Comhairle. Mr Burr noted that there could be merit in convening a dedicated workshop to consider, once finalised, the Comhairle's Report on the Single Island Authority and options for models of delivery.

It was agreed to note the update.

Community Planning and Community Engagement – CnES Internal Audit Report 2024/25 4.

Mr Malcolm Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar submitted a Report by the Comhairle's Internal Audit in relation to Community Planning and Engagement. The Report was considered by the Comhairle's Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 6 February 2025 and provides an overview of the Comhairle's arrangements for the operation and management of Community Planning and Community Engagement, which are relevant to all partners. The Findings, Recommendations and Action Plan at Section 3 of the Report will be used to inform the review of the Community Planning Partnership Structure and inform the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

It was agreed to note the Report.

Partnership Headlines 5.

Ms Alannah Logue, Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament noted that a training session to support and promote meaningful youth engagement would be held as part of 'The Right Way' a project run by the Scottish Youth Parliament which aims to support and challenge officers and decision makers, as duty bearers, to work to ensure young peoples Article 12 right is respected.

Ms Jemma MacVicar, Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn/ Galson Estate noted that recruitment for the vacant post of Development Manager for Community Land Outer Hebrides is anticipated to be concluded in April 2025.

It was agreed that details on 'The Right Way' project training session would be circulated to Community Planning Partnership members following the meeting.

Housing

6. Mr John MacIver, Hebridean Housing Partnership noted that a number of new build housing sites are in development/ planned for development for across the Outer Hebrides. Mr MacIver welcomed the announcement as part of the Scottish Budget 2025/26 of increased funding to support the delivery of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, a reversal of £200m cut made to the programme in 2024/25. Mr MacIver noted that a series of meetings had been held with SSEN Transmission to explore partnership working to deliver legacy housing outcomes from worker accommodation needs as part of a major development in Lewis, and that the HHP Board had agreed to move at pace to develop the Melbost West site on the outskirts of Stornoway. The HHP Board had noted concern in relation to the impact of increased worker numbers in the islands on ancillary services, including transportation, schools, leisure and health.

In discussion, it was recognised that Housing would form a key part of the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Update: and**
- (2) that Housing be considered as part of the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.**

Transport/Lifeline Services

7. Mr Malcolm Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar submitted a Report in relation to the Public Service Obligation (Benbecula - Stornoway) and Western Isles Spinal Route for information, and as considered by the Comhairle's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on 5 February 2025. The Report detailed a request to the Scottish Government to re-examine the policy position regarding the funding of the Benbecula to Stornoway PSO and sought the provision of funding towards completion of the Western Isles Spinal Route.

Mr Ranald Robertson, HITRANS welcomed the Comhairle's representations to Government in relation to the need for provision on the Western Isles Spinal Route and noted that discussion are ongoing to consider how proposed significant major developments in the islands are supported in relation to enhanced transportation to meet anticipated needs. It is anticipated that two new major vessels will enter the Western Isles ferry network by December 2026. It was noted that CMAL had recently announced that an order for seven small electrical ferries had been secured, with the first of these anticipated to join the CalMac fleet in 2027.

It was noted that a larger aircraft had been trialled on the Benbecula to Stornoway route to support enhanced provision on the route, and that options to restructure air service delivery to meet demand for provision to and from Barra is being explored. Mr Malcolm Burr, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar noted that inter-island air provision in the Outer Hebrides is currently funded by the Scottish Government, and Comhairle and that there is a need to explore wider contribution to deliver and sustain enhanced provision. It was noted that discussions are ongoing to explore the extension of the Islands Connectivity Plan to include wider consideration of connectivity options beyond ferries, including clean air travel.

In discussion, it was recognised that Transportation/Lifeline Services would form a key part of the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP).

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Report: and**
- (2) that Transport/ Lifeline Services be considered by as part of the review of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.**

Executive Group	8.	The Draft Minute of the Executive Group Meeting of 13 February 2025 was submitted for information. It was agreed to note the Minute.
Climate Change Group	9.	Discussion deferred to next meeting.
Anti-Poverty Group	10.	Ms Linda Cunningham, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar submitted a Report which sought approval to fully the Anti-Poverty Strategy 2019 -2024 (incorporating the 2019 Local Child Poverty Action Report), and to incorporate the 2024 -2025 Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) in the updated version. The Report noted the refreshed Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan would cover the period from 2024 – 2026, and as proposed incorporate the 2024 - 2025 LCPAR which would report on actions that carry over into the refreshed strategy, priority actions for 2025-2026, to streamline reporting and avoid duplication. The refreshed strategy would align with Scottish Government’s Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, ‘Best Start, Bright Futures 2022-2026.’ The priority areas in the current Anti-Poverty Strategy to mitigate the effects of poverty replicate the three Scottish Government identified national drivers. It is proposed that a subsequent new Strategy (2027 – 2032) would then be developed to align with the delivery timescales of the next Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2027-2037. The Anti-Poverty Strategy objectives and actions reflect the OHCPP’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan where part of the vision for partners in the OHCPP is to work towards, “an increase in average household income and a reduction in poverty and health inequalities.” Ms Cunningham noted that a Special Meeting of the OHCPP Anti-Poverty Steering Group will be held on w/c 22 April 2025 to reflect on the successes of the previous strategy, identify actions to be carried forward and approve new actions, to inform the refresh of the current Strategy. It was agreed: (1) to develop, in partnership, the refreshed Anti-Poverty Strategy for the period 2024-2026; (2) that Members of the Community Planning Partnership would engage in the Improvement Service Child Poverty Self-Assessment Tool prior to the next meeting – (link to be circulated by the CPP Administrator following the meeting); and (3) to incorporate the 2024-2025 LCPAR into the refreshed 2024-2026 Anti-Poverty Strategy to streamline reporting, report on actions, and prioritise actions for the following year.
Stornoway West Locality Group	11.	Cllr Gordon Murray, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar provided an update in relation to the work of the Stornoway West Locality Group. Cllr Murray noted that he had recently been appointed as Chair of the Locality Group, and commended the work of Mr Colin Gilmour, previous Chair of the Stornoway West Locality Group in supporting the Locality Group. Cllr Murray noted that the most recent meeting of the Locality Group had focused on the review and update of key statistics for the Stornoway West Locality, particularly in recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent cuts in welfare. Cllr Murray noted that work is ongoing to consider this information, but initial findings indicate a significant increase in poverty rates within the locality from 24% of households in 2019, to 36% of households in 2023, an increase of 6.4% in relation to neighbouring areas.

Education attainment for the areas has been identified at 4.5% in comparison to 5.1% in some of the most deprived areas of Scotland. Crime rates within the locality have increased to more than double of neighbouring areas, and emergency hospital admissions are significantly higher. Cllr Murray noted that the Locality Group is focussed on prioritising actions to address these issues, and to deliver positive outcomes for the locality. Actions Plans will be established for each area of concern to deliver improved outcomes for households within the locality, and progress will be continually monitored, and reviewed fully after twelve months. It was noted that community planning partners will be invited to support the Locality Group to meet these targets.

Mr Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive welcomed the commitment by the Stornoway West Locality Group to continue to support the locality through focussed work. Mr Burr noted the commitment to review the structure of the Community Planning Partnership as considered at item 2 and 4 of the meeting and asked that any material changes to the Locality Group be considered as part of the Review Report.

It was agreed to note the update.

North Uist and Benbecula Locality Group

12.

Ms Sheena Stewart, Third Sector Interface Western Isles provided an update in relation to the work of the North Uist and Benbecula Locality Group. Ms Stewart noted that work has continued across priority areas in the Locality. The Locality Group remains an active member of the Uist and Barra Childcare Forum, which is focused on identifying solutions to meet childcare needs in Uist and Barra and allow parents and carers to return to work or take up new jobs.

Work is ongoing to support community wellbeing across the locality; the Locality Group supported the establishment of a warm hub in Balivanich over the winter period, and plans are in place to establish this in winter 2025. The locality group has continued to support the An Caladh Café and Soft Play, and it had been agreed to continue this support over the summer holiday period. The Uist in Bloom initiative continues to be supported and well received by residents and visitors to the area. Ms Stewart noted that further discussion with the Lochmaddy Visioning Team is planned for w/c 31 March 2025.

It was agreed:

- (1) to note the Update; and**
- (2) that the Development Officer for the Locality Group would provide an in-depth summary on the work of the Group at the next meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board.**

Date of Next Meeting

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership Board will next meet on Thursday, 12 June 2025 at 2.00pm. The meeting will be held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Sandwick Road, Stornoway and through Microsoft Teams.*

*Special Meetings of the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership may be convened to consider specific topics e.g. Local Improvement Outcome Plan review, Single Island Authority.