



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd
na Gàidhealtachd

Community Planning & Community Partnerships: Guidance & Toolkit

1st Edition - January 2025



Maximise Opportunities and Tackle Inequality
to Build a Thriving Highlands for All

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Introduction

This Guidance and Toolkit document has been developed to provide an accessible and practical resource for understanding Community Planning and the structure of the Highland Community Planning Partnership. Designed with both newcomers and experienced practitioners in mind, this document also offers essential information and tools tailored to support the work of Community Partnerships locally across Highland.

Key Objectives

The objectives of this Guidance and Toolkit are to:

- Provide an overview of Community Planning and the Highland Community Planning Partnership.
- Serve as an induction and reference resource for individuals new to Community Planning.
- Facilitate knowledge-sharing and consistency across the Community Planning network.
- Empower Community Partnerships to collaborate and communicate effectively and deliver positive outcomes for local communities.
- Offer practical tools and templates to support the effective operation of Community Partnerships.

Who Is The Guidance and Toolkit For?

This document serves as a resource for:

- Practitioners new to Community Planning, providing them with a clear and approachable introduction.
- Practitioners joining the Community Partnership network locally, offering a readable and practical induction and handover tool.
- Existing individuals and practitioners involved in Community Planning and Community Partnerships, helping them deepen their understanding and refine their knowledge.

Whether you're exploring Community Planning for the first time or looking to enhance your understanding and knowledge of the Highland Community Planning Partnership or the network of Community Partnerships this Guidance and Toolkit is designed to meet your needs.

Guidance Section

The Guidance section delivers a comprehensive overview of Community Planning, including:

- An explanation of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- An outline of Community Planning principles, purpose and expectations.
- Details of the current Community Planning structure in Highland.
- An overview of the Highland Community Planning Partnership.
- A summary of the strategic plan for Highland, the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- An insight into the delivery structure supporting the Highland Community Planning Partnership.

Toolkit Section

The Toolkit Section has been designed to assist Community Partnerships with practical resources, which can be utilised as needed to enhance efficiency, consistency, and collaboration. It features:

- Practical tools and checklists to streamline activities, including Minimum Standards Model and Compliance Checklist, Website Update Form and Online Meeting Etiquette.
- A collection of customisable templates, including Terms of Reference, Role Descriptor, and Communications Plan.

Guidance Section

The Guidance Section provides a foundational understanding of Community Planning, focusing on its role in empowering communities and developing collaboration across Highland. It outlines key legislation, structures, and processes that guide Community Planning in Scotland and specifically in Highland.

This section begins by exploring the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act), with a particular focus on Part 2 – Community Planning, which establishes the legal framework for collaborative working among public sector partners, community groups, and other stakeholders. It highlights how the Act promotes active community involvement in decision-making and resource allocation to address local priorities.

There is also an overview of Community Planning as defined by the Act, including its purpose, principles, and expectations for public sector partners and communities.

Building on this foundation, the Guidance Section expands into the structure of Community Planning in Highland, offering:

- An overview of the Highland Community Planning Partnership, its purpose, and strategic priorities.
- Insights into the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, which sets out key outcomes and priorities.
- Details of the Community Planning Partnership Board, its role in overseeing and guiding Community Planning efforts.
- A summary of the Delivery Groups and associated Partnerships and delivery Partners, which play a critical role in delivering the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- A summary of the network of Community Partnerships established across Highland.

This Guidance Section serves as an essential resource for understanding the framework that underpins Community Planning in Highland, equipping readers with the knowledge to engage meaningfully in shaping the future of their communities.

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

The [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) (the Act) aims to enhance the power of communities by giving them a greater role in local decision-making and direct influence over how public services are delivered. The Act covers various areas, including community planning, asset transfer, and participation requests, enabling communities to have a stronger voice and more opportunities to shape their local environment and services.

The Act includes:

- **Community Planning:** enhances the role of community planning partnerships, requiring public agencies to work together with communities to plan and deliver better services. It emphasises the creation of Local Outcomes Improvement Plans and locality plans to address specific local needs and reduce inequalities.
- **Asset Transfer:** provides community bodies with the right to request the transfer of ownership, lease, or management of public sector land and buildings. This empowers communities to take control of local assets and use them to benefit their area.
- **Participation Requests:** allows community bodies to request to participate in decisions and processes that affect public services. It ensures that communities have a stronger voice in shaping the services they rely on.

[Part 2 of the Act](#) focuses on Community Planning, a process that requires public sector partners to collaborate with communities to plan and deliver better services, and brings public sector partners, third sector organisations, and communities together to identify and tackle local inequalities. The Act establishes a statutory framework for Community Planning, requiring public bodies to work collaboratively to improve outcomes, particularly for those facing the greatest inequalities.

Key Points from the Act Part 2: Community Planning

Duty to Participate in Community Planning:

- Public sector partners, including local authorities, health boards, fire service, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, and police, are required to work together and with communities to plan and deliver better local outcomes. Collectively referred to in this Part of the Act as a Community Planning Partnership.

Focus on Inequalities:

- Community Planning prioritises tackling inequalities and focuses efforts on communities experiencing disadvantage.

Local Participation:

- Communities must be actively involved in identifying local priorities and developing plans to address them. Public sector partners are expected to support and enable meaningful participation.

Local Outcomes Improvement Plans:

- Community Planning Partnerships are responsible for preparing and publishing Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, which set out priority outcomes and how they will be achieved. Plans should be evidence-based and responsive to local needs.

Locality Plans:

- Community Planning Partnerships are required to develop Locality Plans (or similar) for areas experiencing significant inequalities.

Leadership:

- Public sector partners involved in Community Planning must demonstrate leadership, share responsibility, and coordinate efforts effectively to deliver agreed outcomes.

Accountability and Reporting:

- Community Planning Partnerships must regularly review progress on their plans and report on outcomes.

Community Planning

The structure of Community Planning is guided by the statutory requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) and includes the following key components:

- **Community Planning Partnership:** A Community Planning Partnership is formed by public sector partners within each local authority area, as mandated by the Act. A Community Planning Partnership is a framework established to improve outcomes for people and communities in Scotland, focusing on tackling inequalities. It brings together public sector partners, the third sector, and other relevant stakeholders to collaborate in planning and delivering services. A Community Planning Partnership emphasises a shared commitment to working collaboratively for the wellbeing of communities.
- **Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan is a strategic plan developed by a Community Planning Partnership to identify and improve outcomes across the local area. It identifies key priorities informed by community consultation, with a focus on tackling inequalities and enhancing the wellbeing of communities. The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan sets goals to improve services and quality of life, ensuring services are responsive to local needs and challenges.
- **Locality Plans:** Locality Plans target communities experiencing significant inequalities. These plans address local challenges through actionable goals aimed at tackling inequalities and improving the quality of life for residents. Developed in consultation with communities, Locality Plans focus on issues such as health, education, employment, and housing. Reviews ensure these plans adapt to evolving needs and continue delivering meaningful improvements.

Community Planning in Highland

The structure of Community Planning in Highland follows the statutory requirements outlined in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) and includes the following key components:

- **Highland Community Planning Partnership:** The Community Planning Partnership coordinates Community Planning efforts. Further details about the Partnership can be found here: [Highland Community Planning Partnership](#).
- **Highland Community Planning Partnership Board:** The Highland Community Planning Partnership Board takes strategic leadership of the Partnership. Further details about the Board can be found here: [Highland Community Planning Partnership Board](#).
- **Highland Outcome Improvement Plan:** The Highland Community Planning Partnership has produced a revised Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) for 2024–2027. This plan outlines the strategic priorities for tackling inequalities and improving outcomes across the area. A copy of the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is available here: [Highland Outcome Improvement Plan](#).
- **Community Partnerships:** To address the challenges posed by Highland’s large geographical area, the region is divided into nine Community Partnerships. These partnerships facilitate localised engagement and delivery, ensuring that Community Planning responds to the needs of local areas. Further information on Community Partnerships can be found here: [Community Partnerships](#).
- **Delivery Groups, Partnerships, Partners and Programmes:** A range of thematic delivery groups, partnerships, partners and programmes have been identified, established or engaged with across the wider Community Planning structure to support delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan. Further information can be found on the Community Planning Partnership website: [Highland Community Planning Partnership](#).
- **Community Partnership Plans:** Community Partnerships will publish a Community Partnership Plan in 2025. These plans will act as Locality Plans as defined within the Act.
- **Partnership Development Team:** The Partnership Development Team provides direction and support to the Highland Community Planning Partnership and Community Partnerships. It works to align strategic objectives with local priorities, ensuring cohesive and effective planning and delivery. Further information about the team can be found here: [Partnership Development Team](#).

Highland Community Planning Partnership

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) outlines the public sector partners required to participate in Community Planning. These agencies form a Community Planning Partnership within each Local Authority area. The Community Planning Partnership will work collaboratively to engage with communities and enhance local service delivery. The primary aim of Community Planning Partnerships is to prioritise community needs in planning and service delivery, with a particular focus on tackling inequalities and improving outcomes.

In Highland the public sector partners involved in the Community Planning Partnership and the Board, and within the Community Partnership network include:

The Highland Council	NHS Highland	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	University of the Highlands and Islands
NatureScot	Highlands and Islands Enterprise	Skills Development Scotland	Police Scotland

This collaborative model is integrated into the structure of Community Partnerships at a local level where possible to ensure effective community engagement and localised service delivery.

The Act also emphasises the vital role of the third sector in Community Planning, requiring Community Planning Partnerships to include representatives from this sector. This ensures a collaborative approach to planning and decision-making while amplifying the voices of communities. The third sector plays a crucial role in supporting community empowerment and engagement, contributing local knowledge and expertise to identify and address the needs of disadvantaged groups.

The third sector partners involved in the Highland Community Planning Partnership and the Board include:

Highland Third Sector Interface	High Life Highland
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At the local level, the involvement of third sector partners is more extensive, reflecting the diverse range of work delivered within communities and includes:

Community Councils	Development Trusts	Charities
Community Groups and Organisations	National Third Sector Organisations with an area specific remit	

Their contributions are essential for tackling inequalities, improving services, and enhancing overall community well-being.

Further information about the Highland Community Planning Partnership is available here: [Highland Community Planning Partnership](#).

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board

The Highland Community Planning Partnership Board is the oversight body of the Highland Community Planning Partnership. It comprises Chief Executives and Senior Officers from the public and third sector partners outlined previously.

The Board's primary purpose is to provide strategic leadership and expertise to drive meaningful change across Highland. Working collaboratively, the Board oversees the delivery of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan and ensures that efforts are aligned with the priorities and needs of communities.

Further information about the Highland Community Planning Partnership Board is available here: [Highland Community Planning Partnership Board](#).

Highland Community Planning Partnership Structure

The structure of the Highland Community Planning Partnership includes various Delivery Groups, Partnerships, Partners, and Groups that collaboratively support and work towards delivering 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan. As integral parts of the wider Community Planning structure, they are working towards the shared Vision of tackling inequalities and building a thriving Highlands for all.



As the implementation of the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan continues, the structure will be reviewed to ensure alignment with the new strategic priorities. Once finalised, the updated structure diagram will be published on the Highland Community Planning Partnership website.

Delivery Groups: Updated

Thematic Delivery Groups were established to delivery against the original 2017 - 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, these have been reviewed to reflect the revised cross-cutting themes within the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan. Delivery Groups are chaired by one of the public sector partners. Further information can be found here: [Delivery Groups](#).

Mental Health & Wellbeing NHS Highland	Community Safety & Resilience Police Scotland/Scottish Fire & Rescue	Poverty Reduction Highland Council
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Delivery Partnerships and Delivery Partners: New and Existing

Delivery Partnerships and Delivery Partners support delivery against joint, specific or thematic areas of work across the Community Planning Partnership or against specific cross-cutting themes within the Delivery Plan for the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

Highland Property Partnership	Highland Community Wealth Building Partnership	Highland Integrated Children’s Service Planning Board
Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership	Highland Community Justice Partnership	Highland Employability Partnership
Highland Whole Family Wellbeing Programme	Highland Community Learning and Development Partnership	Highland Housing Hub and Local Development Forums

Short Life Working Groups: New

These Short Life Working Groups will be established during 2025 to support delivery against specific cross-cutting themes within the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

Health Inequalities NHS Highland	Natural Capital NatureScot	Shared Approaches to Commissioning TBC
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Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

The 2017 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan was the original strategic plan developed by the Highland Community Planning Partnership in response to the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Published in 2017, the plan focused on five core outcomes aligned with its overarching vision "Working Together to Reduce Inequalities in Highland". The 2017 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan was created in collaboration with communities and highlighted key actions to address inequality across Highland.

Evolution of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

Since the publication of the 2017 - 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, individual public sector partners and third sector organisations have updated their own strategic plans and priorities through significant stakeholder and community engagement. Additionally, partners have faced unprecedented challenges since 2020, including the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and increasing financial pressures on services. Recognising these challenges, the Community Planning Partnership Board initiated and agreed a review of the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan would take place in 2024.

2024–2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

Following an extensive period of engagement, the updated 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan has been developed and published.

The focus for the Highland Community Planning Partnership is on improving the lives for everyone across the Highland area by realising and maximising the opportunities to create thriving communities. The Partnership recognise the inequalities that exist in the Highland community and that tackling inequalities will benefit communities in many ways. The revised Highland Outcome Improvement Plan demonstrates the partners commitment to tackling inequalities through delivering services that are proportionate to need. The 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan focuses on prevention to address the root causes of inequality and help avoid them arising in the first place.

The revised 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan introduces a new vision:

- **"Maximise Opportunities and Tackle Inequality to Build a Thriving Highlands For All"**



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2024 – 2027

Highland Outcome Improvement Plan

**Maximise Opportunities and Tackle Inequality to Build a
Thriving Highlands for All**

The 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan identifies three high-level strategic priorities:

- **People** – Enable people to live independently, safe and well within their community
- **Place** – Work in partnership to develop sustainable and resilient local communities
- **Prosperity** – Creating opportunities for all people and places to prosper and to thrive economically.

VISION Maximise Opportunities And Tackle Inequality To Build A Thriving Highlands For All			
Strategic Priorities	People Enable people to live independently, safe and well within their community	Place Work in partnership to develop sustainable and resilient local communities	Prosperity Creating opportunities for all people and places to prosper and to thrive economically
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will take a person centred approach to how we design and deliver services and support. • We will ensure our practice is trauma informed and responsive to lived experience. • Preventative approaches and addressing inequality will underpin our partnership working. • We will deliver services and support that is proportionate to need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will take an integrated and place-based approach to how we design and deliver services and support. • We will ensure just transition to net zero and support to communities to adapt to climate change will be considered when promoting sustainability and resilience. • We will enable and empower people and communities to be involved in local decision making through active participation and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will integrate and align our people, investment and financial resources to maximise opportunities for Highland. • Innovation and technology will be central to evolving service delivery and support across Highland. • We will strengthen our partnership by encouraging involvement from our business and social enterprise sectors.
Outcomes	<p>Improved access to services and support through the development of co-produced and integrated processes.</p> <p>People in Highland will benefit from good health and social wellbeing opportunities.</p> <p>People in Highland will access the right support at the right time through developing a whole system approach.</p>	<p>Depopulation will be tackled by addressing the key barriers to sustaining local communities – housing, transport, childcare.</p> <p>Communities in Highland will benefit from being able to access support and services within local places.</p> <p>Highland communities will be strong and resilient and be involved in identifying and delivering local priorities.</p> <p>Support communities to maximise opportunities in places from sustainable tourism, culture and heritage, including Gaelic.</p>	<p>Communities in Highland will benefit from embedding community wealth building approaches into partnership activity.</p> <p>Our collective use of physical assets will deliver better services, efficiencies and opportunities for communities.</p> <p>Young people have access to employment, education, training and recreational opportunities to retain and attract returners.</p> <p>People across Highland will have improved access to career development opportunities.</p> <p>People in Highland will benefit from maximising our natural capital and attracting investment.</p>

A copy of the 2024–2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is available here: [2024 - 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan](#).

2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan: Delivery Plan

To support delivery of the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, the Community Planning Partnership Board agreed a Delivery Plan. This plan focuses on seven cross-cutting themes, prioritised for their ability to address multiple strategic priorities (People, Place, Prosperity) and deliver meaningful outcomes. The seven cross-cutting themes were identified on the following:

- They address issues that are cross-cutting in nature, impacting more than one strategic priority and outcome.
- They enable partnership action, ensuring activities are collaborative and add value.
- They focus on areas of greatest importance across Highland, targeting key challenges and opportunities.

The seven cross-cutting themes are:

- Connecting People and Places
- Whole Family and Community-Based Approaches
- Employment / Employability
- Community Wealth Building
- Housing
- Shared Approaches to Commissioning
- Aligning Partnership Practices

For each cross-cutting theme the Delivery Plan sets out the aims and actions the Community Planning Partnership is working towards. Each theme includes a detailed outline for delivery, covering the following:

- Purpose – outlines the overall purpose of the theme.
- Deliverables – highlights the actions that will be undertaken.
- Measures of Success – outlines indicators that will demonstrate progress towards the desired outcomes.
- Delivery Mechanism – identifies the partnership group or forum responsible for implementing actions.
- Senior Officer Sponsor – the Community Planning Partnership Board member assigned as the lead for the theme’s delivery.

A copy of the Delivery Plan is available here: [2024 - 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan](#).

2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan: Performance Framework

The Performance Framework is being developed by the Highland Community Planning Partnership Board as a tool to support the effective delivery and monitoring of the 2024–2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

The Performance Framework establishes performance indicators based on population data available nationally and regionally to measure the overall progress of key deliverables and measures for success as outlined in the Delivery Plan. The Performance Framework will provide a structured approach to tracking performance, assessing the impact of interventions, and ensuring accountability among partners.

Through monitoring, data analysis, and reporting, the Performance Framework will help identify strengths, highlight areas for improvement, and guide ongoing collaboration to achieve the Outcomes outlined in the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

A copy of the draft Performance Framework is available here: [2024 - 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan](#).

Locality Plans (now Community Partnership Plans)

During 2017 and 2018 several Locality Plans were developed across Highland, as required by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act). These plans focussed on locality areas experiencing significant disadvantage, using data sources including the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and Socio-Economic Performance Index (SEP). Some areas in Highland continue to work towards and progress their Locality Plans. However, the number of Locality Plans proved unsustainable to monitor and manage their implementation.

The Highland Community Planning Partnership Board has since reviewed the Locality Plan structure and identified that changes were required to ensure effective delivery of Community Planning across Highland. The review highlighted the need for:

- Simplification of plans, priorities and outcomes.
- Prioritisation of data to inform priorities relevant to communities.
- Improvements in communication and engagement, with active involvement of communities in the delivery process.
- Leadership that embeds partnership working into everyday activities and the 'day job'.

As a result, the Community Planning Partnership Board, taking into consideration the inequalities faced by the communities, families, and individuals across Highland, agreed to implement a simplified approach by creating one Community Partnership Plan per Community Partnership area.

With the support of the Partnership Development Team, each Community Partnership in Highland will actively develop a Community Partnership Plan and publish these in 2025. These plans will not replace the ongoing work being carried out through the original Locality Plans structure but will instead serve as an overarching plan focussed on inequalities for each Community Partnership area.

The primary purpose of Community Partnership Plans aligns with the Act's definition of a Locality Plan. These plans will:

- Identify local priorities.
- Set actions aimed at reducing inequalities.

The Community Partnership Plans will be developed in collaboration with Community Partnerships, focusing on inequalities such as health, education, employment, and housing. Utilising a set of focused data sources.

Key features of the Community Partnership Plans will be:

- Actionable and focused, aimed at addressing local inequalities through targeted initiatives.
- Regularly reviewed to ensure they effectively respond to evolving community needs.
- Identified locality areas that experience disadvantage for targeted interventions.

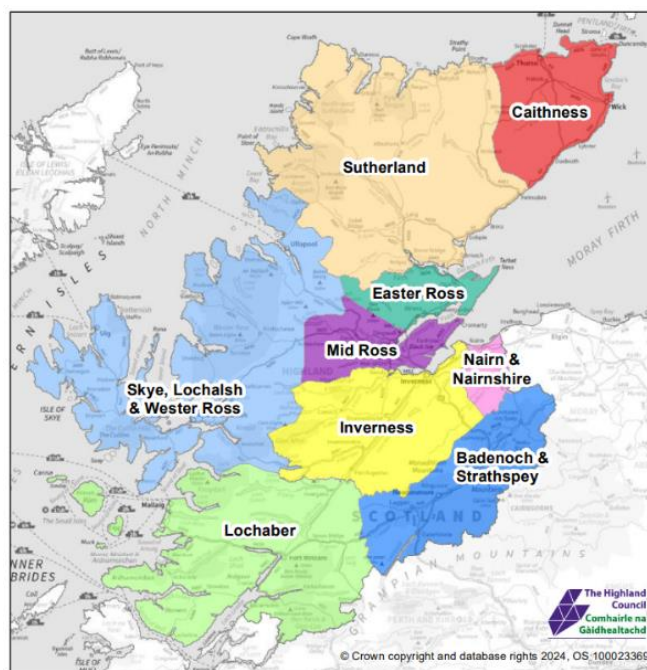
Community Partnerships

Following the establishment of the Highland Community Planning Partnership and launch of the 2017 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, it was agreed that, due to the large geographical area covered by Highland, a number of locally-based Community Partnerships would be formed.

As a result, nine Community Partnerships have been established across Highland. With direct support from the Partnership Development Team throughout 2024 all nine Community Partnerships are fully functional across the Highland area. Each Community Partnership is chaired by a public sector partner, ensuing leadership and effective collaboration at a local level.

Badenoch & Strathspey NHS Highland	Caithness Highlands & Islands Enterprise	Easter Ross Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Inverness Highland Council	Lochaber Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Mid Ross NHS Highland
Nairn & Nairnshire Police Scotland	Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross Highlands & Islands Enterprise	Sutherland Police Scotland

The geographical boundaries of the nine Community Partnerships are illustrated in the map below:



A Community Partnership is a coordinated forum consisting of public sector partners, relevant agencies, organisations, and community groups from both the public and third sectors, within a defined geographical area.

The primary objective of the Community Partnership is to address inequalities by fostering collaboration between public sector partners, third-sector organisations, and local communities. Together, they plan and deliver services and projects that enhance local outcomes. This collaborative approach is guided by the Highland Community Planning Partnership and aligned with the 2024–2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.

Further information on each of the nine Community Partnerships can be found here: [Community Partnerships](#)

Partnership Development Team

Established in June 2023 the Partnership Development Team is composed of Partnership Officers, and a Partnership Development Manager. Hosted by The Highland Council the Team works across the Highland Community Planning Partnership. The Team plays a vital role at a strategic and local level to support and enable effective Community Planning across Highland. The overarching objectives are:

- **Strategic Direction:** Guide community planning activities at both the Highland-wide and local levels.
- **Ambassadors for Community Planning:** Promote the value and impact of community planning.
- **Aligning Priorities:** Ensure strategic priorities at the regional level align with local initiatives and community needs and vice versa.
- **Connecting Partnerships:** Link Community Partnerships with broader regional and national strategies.
- **Consistency:** Deliver a cohesive and uniform approach to community planning across Highland.
- **Tools and Frameworks:** Develop resources like templates, guidance, and frameworks to support effective planning and implementation.
- **Direct Support:** Provide assistance to the Highland Community Planning Partnership, including the Highland Community Planning Partnership Board.
- **Outcome Improvement Plan Delivery:** Support the implementation of the 2024–2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- **Website Management:** Oversee and update the Highland Community Planning Partnership website, ensuring it is a central, accessible resource for all stakeholders.

The remit of the Partnership Officers with a specific focus on Community Partnerships includes:

- **Identifying Priorities:** Assist Community Partnerships in identifying local inequalities, setting priorities, and planning actions in alignment with the 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- **Guidance and Resources:** Offer advice, guidance, and signposting to help Community Partnerships tackle challenges and access the right tools and resources.
- **Minimum Standards Model:** Support with the implementation of the Minimum Standards Model and Compliance Checklist and provide assistance with progress and offer advice on gaps and opportunities.
- **Developing Tools:** Create and implement practical tools, templates, and trackers that help partnerships meet core objectives and demonstrate progress.
- **Priority Action Trackers:** Facilitate the development and use of Priority Action Trackers to showcase and monitor local collaboration and progress in addressing inequalities.
- **Community Partnership Plans:** Support the development of Community Partnership Plans tailored to addressing key local issues while contributing to reducing inequalities regionally.
- **Facilitating Connections:** Act as a conduit between the Highland Community Planning Partnership and local Community Partnerships, ensuring communication on priorities and actions.
- **Outreach and Engagement:** Boost community and organisational awareness of community planning through outreach initiatives at both regional and local levels.
- **Fostering Collaboration:** Identify opportunities for joint efforts among Community Partnerships to share resources, knowledge, and best practices.

The Partnership Development Team serves as a bridge between the Highland Community Planning Partnership and local Community Partnerships. By coordinating efforts, providing direct support, and developing practical tools. Their work ensures that both strategic objectives and grassroots initiatives work in tandem for the benefit of communities across the Highland area.

Toolkit Section

The Toolkit Section is designed to serve as a practical resource for practitioners, individuals and partners engaged in Community Planning and Community Partnerships across Highland. Developed by the Partnership Development Team it provides actionable tools and templates to support the effective implementation of Community Planning activities at a local Community Partnership level.

This Section focuses on equipping Community Partnerships with the resources needed to successfully enhance their operation, governance, communications and practical delivery.

An overview of each tool and template is provided, with links to the individual tools and templates which Community Partnerships can utilise and adapt to suit their specific needs.

To simplify access to the templates within this Toolkit Section for Community Partnerships, and to reduce the number of attachments to this document, a Community Partnerships Resources section has been created on the Community Partnerships webpage of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website. The templates can be accessed here: [Community Partnerships](#).

Minimum Standards Model and Compliance Checklist

The aim of the Minimum Standards Model is to create a consistent basis for how all nine Community Partnerships in Highland establish themselves and conduct their business, allowing for improvements with delivery, monitoring and reporting. The Minimum Standards Model incorporates key parameters and applies a framework to the structure of the Community Partnerships. When applied the Model creates the basis of a similar structure across all Community Partnerships. The purpose of the Model and its implementation includes:

- Establishes a shared structure for Community Partnerships to operate effectively and consistently.
- Enhances delivery of Community Planning activities, ensuring accountability and transparency in progress.
- Strengthens the connection between local Community Partnerships and the Highland Community Planning Partnership through support and alignment.

The implementation and key features of the Minimum Standards Model includes:

- **Consistency Across Partnerships:** Ensures all nine Community Partnerships work from a common foundation, creating a uniform standard for operations.
- **Support Framework:** Delivered with the guidance of the Partnership Development Team, which offers updates, meetings, and events to facilitate communication and progress tracking between the Highland Community Planning Partnership and the Community Partnerships.
- **Compliance Checklist:** Developed in 2024 to help Community Partnerships monitor their adherence to the Minimum Standards Model. Focuses on key priority areas rather than attempting to cover every detail, allowing for practical and targeted implementation.
- **Tiered Standards:** Minimum Standards: Baseline requirements that all Community Partnerships should meet to ensure effective operation. Recommended Standards: Aspirational requirements that Community Partnerships can work toward once Minimum Standards are achieved. Recognises that Community Partnerships may require time and tailored support to progress.

The Partnership Development Team plays a pivotal role in the implementation and success of the Minimum Standards Model by:

- Providing guidance and direct support to ensure the model's adoption across all Community Partnerships.
- Offering tools, such as the Compliance Checklist, to help Community Partnerships assess and improve their performance.
- Facilitating regular reviews to ensure the Model remains effective and adaptable to emerging needs.

All Community Partnerships successfully completed a Minimum Standards Model and Compliance Checklist during 2024, the Partnership Development Team will support all Community Partnerships to regularly review their compliance and support with areas for improvement.

A copy of the Minimum Standards Model and Compliance Checklist template is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).

Priority Action Trackers

Developed in 2024 and with direct support from the Partnership Development Team each Community Partnership has been encouraged to develop a Priority Action Tracker. The Priority Action Tracker has been developed as a tool to support the identification of local priorities and actions.

The implementation of the Priority Action Tracker aims to support Community Partnerships with recording and monitoring relevant activities within the area. Their primary purpose is to ensure that Community Partnerships can effectively track the implementation of priorities and actions, facilitating transparency and accountability.

The Priority Action Trackers focus on:

- Collating information on existing service delivery within the area.
- Incorporating inputs from local public and third sector partners.
- Gathering regular progress updates from identified leads.

These efforts are part of a broader package to enhance the effectiveness of Community Partnerships in delivering on their commitments and improving outcomes for communities across Highland.

A copy of the Priority Action Tracker template is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference set out the role of Community Partnerships as collaborative forums tasked with tackling inequalities and improving outcomes within Highland communities. The Terms of Reference for Community Partnerships outline the framework, structure, and operational guidelines for how Community Partnerships function. They define the purpose, objectives, and principles that guide the work of Community Partnerships.

The Terms of Reference sets out the roles and responsibilities of members, governance arrangements, meeting protocols, and reporting processes. It ensures alignment with the strategic priorities of the Highland Community Planning Partnership and 2024 – 2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan while providing a consistent approach to how Community Partnerships plan, deliver, and monitor their work.

The Terms of Reference guide the practical operation of Community Partnerships by:

- Establishing clear governance structures and roles, including leadership by the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretariat.
- Setting minimum standards for meetings, membership, and engagement processes, ensuring consistency across all Community Partnerships.
- Providing an outline for aligning local priorities and actions with strategic priorities and actions.
- Encouraging collaboration between public sector partners, third-sector organisations, and communities to pool resources and address shared goals.

Key Features of the Terms of Reference include:

- **Defined Objectives:** Focused on tackling inequalities and fostering thriving, sustainable communities.
- **Core Principles:** Include person-centred approaches, prevention, community empowerment, resource integration, and partnership strengthening.
- **Membership and Governance:** Includes core and wider members, with roles described for leadership and decision-making.
- **Operational Standards:** Meetings, planning, and reporting follow the Minimum Standards Model to ensure consistency and accountability.

All Community Partnerships are tasked with adopting the Terms of Reference, an e-signed copy will be published on each Community Partnership webpage as evidence of this commitment. Reviews of the Terms of Reference will be undertaken to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The Partnership Development Team will support with the implementation and review of the Terms of Reference.

The Terms of Reference ensures Community Partnerships operate effectively, respond to needs, and deliver meaningful outcomes for local communities.

A copy of the Terms of Reference template is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).

Role Descriptor

The Role Descriptor for Community Partnerships provides a definition of roles, responsibilities, and expectations for members of Community Partnerships. The purpose of the Role Descriptor is to clarify the duties and expectations of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretariat, and Wider Membership. It ensures consistent leadership, effective collaboration, and adherence to governance standards to improve community outcomes and tackle inequalities.

The Role Descriptor supports the structured operation of Community Partnerships and highlights key features including:

- **Defined Roles:** Clear duties for the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretariat, and Wider Membership, emphasising leadership, collaboration, and governance.
- **Operational Standards:** Guidelines for meeting facilitation, agenda setting, documentation, and action tracking.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Encourages active participation, decision-making, and engagement with local communities and partners.

The Role Descriptor ensures that all Community Partnership roles contribute to good governance, community collaboration, tackling inequalities, and achieving shared objectives.

A copy of the Role Descriptor is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).

Communications Plan

The Communications Plan aims to support Community Partnerships to deliver consistent and effective messaging to enhance engagement and awareness of their Community Partnership. Community Partnerships are encouraged to use the template plan to guide local communication efforts, targeting key audiences such as public and third sector partners, media, and community members. The template plan outlines channels like websites, social media, newsletters, press releases, and events. Timelines and responsibilities are outlined to ensure regular, accessible, and impactful communication.

Key Features within the Communications Plan include:

- **Audience Targeting:** Focus on community groups, elected members, media outlets, and public sector partners.
- **Diverse Channels:** Highland Community Planning Partnership website, social media, newsletters, events, press releases, and ad-hoc materials.
- **Roles and Support:** Core partners lead implementation, with the Partnership Development Team providing guidance, templates, and assistance with branding and accessibility if required.
- **Branding:** Consistent use of Community Partnership logos enhances recognition and trust.
- **Contingency Planning:** Clear processes for urgent communications and media responses.

Measures for Success for the implementation of the Communications Plan may include:

- **Engagement Analytics:** Website traffic, social media interactions, and survey responses.
- **Event Attendance:** Tracking participation in Community Partnership networking events and meetings.
- **Outputs:** Regular updates of minutes, creation of new communication channels, and media reach.
- **Feedback and Reviews:** Continuous monitoring to ensure the plan meets objectives effectively.

The communications approach outlined within the Communications Plan template offers Community Partnerships a structure for implementation which aims to enhance the visibility and impact of Community Partnerships while fostering stronger community connections and collaboration.

A copy of the Communications Plan is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).

Online Meeting Etiquette

The following guidelines are designed to support Community Partnerships for online meetings, ensuring they are conducted in a professional, productive, and respectful manner. The Chair is encouraged to review these guidelines at the start of each meeting or provide a summary in the meeting's chat feature.

- **Microphone Usage:** Keep your microphone muted when not speaking to minimise background noise and avoid disruptions. Be particularly mindful if your environment has ambient noise that could affect the meeting.
- **Camera Usage:** Turning on your camera is encouraged, especially for smaller meetings, as it fosters engagement. If connectivity issues arise, switching off your camera may help improve your experience. If you need to step away briefly, please turn off your camera during your absence.
- **Background Considerations:** Ensure your background is non-distracting. Use the "blur" function or a neutral virtual background if necessary to maintain focus on the meeting content.
- **Requesting to Speak:** Use the "raise hand" function to indicate your wish to speak or ask a question. This helps the Chair manage discussions effectively and ensures everyone has an opportunity to contribute.
- **Use of the Chat Function:** The chat function is available for questions, comments, or contributions during the meeting. This is particularly helpful for those without microphone access or who prefer not to speak aloud. The Chair or a designated moderator will monitor the chat throughout the meeting.
- **Meeting Recordings:** If the meeting is being recorded, the Chair will inform all participants at the start. To maintain privacy, you may choose to keep your camera and microphone off during the recording. Participation is still possible through the chat feature for submitting comments or questions.

Website Update Form

The Website Update Form is a tool designed to help Community Partnerships, Delivery Groups, Partnerships, Partners and others keep their online presence on the Highland Community Planning Partnership website accurate and up to date.

By submitting this form, Community Partnerships (or others) can request updates or additions to their webpages, ensuring that relevant information, such as meeting minutes, reports, and resources, is easily accessible to the community and partners.

Website Update Forms are processed by the Partnership Development Team, who manage the content of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website centrally. As a key communication tool, it is important that the website remains a reliable and current source for Community Planning related information.

A copy of the Website Update Form is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).