



Caithness Community Partnership: Terms of Reference

Purpose

A Community Partnership (CP) 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 CP 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 (CPP) and aligned with the 2024–2027 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP).

The HOIP aims to tackle inequalities and maximise opportunities for all people in the Highland area. It emphasises that collaboration at both the local and strategic levels is vital to achieving better community outcomes. The HOIP provides a framework focusing on the following 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.

The overarching purpose of the CP is to enable people to live independently, safe and well within sustainable and resilient local communities and ensuring that both people and places can prosper and thrive economically.

Further information on the CPP can be found here: [Highland Community Planning Partnership](#), a copy of the HOIP can be found here: [2024-2027 HOIP](#).

All CPs are chaired by one of the public sector partners, as per agreement by the CPP Board.

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

Core Objectives

The core objectives of a CP aim to address inequalities and foster sustainable, thriving communities. These include:

- **Tackling Inequalities** by working collaboratively between public sector partners, third-sector organisations, and local communities.
- **Planning and Delivering Services** that improve local outcomes, aligned with the HOIP's focus on People, Place, and Prosperity.
- **Supporting Sustainable and Resilient Communities** where individuals can live independently, safely, and well.
- **Developing Growth** and opportunities for local areas, enhancing both social and economic resilience.



Core Principles

The core principles which underpin the purpose of a CP and guide the approach taken in achieving the Core Objectives:

- **Person-Centred Approach:** Services and projects are designed and delivered in a way that is proportionate to local needs, with a focus on improving lives.
- **Preventative Approaches:** Services are aimed at preventing and tackling inequalities by addressing root causes.
- **Empowering Communities:** Actively involving local communities in decision-making processes, giving them a voice in shaping service design and delivery.
- **Resource Integration:** Aligning and pooling resources across partners to maximise opportunities and achieve shared goals.
- **Strengthening Partnerships:** Encouraging collaboration across sectors to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the partnership.

Remit

As a forum, CPs provide leadership and oversight aiming to improve outcomes for Highland communities. The CP focuses on tackling inequalities, guided by the following:

- **Collaborative Planning:** Bringing public sector partners, the third sector, and local communities together to plan and deliver services and projects.
- **Tackling Inequality:** Identifying and addressing local inequalities to improve the wellbeing of communities.
- **Maximising Opportunities:** Creating opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive.
- **Supporting Sustainable Communities:** Developing resilient, sustainable local communities through partnership efforts.
- **Coordinating Resources:** Pooling and optimising resources across partners to reduce duplication and increase efficiency.
- **Focusing on Prevention:** Addressing the root causes of inequalities to prevent issues from arising.
- **Promoting Active Participation:** Engaging communities in local decision-making to ensure their needs and voices are heard.
- **Aligning with HOIP Priorities:** Following the strategic priorities outlined in the HOIP - People, Place, Prosperity.
- **Adapting to Changing Needs:** Responding to challenges such as pandemics, the cost-of-living crisis, and demographic changes.

Membership

Outlined within the Community Partnerships: Minimum Standards Model the membership of a CP is structured to allow for core representation and the involvement of the wider community. 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](#).

Core Partner Membership: Minimum Standards (Core Partner Group): Representation from public sector partners and identified third sector partners – including the local Third Sector Interface. This group provides leadership and guidance for the governance of the CP. The Core Partner Group is a smaller group designed to meet out with CP quarterly meetings to agree proposed agenda items, address potential issues or highlight success stories.



Core Partner Membership: Recommended Standards: Representation from additional public and third sector partners as identified within the Minimum Standards Model. CPs may wish to involve these partners in their Core Partner Group if appropriate.

Wider Membership: Open to additional public sector partners, third sector and community organisations, groups, individuals, or agencies who have an interest in or are working towards tackling inequalities within the CP geographical area.

The Partnership Development Team maintains a central contact list for the Membership of each CP, this is shared monthly with the Chair, Vice Chair and Secretariat of each CP. The Secretariat is expected to combine this database with their own list of members, and will inform the Partnership Development Team of required changes to ensure all contacts are up to date.

Members

Members of CPs are expected to:

- Actively participate in CP discussions, communications and meetings.
- Commit to attending meetings, with apologies being made only in exceptional circumstances.
- Identify a suitable replacement to attend CP meetings in their absence.
- Complete and report on allocated actions from quarterly meetings and within the Priority Action Tracker within agreed timeframes.

Members agree to:

- Their name, organisations and/or job title being recorded within CP Minutes/ Notes/ Priority Action Trackers.
- Being recorded when CP meetings are recorded for the purposes of minutes or uploading to social media channels such as YouTube – notification of recordings will be made at the start of CP meetings.
- Adhere to confidentiality and data protection regulations, including making any declarations of interest at the start of CP meetings, with any special requests put forward to the Chair.

Member Responsibilities

Members of the CP play a crucial role in driving forward priorities and actions, ensuring effective collaboration. Their responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Contributing to Local and Regional Discussions:** Participating actively in discussions at both local and regional levels to share insights, experiences, and knowledge. Members bring forward agency and community perspectives, data, feedback, and suggestions that inform planning and delivery.
- **Representing Their Organisation:** Attending CP meetings as representatives of their organisation, not solely as individuals. Members are responsible for providing feedback and updates from the CP to their respective organisations, ensuring that decisions and actions are communicated effectively.
- **Progressing Actions:** Taking actions on behalf of their organisation as the primary point of contact or identifying relevant contacts - potentially in other departments or services - to lead on actions and report back or attend future CP meetings.
- **Engaging in Service Planning and Delivery:** Collaborating with public sector partners, third-sector organisations, and local communities to plan and deliver services or projects that address local needs and improve community outcomes. Members contribute their expertise and help shape services and projects that are responsive to community needs.
- **Promoting Community Wellbeing:** Identifying and addressing local inequalities by contributing to initiatives that enhance the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of communities.
- **Fostering Partnerships:** Strengthening relationships and working in partnership with other organisations and community groups to maximise resources and achieve shared priorities.



- **Providing Leadership and Oversight:** Supporting the CP's leadership role in guiding service delivery and providing oversight to ensure alignment with the HOIP's strategic direction.
- **Coordinating and Reporting:** Acting as key points of contact between their organisation and the CP, coordinating actions, and reporting back to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Adapting to Changing Needs:** Responding to evolving local needs and circumstances, such as demographic changes, economic shifts, and emerging challenges like pandemics and the cost-of-living crisis.

Governance

Individual CPs are governed by a structure that ensures effective leadership, accountability, and alignment with strategic priorities. Governance follows these Terms of Reference and the Minimum Standards Model. 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](#).

The Core Partner Group is responsible for decision-making, ensuring that local actions align with communities' needs and the strategic priorities of the HOIP and is supported directly by the Partnership Development Team. Leadership within the CP is provided by the Chair and Vice Chair, who guide discussions, decision-making processes, and the overall direction of the CP.

Should a CP establish additional sub, working, or steering groups with a thematic or geographic focus, the identified lead for these groups is responsible for providing regular updates and progress reports within the Priority Action Tracker and to the quarterly CP meetings. This ensures that all sub-group activities remain aligned with the overarching CP priorities, maintaining clear communication and accountability.

CPs play a key role in driving the strategic priorities outlined in the HOIP locally. Through their Priority Action Trackers and Community Partnership Plans (expected to be completed early 2025), they identify specific local priorities and actions. These ensure alignment between local priorities and the HOIP's overarching focus on People, Place, and Prosperity.

CPs will report their progress and impact to the Partnership Coordinating Group (the reporting mechanism will be implemented in 2025). The Partnership Coordinating Group, in turn, reports to the CPP Board. This structured reporting system ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in the CPs efforts to deliver positive community outcomes.

The Partnership Coordinating Group acts as a mechanism within the wider CPP structure, serving as a platform where Community Partnerships, Delivery Groups and Delivery Partners and Partnerships come together to support one another. This group monitors and reports on progress collectively against the HOIP, identifies shared resources and opportunities, and allows for effective networking and the exchange of information.

Meetings

CPs will:

- Meet no less than four times per calendar year.
- Align quarterly meetings with CPP Board meetings which take place in February, June, September and December where possible.
- Publish meeting dates for the upcoming year once agreed on the CPP website.
- Arrange for meetings to take place online, hybrid or in person, as appropriate. As outlined in the Minimum Standards Model there is an expectation that a minimum of one CP meeting will take place in person per year, where possible, but it is recognised that geographic restrictions may not permit this.



- Record meetings if they wish for the purposes of Minutes/ Notes or uploading to social media channels such as YouTube, when taking place online or as hybrid.
- Welcome external presentations and speakers relevant to the work of the CP to quarterly meetings.
- Consider taking a thematic or geographic approach to quarterly CP meetings, this may also reflect a sub, working or steering group structure adopted by the CP.

The Core Partner Group will meet quarterly as a pre-meeting in advance of a CP meeting to finalise the agenda, confirm speakers' attendance and gather initial updates on progress and any other areas to be discussed ahead of the CP meeting.

As outlined within the Minimum Standards Model the CP meeting Minutes/Notes are to be circulated within two weeks of the meeting. Meeting Minutes/Notes will be published, once approved, on the CPs webpage.

Members of CPs are asked to note that CP minutes are not to be shared as a stand-alone document on social media, websites or other online methods, the link to the CP webpage where Minutes/ Notes are published can be shared.

Roles

The overall administration of the CP will be supported by the Partnership Development Team. Further details on the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretariat can be found in the Role Descriptor document.

- **Chair:** Identified by the lead public sector partner.
- **Vice Chair:** Identified from the Core Partner Group, not to be the same public sector partner as the Chair where possible.
- **Secretariat:** Identified by the lead public sector partner.

As outlined within the Role Descriptor the Secretariat role is to support the Chair and Vice Chair through their role in attending meetings, minute/note taking and logging meeting actions, preparing agendas and meeting papers, and information sharing. A copy of the Role Descriptor template is available in the Community Partnerships Resources section of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website: [Community Partnerships Resources](#).

Minimum Standards Model

The Minimum Standards Model and Compliance Checklist has been developed to create a consistent basis for how CPs 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 CPs. The implementation and review of the Minimum Standards Model will be led by the Partnership Development Team. 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](#).

Review

The Core Partner Group will review this Terms of Reference template. The document will be agreed at the first available Core Partner Meeting. Once agreed the Secretariat will submit a copy e-signed by the Chair and Vice Chair to the Partnership Development Team, for it to then be published on the relevant CP webpage. CPs will review their Terms of Reference annually, making any adjustments.

Signed

Chair:

Print Name: Eann Sinclair Date: 25/07/2025



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Vice Chair:



Print Name: Christian Nicolson

Date: 25/07/25