Highland Community Planning Partnership Update August 2026

Summary

This August 2026 Update provides an overview of the key matters discussed at the June 2026 CPP Board meeting and highlights current partnership activity across Highland. It also includes updates on the development of the new 2027–2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP), the successful 2026 Highland CPP Conference, ongoing community planning activity, and emerging areas of focus and progress including fuel poverty, childcare, housing and community wealth building.

Updates were delivered on the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2025: "A strong start: health and wellbeing in the early years", fuel poverty, the new Highland Children's Services Partnership Plan 2026 to 2029, childcare challenges in rural and island communities, Invest Highland, community wealth building, Highland Housing Challenge, community justice and natural capital. The Board also held a development session focused on the next Highland Outcome Improvement Plan prior to the meeting, a strong focus of which was strengthening partnership contributions to support its delivery.

Development of the 2027–2037 HOIP continues, with evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement and planning underway. Draft priority themes have been identified and locality, thematic and partner engagement activity will continue throughout the remainder of 2026.

The 2026 Highland CPP Conference, Community Planning in Practice, was attended by more than 120 representatives from public and third-sector organisations across Highland. The event focused on collaboration, place-based working and future priorities and has helped build momentum for the next phase of community planning across the region.

The CPP Community Briefing continues to grow, now reaching more than 800 subscribers across sectors and communities.

The new Community Planning Induction Module will be launched in September 2026 to support partners in understanding community planning structures, responsibilities and opportunities for involvement.

Summary of Discussions

- **Fuel Poverty**
  The Board received an update on fuel poverty across Highland and discussed the significant challenges faced by rural communities. Members agreed recommendations to strengthen partnership action and improve support for households experiencing fuel poverty. As part of this work, a Fuel Poverty Action Group is being established to coordinate activity, share expertise and drive delivery of actions. Community Partnerships have been identified as key partners within this work, and Chairs and Vice-Chairs have been invited to nominate a representative from their area to participate in the Action Group, ensuring that local knowledge, priorities and community perspectives help shape Highland-wide activity.

- **Director of Public Health Annual Report**
  The Board received The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2025, A Strong Start: Health and Wellbeing in the Early Years. Discussion focused on early childhood development, improving data collection and assessment processes, and ensuring that children and families receive the support they need at the earliest stage possible. An update will be brought back to a future Board meeting. A copy of the report is available here: Director of Public Health annual report | NHS Highland.

- **Highland Children's Services Partnership Plan 2026–2029**
  The Board discussed the new Highland Children's Services Partnership Plan 2026 to 2029. Members highlighted the extensive work undertaken to engage with children and young people and discussed opportunities to strengthen youth participation across wider community planning structures and activities. A copy of the Plan is available here: Children's Services - Highland Community Planning Partnership.

- **Childcare in Rural and Island Communities**
  Members considered an update on childcare provision across Highland. Discussion focused on the impact of childcare availability on families, employment, businesses, housing and population sustainability. The Board agreed that the challenges and barriers identified should be raised with the Scottish Government and further discussions will continue.

- **Community Wealth Building and Social Value Charter**
  The Board approved a refresh of the Highland Social Value Charter and agreed, in principle, governance arrangements for the proposed Highland Futures Investment Fund. Members also noted progress with the Highland Project Bank and wider work to maximise community benefit and social value from investment across Highland.

- **Housing Update**
  The Board received an update on delivery of the Highland Housing Challenge Action Plan. Members recognised the scale of the housing challenge and discussed the need for a range of solutions to increase housing delivery, support communities and respond to the demands being created through major economic and infrastructure developments across the region.

- **Community Justice and Natural Capital**
  Updates were also received from the Highland Community Justice Partnership and the Natural Capital Short-Life Working Group. Discussions focused on strengthening collaboration across partnerships, considering long-term sustainability for key projects, and progressing work to identify opportunities linked to Highland's natural capital assets.

- **Community Planning Activity Across Highland**
  Community Partnerships continue to build more thematic and collaborative approaches to addressing local priorities. Common areas of focus include community resilience, health and wellbeing, young people, employability, poverty reduction, transport and community wealth building. Partnerships are increasingly using thematic sessions and working groups to strengthen delivery and improve coordination across partners.

  Notable recent activity includes the first Caithness Community Conversation event, resilience planning work in Lochaber, Mid Ross and Badenoch & Strathspey, youth-focused engagement in Inverness and Easter Ross, and continued discussions around inequalities across several localities.

- **Developing the 2027–2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan**
  Development of the next Highland Outcome Improvement Plan is a current major priority. Work is currently focused on evidence gathering, identifying priority themes, stakeholder engagement and partnership planning. Community Partnerships, Delivery Groups and partners from across sectors will continue to contribute to the process throughout 2026, helping shape the future vision and outcomes for Highland communities over the next decade.

Looking Ahead

Key areas of focus over the coming months include:

- Continued engagement and development of the 2027–2037 Highland Outcome Improvement Plan.
- Preparation of the 2025-2026 Highland CPP Annual Report.
- Strengthening Community Partnership activities.
- Launch the Community Planning Induction Module.
- Ongoing collaboration around priority inequalities.

Community Networking Events

Planning for the 2026 series of Community Networking Events is well underway, with the following dates and locations confirmed. Community Partnerships and partners will receive further information on the events, including details on how to book pop-up stands and participate in the event.

Date	Location
Wednesday 30 September 12:00 – 15:00	Newtonmore Village Hall Main St, Newtonmore PH20 1DA Badenoch & Strathspey Community Partnership
Friday 09 October 12:00 – 14:00	Nairn Community & Arts Centre King St, Nairn IV12 4BQ Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership
Thursday 15 October 13:30 – 16:30	Mallaig and Morar Community Centre Mallaig, West bay PH41 4PX Lochaber Community Partnership
Thursday 22 October 12:00 – 14:30	Muir of Ord Village Hall Village Hall, Seaforth Road, Muir of Ord, IV6 7TA Mid Ross Community Partnership
Wednesday 04 November TBC	Averon Centre High Street, Alness, IV17 0QB Easter Ross Community Partnership
Friday 06 November 13:00 – 16:00	Lairg Community Centre The Main St, Lairg IV27 4DD Sutherland Community Partnership
Thursday 12 November TBC	Glen Urquhart Public Hall 21 Enrick Crescent, Drumnadrochit, IV63 6TP Inverness Community Partnership
TBC November	Eastgate Centre 11 Eastgate, Inverness IV2 3PP Inverness Community Partnership