



CAITHNESS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

ACTION NOTE – Focused Workshop

Location: Wick Town Hall

Date: 13th June

Time: 10.00 - 12.00

Chair: Eann Sinclair

Agenda Items

1	Welcome and Apologies	Eann Sinclair (HIE)
2	Context	Eann Sinclair (HIE)
3	Outcomes	Eann Sinclair (HIE)
4	Caithness Community Partnership Plan	Lynn McNeil (CP Officer)
5	Caithness Community Priority Action Tracker	Lynn McNeil (CP Officer)
6	Caithness Survey Results	Lynn McNeil (CP Officer)
7	Caithness Area Place Plan overview	Fiona Richardson (CDM)
8	WFW – LPNG overview	Ann Gillies (WFW)
9	Activity 1 – Top 3 Priorities	All
10	Activity 2 – Actions	All
11	Date of next meeting	Eann Sinclair (HIE)

Attendees: Eann Sinclair (HIE); Christian Nicolson (NHS); Lynn McNeil (HC); Janet McEwan (Councillor); Jane MacIntosh (CAB); Fiona Richardson (HC); Ann Gillies (WFWP); Bryan Dods (CVG); Alexander Glasgow (TCC); Michael Simpson; (CAB); Fiona Webster (HC); Karl Rosie (Councillor); Angus MacInnes (CVG); Siobhan Leen (NHS); Kayleigh Nicholson (HIE).

Apologies: Raymond Bremner (Councillor); Gary Cringles (SFRS), Lindsay Broomfield (Planet Youth)

Context: - ES explained that the purpose of the workshop was to reset the Caithness Community Partnership, by looking at the current position, reviewing the priorities and discussing what the next steps are.

Outcomes: - Outcomes from the workshop are to understand what the priorities for Caithness Community Partnership are going forward and where we need to be.

Caithness Community Partnership Plan – LM explained that the Partnership Development Team are currently drafting a template for the plan. These plans will be equivalent to Locality Plans as per the statutory duty in the Empowerment Act. The plan will include a purpose and will align with the 2024 – 2027 HOIP and other relevant plans. It will include a geographical profile, inequalities profile and data, a community partnership overview and community partnership priorities.

Priority Action Tracker – LM explained the purpose of the priority action tacker. It is a tool designed to support CP's in identifying, monitoring and managing their local priorities and actions, with a focus on inequalities. The tracker helps align local activities with the strategic priorities of People, Place and Prosperity set out in the 2024 -2027 HOIP. The trackers are used to monitor progress, identify gaps in provision and highlight good practice examples of partnership working. By using Priority Action Trackers, the CP can maintain a centralised and organised approach to their work.

An example of the action tracker can be viewed here: [CP Action Tracker Template](#)

Survey Results – LM went over the results from the survey:

Purpose – Most respondents (64%) indicated they understand the purpose of the Caithness Community Partnership (CP) but only 29% believe it is effectively meeting that purpose. A significant portion (43%) disagreed with this statement, and 28% were unsure, suggesting a disconnect between understanding and perceived impact.

Partners – While 57% of respondents said their organisation was involved in CP activities, views on the overall involvement of partners were mixed. Only 36% agreed that partner involvement is good, while another 36% disagreed. Open responses highlighted a need for better collaboration and more inclusive engagement methods.

Structure - The structure of CP up to March 2025 received mixed reviews: 36% agreed it worked well, 43% disagreed, and 21% were unsure. Leadership structure was similarly divided, with 43% agreeing it met requirements, 21% disagreeing, and 36% unsure. Comments pointed to stagnation, infrequent meetings, and a desire for more in-person engagement.

Priorities - The three existing priority themes—Mental Health, Poverty, and Employability—were supported by 36% of respondents, while another 36% were unsure. Suggestions for new or additional priorities included accessible transport, substance misuse, and broader healthcare issues. Respondents emphasized the need to revisit and refresh these themes in light of evolving community needs.

Reporting - Only 36% of respondents felt the current reporting structure effectively tracks progress and outcomes, while 43% disagreed. However, there was strong support (79%) for adopting a centralized Priority Action Tracker to improve accountability and visibility. Most respondents also supported the use of standardized tools like standing agendas for meetings.

Resources - The end of Project Support Officer roles raised concerns about sustainability. Half of respondents said their organisations lack sufficient resources to support CCP, and 79% agreed that CCP should seek funding to support project delivery and potentially reinstate support roles. Comments emphasized the importance of dedicated staff in maintaining momentum.

Communication - Internal communication was rated more positively than external communication. While 64% agreed internal communication was clear and informative, only 29% said the same about external communication. Respondents called for more transparency, regular updates, and better visibility into both local and Highland-wide partnership activities.

Caithness Area Place Plan – FR provided the group with an overview of the Caithness Area Place Plan (APP). The Caithness Area Place Plan is a strategic framework developed by Highland Council and partners to guide collaborative action across Caithness. It aims to align community aspirations with public service delivery, investment, and policy development through a place-based approach.

Purpose of the Plan

- Apply a **place lens** to all activities.
- Foster **collaborative working** between communities and agencies.
- Provide **evidence for funding** and investment.
- Support **short-, medium-, and long-term actions**.
- Promote **shared responsibility** for delivery.

Who It's For

- Local communities and Community Councils
- Development Trusts
- Highland Council and Community Planning Partners
- Local businesses, investors, and national agencies

Engagement Summary

- 3 in-person sessions, 1 online workshop
- Online survey and ideas board
- Focused interviews and youth engagement
- Over **200 participants** and **428+ comments**
- **150 Place Standard** responses

Overarching Themes include:

- Addressing depopulation, Investment, Poverty and Inequality, Community Empowerment and local decision making.

Organised under the three Pillars of People, Place and Prosperity priorities include:

- Health & Wellbeing, Access to Public Transport, Sport & Recreation
- Active Travel, Roads, Town Centres, Waste & Recycling, Housing, Community Wardens
- Diverse Economy, Renewable Energy, Opportunities for Young People & Families and Tourism.

Caithness District Planning Group – CN gave a brief overview of the Caithness District Planning Group and its Action Plan which exists to support the delivery of the Adult Services Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027. This is a joint plan, which was approved by The Highland Council and NHS Highland at the end of December 2023.

Strategic Objective Links

- Support people to live fulfilling lives in their own homes for as long as possible
- Promote health and wellbeing across our communities and age groups
- Support staff to continuously improve the information, support, and care they deliver
- Efficiently and effectively manage all resources to deliver best value

Key Themes/Priorities for Caithness the Caithness DPG

- Sustainability of Staffing
 - Training and Development for existing staff
 - Developing the Young Workforce/Role of Modern Apprenticeship
 - Recruitment
- Sustainability of Services
 - Digital
- Communication
 - Between NHS Highland and the community
 - Strategically with NHS Highland (re possible future needs)

Whole Family Wellbeing - Local Partnership Networking Group (LPNG) – AG informed the group of the purpose of the LPNG. This group aims to bring together professionals who work with families in Caithness to form a Local Partnership Network Group. They will identify local needs & gaps, use data, family feedback, and knowledge of existing services to highlight key priorities and service gaps in the area. Create a space for professionals to share best practices, ideas, and solutions to strengthen Whole Family Wellbeing (WFW) in Caithness. Oversee the allocation and use of £100k in Element 2 funding (2 grants of £50k) to support family-focused services and initiatives.

An initial meeting took place on the 29th April in Wick where the group mapped out what was already happening, where the gaps were and what the priorities were moving forward. These are listed below:

- Increase Awareness of Services – Communication Strategy, Information Sharing
- Enhance Face-to-Face Services – Community Meetings and drop-in sessions, Accessible locations
- Improve Rural Transport – Collaborate with Transport providers, Community Transport Initiatives
- Support Mental Health & Isolation – Peer support groups and social activities, mental health outreach
- Expand Outreach Services - Funding for expansion, Monthly outreach visits
- Address Childcare Needs – Recruit and train childminders, flexible childcare options
- Reduce waiting Lists for Mental Health Services – Funding for Mental Health Services, Triage Systems
- Enhance Support for Unpaid Carers – Support Packages, Respite Care Services
- Improve Collaboration – Multi-Agency Forums, Shared Database
- Support for Workforce – Training and Development Programs, Staff Wellbeing, Fair Wages and Working Conditions

The next meeting of the LNPG has yet to be confirmed.

Activities

Drawing from the Area Place Plan, the District Planning Group Action Plan, and the WFW Local Partnership networking group priorities, a list of ten key priorities was given to the group. Working in pairs, participants were then asked to discuss and agree on the top three priorities for Caithness.

Based on the number of votes and discussion the top 3 were:

1. **Tackling Poverty & Inequality**
2. **Health & Wellbeing**
3. **Access to Services**

Other priorities received fewer or no votes, and participants noted that all priorities were interconnected, making it difficult to choose just three.

The group were then asked what key actions could be taken to address the top priorities with the outcomes listed below:

Access to Services

- Utilise "Near Me" (remote consultation) with support.
- Improve coordination between specialist services and GP surgeries.
- Enhance local NHS services and transport access to mental, dental, and other treatments.
- Ensure NHS and Police Scotland are fully staffed.
- Promote awareness and use of Power of Attorney.

Health & Wellbeing

- Promote free and low-cost options for social prescribing and peer-led health groups.
- Support for 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Equip GPs and pharmacies with resources for social prescribing (e.g., flyers).
- Identify and address barriers to participation.
- Share safe walking, running, and cycling routes.
- Improve communication and education about available resources.
- Encourage self-help groups and reduce mental health stigma.
- Promote Power of Attorney awareness.

Tackling Poverty & Inequality

- Streamline application processes and support CV building.
- Ensure application processes are inclusive for neurodiverse individuals.
- Improve communication about available support (food, fuel, etc.).
- Upgrade Highland Council housing stock to liveable standards.

- Foster collaboration across sectors to help people overcome poverty.
- Identify service gaps and avoid duplication.
- Take a targeted approach to reach those in need.
- Promote Power of Attorney as a supportive tool.

Next Steps

Another workshop is due to be held after the summer break. A date for this has still to be confirmed. This will be to discuss the actions we are going to take to achieve the 3 outcomes that have been chosen, who is the most suitable organisation to lead those actions, what the structure will look like and what funding is required.

Actions

Lynn McNeil, HCPP	To share Caithness survey data, and slides of Caithness Area Place Plan to CP Members.
ALL	To think about actions that can be taken to achieve the top 3 priorities of Health & Wellbeing, Poverty & Inequality and Access to Services, who can lead and how others can get involved.

Next Meeting Date:

The next Caithness Community Partnership meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday 19th September** – venue to be confirmed. But as stated previously another workshop will be scheduled before this date.