

MINUTE
of
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 30 August 2021.

Present:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Chair)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
John Binning (Strathclyde Partnership For Transport)	David McCarrey (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)
Andy Cahill (East Renfrewshire Council)	Siobhan McColgan (East Renfrewshire Council)
Alan Coughtrie (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)	Michael McKernan (East Renfrewshire Council)
Donna Duffy (Police Scotland)	Lorraine McMillan (East Renfrewshire Council)
Stephen Frew (Scottish Enterprise)	Anthony McReavy (East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust)
Ruth Gallagher (Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire)	Julie Murray (Health & Social Care Partnership)
Michelle Grant (Police Scotland)	Louise Pringle (East Renfrewshire Council)
Neil Hastie (Scottish Government)	Mark Ratter (East Renfrewshire Council)
Gary I'anson (Police Scotland)	James Russell (Skills Development Scotland)
Anne Marie Kennedy (Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire)	Councillor Gordon Wallace
	Wendy Wilkinson (Scottish Government)
	Nathan Tyler (West College Scotland)

Councillor Buchanan in the Chair

Attending:

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Jamie Reid, Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager; Claire Coburn, Strategic Services Lead Officer; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Apologies:

Liz Connolly (West College Scotland); David Crawford (Department of Work and Pensions); Emilia Crighton and Mark White (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde); Alan Gray (Police Scotland); Sharon Kelly (Skills Development Scotland); and Kate Rocks (Health and Social Care Partnership).

INTRODUCTION

1. Councillor Buchanan welcomed those attending and invited all present to contribute to the discussion and debate.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Board considered the Minute of the meeting of 13 June 2019.

The Chief Executive referred to the Chief Officers' Public Protection Group Annual Report (Item 5 refers) which had been considered at the previous meeting, explaining that an up to date version of that report had not been available to be issued with the papers and discussed at this meeting. She therefore proposed that the report be issued to members separately in due course when it became available.

The Board agreed:-

- (a) to approve the minute of the meeting of 13 June 2019; and
- (b) that the Chief Officers' Public Protection Group Annual Report would be issued to members in due course.

ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21

3. Councillor Buchanan invited Ms McMillan to introduce the report on Annual Review 2020/21.

Ms McMillan referred to the exceptional partnership working which had taken place over the last year and half indicating that this was an excellent example of community planning in action as every partner had contributed to the local response to Covid-19.

A video was shown providing a summary of community planning performance, highlighting that progress had been made in each priority area, including in relation to life expectancy; child poverty rates; school leaver destinations; and wages. Further information was provided on a number of initiatives which had been introduced including, support provided by Town Centre Recovery groups as restrictions were lifted; introduction of detached youth work supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people; and establishment of a Wellbeing Network, Food Dignity Network, and Digital Inclusion Partnership. New activities introduced included employment support for those newly unemployed as a result of Covid; wellbeing support for those returning to the workplace; and digital engagement and increased digital preparation.

Thereafter, a number of partners provided case studies of work which had taken place over the last year.

Ms Gallagher reported on the establishment of a Digital Inclusion Partnership which aimed to deliver digital access for the most vulnerable in society including providing digital devices and the support required to use them; access to wifi; assistance with paying bills; and information support. She added that the Partnership, which consisted of members from various council departments, including Education and Economic Development; HSCP; and third sector organisations, had benefitted from Connecting Scotland funding and had been able to provide a number of chromebooks to vulnerable residents. The partnership also gave support to a team of volunteers tasked with helping people to get connected; teaching them to operate their devices as securely and safely as possible; and providing information on, amongst other things, how to access free wifi, and this support would continue for the remainder of 2021/22.

Mr Cahill provided information on the need for resilience as town centres and businesses had been particularly adversely affected during the pandemic. Many businesses closed, or required to change the way they operated and, even as restrictions were lifted, residents

remained concerned about safely accessing town centres and businesses. Town and Village Recovery groups were established to provide support and create resilience as restrictions changed throughout the pandemic. A wide range of partners were involved with these groups include the BIDS; Chambers of Commerce; Police Scotland; local business owners; residents; voluntary action; and community groups, and regular meetings had taken place to discuss the recovery process and to share information on the latest guidance. Town centres were opened safely, with actions being delivered by various partners, and a “Shop Local” initiative was introduced. He advised that, regardless of Covid, the groups would continue to operate as they had provided resilience and a collaborative approach within communities.

Mr McReavy provided information on the establishment of a mass vaccination centre which had involved collaboration with partners from the Army; NHS; East Renfrewshire Council; Community and Leisure Trust; voluntary organisations; and individual volunteers. Volunteers took on tasks which were out of the ordinary for them including involvement in holiday hubs; support for schools; and mass testing/vaccination, and the number of local volunteers often exceeded demand. Volunteering had brought out the best in colleagues and partners, with new, stronger relationships being built, and he praised the professionalism, commitment, flexibility and patience of the volunteers and partners.

Thereafter, Ms McMillan posed questions to the board in relation to what had gone well; what could have gone better; what lessons could be learned for the future; and whether the issues set out in the 2019 Community Plan had been achieved. Referring to the above case studies, she praised the partnership working, volunteering and community involvement which had taken place during the pandemic.

Referring to the national situation in terms of volunteering, including the expectations from the Ready Scotland Campaign, Ms Gallagher highlighted that many people had volunteered to assist in their local communities but a position could not always be found for them due to restrictions during the pandemic. She added that there was a need to ensure that those involved in the emergency response for the pandemic were involved in planning for future emergencies to ensure a streamlined approach.

Area Commander McCarrey reported that fire stations were made covid secure in the early stages of the pandemic and staff had been involved in partnership working throughout, including in delivering food parcels to local residents. He advised that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service could have a role in supporting older and isolated people in future by guiding them towards partner services for assistance. He added that the fire service had also been involved in giving advice to supermarkets about changes in fire evacuation procedures due to the introduction of one way systems, and providing support to staff when returning to offices and buildings following the easing of restrictions. He advised that the service was keen to connect with other partners and provide assistance as required.

Ms Murray highlighted that the pandemic was not over and the legacy for local communities would be significant, requiring additional provision of resources to vulnerable people for the foreseeable future, and ongoing assistance from local volunteers.

Referring to learning points for the future, Mr McReavy advised that responses to the pandemic from the UK and Scottish Governments had included providing funding for specific issues, but sometimes the need at a local level did not match the way the support was provided. As an example, he referred to funding which had been provided to support the “Get into Summer Campaign”, but this had been made available just after the schools in Scotland had finished for the summer break making it extremely difficult to progress.

Referring to the excellent examples of joint working which had been provided, Councillor Buchanan added that there was a need for resources to continue to be provided and harnessed in the best possible way to assist local communities in future and not just as a part of an emergency response. He stated that many people's priorities and wellbeing had changed as a result of the pandemic and that required to be taken into account in terms of supports levels and future service provision. Referring to the imminent ending of the furlough scheme, he stated that local people and businesses could be adversely affected by this change and may need additional financial support in the coming months.

Ms Pringle referred to funds which had become available across the council and from various partner agencies, including humanitarian funds, some of which were only available for use until the end of March 2022. Research had been commissioned on what the funding meant for local communities and how the community bid programme could help local groups get back to work. In addition, they aimed to engage with new groups of people, including those who had been asked to shield or were in a difficult financial position as a result of the pandemic, and further consideration regarding how they could be funded would be required in the longer term.

Councillor Wallace referred to the proposed centralisation of social care and how that could have adversely affected the pandemic response due to a loss of key local knowledge. On behalf of the residents of East Renfrewshire he requested that officers and councillors should oppose the centralisation of social care at a national level. Councillor Buchanan confirmed that CoSLA had requested an extension to the consultation period to give all interested parties sufficient time to respond to the proposed changes.

Having noted the information provided and comments made, the Board approved the Annual Review 2020/21.

WHERE ARE WE NOW

4. Councillor Buchanan invited the Partnership Development Officer to introduce the report on "Where Are We Now" – Fairer East Ren Transition Delivery Plans 2021/22.

The Partnership Development Officer referred to the five priority areas within the Fairer East Ren plan which had been due for review in 2020. Because of the pandemic a decision was taken to complete an interim plan for one year instead of carrying out a full review and some new activities and information had been included during the transition year.

She advised that many priorities had changed in the last 18 months and there was a need to consider whether the five priorities reflected the balance of recovery and renewal required following the pandemic. The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the Child Poverty Action Group had produced a report in June 2021, highlighting a number of positive measures which had taken place during the pandemic and providing insight into the support which was provided to children and families. She added that a lot of recent work had been reactive as a result of government funding; the needs of residents; and the introduction of restrictions, and there was now a need to look at whether or not a strategic change was required for the future. Discussions would continue with partners over the next 6 months and future considerations would include fuel poverty; child poverty; and the cost of the school day for families. It was hoped that useful data could be obtained in those areas to inform, amend and update strategies and policies.

Referring to the five themes, Ms McMillan added that a crucial area of development would be mental health and wellbeing as the effect of lockdown and restrictions on people's mental health had not yet been fully established. In response, Ms Paterson referred to partnership

NOT YET ENDORSED AS A CORRECT RECORD

working which had taken place between HSCP, education, CAMHS, third sector partners and GPs to tackle mental health and wellbeing in the community, some of which had already been extremely successful and would be built on for the future. Referring to the national ambition for all employers to be Living Wage employers in future, Mr Frew acknowledged that this may be a difficult ambition to achieve but working towards this goal was a priority and may help to reduce poverty. Mr Ratter added that mental wellbeing was interconnected with other outcomes including residents having the right skills, learning opportunities, and confidence to secure and sustain work. Going forward the close working relationships that had been built throughout the partnership would help to deliver these goals for residents.

Referring to the theme of “feeling safe”, Inspector Grant reported on Police Scotland’s key priorities in tackling adult mental health, poverty, and drug deaths and reported on a local initiative which had been introduced earlier this year, in liaison with youth workers and British Transport Police, to target youth disorder. She advised that this successful initiative was part of the Safer East Ren plan and Campus officers continued to work closely with Head Teachers on a variety of matters including anti-social behaviour. Police Scotland also maintained a close working relationship with Scottish Fire and Rescue; linked with partners and other agencies when called to domestic incidents; and had introduced the Herbert Protocol to safely locate missing persons with dementia/alzheimers. Thereafter, Detective Superintendent Duffy reported on Police Scotland’s focus on public health and how this could tie in with ongoing community planning work, including to ensure that adults with, amongst other things, mental health, gambling, poverty or addiction issues, who became known to the Police, received the appropriate assistance. She advised that domestic abuse reports had reduced, but they were unsure if this was as a result of people being unable to gain access to reporting mechanisms during the pandemic, and innovative ways to ensure anyone who wished to report domestic abuse could do so safely were being considered, including through providing training to housing officers. She summed up by asking that consideration be given to how partnership working on public health issues could be added to the community plans in future. The Deputy Chief Executive referred to a recent meeting which had taken place with representatives from Police Scotland, in the course of which discussions had taken place regarding how the public health approach could be built in to locality planning in future.

Area Commander McCarrey reported on a rise in accidental dwelling fires across the country; a reduction in unwanted fire alarms signals; and the need to revise the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service’s response model to reduce exposure of staff to risk. He advised that one of the service’s aims was to reduce the number of domestic fire occurrences by targeting specific groups of people, including those who were socially isolated; smokers; people with mobility issues; and people with chaotic lifestyles, in order to provide them with information which may assist in fire prevention. Thereafter, he reported on the establishment of the first Fire and Rescue mental health support group in Scotland, which was located in this area, and introduction of a local Youth Engagement Officer as part of the Community Action Team.

In response to a question about water safety in East Renfrewshire following a number of recent deaths throughout Scotland and the UK, Councillor Buchanan advised that safety messages had been issued by East Renfrewshire Council and partners in response to the recent tragedies. Referring to a partnership project which had been introduced in East Dunbartonshire providing skills and knowledge on water safety to local people, Area Commander McCarrey advised that this information would be shared with other areas for their use. Referring to free swimming lessons for children, which could help to reduce the number of drowning deaths, Councillor Wallace advised that no record was currently kept on the number of children who did not take up this offer, and he had been communicating with the Education Department and Leisure Trust to ascertain if this information could be provided in future.

Thereafter, having noted the discussion and comments made, the Board approved the “Where Are We Now” – Fairer East Ren Transition Delivery Plans 2021/22.

PRIORITIES FOR 2022 AND BEYOND

5. Councillor Buchanan invited the Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager to introduce the report on Priorities for 2022 and Beyond.

The Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager reported that this was a joint meeting between the Board and PAR (Performance and Review Committee) members providing an opportunity for leadership across the Community Planning Partnership to come together and consider what they want to achieve in the next few years. He advised that workshops had recently been held with community planning partners to consider action planning in the short to medium term but longer term planning was now required and would include consideration of the five outcomes referred to previously, and the CPP recovery and renewal themes of Community Wellbeing; Community Connectivity; and Community Wealth Building, which were pivotal to the Covid response. He added that a number of changes had been made to service provision following partners’ responses to the pandemic and consideration should now be given to any overlap within the themes; changed priorities; areas which remained important but were no longer critical; and how to continue with the stronger depth of joint working which had been achieved during the last 18 months. Further information was provided on the 3 themes and it was proposed that discussion should take place on future themes and how they related to the current ones.

A full discussion took place in the course of which it was highlighted that the key to any future themes should be “community” as this was at the heart of the partnership arrangements. It was also highlighted that there was a need to tackle serious underlying issues including adult mental health; drug deaths; and poverty, as they could have a serious impact on any future progress. In addition, Mr Russell, referring to the forthcoming COP 26 event which was taking place in Glasgow in November, proposed that community sustainability should be included within the themes going forward as this was a very important issue for all communities and residents. Councillor Wallace emphasised the importance of providing a living wage for all and the need to offer diverse training and employment opportunities for young people. Mr Binning referred to increased challenges for transport as more people than before the pandemic were using cars due to being uneasy about travelling on public transport. He added that there was a need for more flexible travel models to be introduced and referred to the introduction of free bus travel for under 25s from January 2022 which would assist with access to education, training and employment.

The Strategic Insight and Communities Senior Manager summed up by proposing that the themes should be refined and amended in the coming months to ensure they focussed on key priorities for local communities.

Having heard Councillor Buchanan refer to the difficulties which had been overcome in the last 18 months through joint working and improved support for communities, the Board noted:-

- (a) the timeline for renewing the Fairer East Ren Plans for the period 2022-2025; and
- (b) the thematic framework and relevant thematic group work to develop the Fairer East Ren Plans; and
- (c) otherwise, the information provided and comments made.

AOB – PARTNERSHIP WORKING

6. Councillor Buchanan took this opportunity to thank all of the community planning partners and their respective organisations for the excellent joint working which had taken place during the pandemic, and for their input to the Board meeting today.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. It was reported that the next meeting of the Board would be held on a date to be confirmed following consultation with partners.

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