

Community Wellbeing Board Update

Summary and Recommendations

COSLA is in the process of changing the way workplans are drafted so that they are more consistent. In the past this report has fallen into three parts. On this occasion we are only providing material staff supporting the Board that COSLA staff wish to bring to members' attention, but not requiring political decisions.

This paper invites members of the Community Well-Being Board to:

- i. Note and comment on the update report.

References

Previous immediate reports:

- CWB Board item 2.1 Community Wellbeing Board Plan December 2023
- CWB Board item 2.1 Community Wellbeing Board Plan October 2023

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Community Wellbeing Board Update

Purpose

1. This paper provides a summary of updates from the teams for information, including oral updates, if needed. Comment and questions are welcome even though no immediate political decisions are required. The material included will often be of relevance to previous positions that have been adopted or flag emerging developments that might require future discussion and decisions.

Background

2. The Community Wellbeing Board covers a wide range of policy areas, as one of COSLA's four policy Boards. The five agreed principles that underpin COSLA's overall work. These are: Strengthening Local Democracy; Working Together Locally; Delivering Outcomes; Focusing on Communities; and Defending Local Choices.
3. The Board is supported through the work of the Communities, Migration, Population & Diversity and Trading Standards Scotland Teams. The Community Wellbeing Board workplan covers the following key areas of work:
 - Community Empowerment and Engagement
 - Community Safety and Resilience
 - Consumer Protection
 - Culture including libraries
 - Employability
 - Housing & Homelessness
 - Human Rights, Equalities and Violence against Women and Girls
 - Justice (community and criminal)
 - Migration & Population Policies, Refugee & Asylum Seeker support & settlement Issues
 - Poverty, Social Security and Welfare Reform
 - Sports
 - Veterans / Armed forces

What's new

4. The appended **update report** covers the following headings:
 - Near Me in Prisons
 - Scottish Community Safety Network
 - New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
 - CLD Review and English for Speakers of Other Languages
 - Community Justice Strategy Delivery Plan
 - Sentencing and Penal Policy Review
 - On 27 February the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs made a statement to
 - Fireworks Licensing
 - Antisocial Behaviour
 - Violence Against Women and Girls
 - Universal Credit Managed Migration
 - 2024 COSLA Excellence Awards open for applications
 - 2028 UEFA European Football Championship

If there are further additions to be made to what is included in the above COSLA staff will provide an oral comment. Comments and questions from board members are welcome – either at the meeting or through email correspondence.

Next Steps

5. None of the issues highlighted in the annex in of themselves at this time are thought likely to need positions to be established by Members or actions to be pursued by member councils.
6. However, comments from Board members on the generality of the work of the board covered in this report, its annexes and elsewhere on the agenda would be welcome and can help influence the development of COSLA priorities and positions in the longer term.

April 2024

Annex

Near Me in Prisons

1. Following mandates from both the Community Wellbeing Board and the Health and Social Care Board, Officers are working with Social Work Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, and Scottish Government to explore the potential benefits of embedding video appointments via the 'Near Me' platform into justice social work and throughcare processes in prison. Scottish Prison Service has given approval to progress with a proof-of-concept project for this work in HMP Stirling. Work to set-up the project is currently ongoing, with an anticipated start date of May 2024. Board members will be kept updated at key junctures as this work progresses.

Scottish Community Safety Network

2. Members will be aware from the update provided in February that the Community Wellbeing Spokesperson wrote to Minister for Victims and Community Safety Siobhian Brown MSP in support of the work of the Scottish Community Safety Network, whose viability was under threat due to proposed Scottish Government funding cuts.
3. The Spokesperson also met with the Minister on 7th February where she reiterated Local Government's concerns. The Spokesperson also wrote to the Minister after the meeting, indicating that the Scottish Community Safety Network would be ideally placed to support the following commitment in the Verity House Agreement, through a specific focus on community safety and collaboration with key partners:

“Scottish Government should ensure that those public bodies that can contribute to community planning play their part, including involving local third sector and community bodies in promoting and improving wellbeing”

4. We can confirm that SCSN will be continuing to support Community Safety Partnerships from 1 April. The Network's Chief Executive, Lorraine Gillies, will continue to co-chair the Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour and the SCSN team will provide support to the group as they take evidence and meet with individuals, communities and agencies. SCSN will also continue to provide support as appropriate to officers in local authorities, hold online sessions with CSP leads and provide opportunities for information exchange and improvement practice.

New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

5. On March 28 204 the third iteration of the New Scots Strategy was published. It is available here [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: 2024 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2024/pages/1-introduction.aspx)
6. The strategy has been writing in partnership between Scottish Government, Scottish Refugee Council and COSLA. The Strategy has been informed by three years of research and projects, including extensive consultation with people with lived experience of being refugees and the local authority teams who support them. The strategic framework will be followed by a delivery plan, to be published in June 2024.

CLD Review and English for Speakers of Other Languages

7. In 2023, Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of Community Learning and Development (CLD). Following meetings at political and officer level, the Minister for Higher Education and Further Education Graeme Dey has agreed to jointly consider the findings of the review with COSLA.
8. CLD has wide-ranging implications, including for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and employability services. Access to ESOL classes has been identified as

fundamentally key to integration for new arrivals into Scotland, as is a necessary component to them being able to access health, education, or employment opportunities. Since the expiration of the ESOL Strategy in 2020, Scotland has seen a significant increase in the number of people requiring access to ESOL whilst funding has reduced and there has also been a decrease in the number of ESOL practitioners due to a lack of investment and security in the sector.

9. This Board has previously called for ESOL to be better funded and approached more strategically. COSLA officers are using this opportunity to engage with the CLD review, and taking into consideration the specific additional barriers to learning facing ESOL learners or would-be learners. The Review is due to make its recommendations in June 2024 and this matter will return to the Board in due course.

Community Justice Strategy Delivery Plan

10. The updated Community Justice Strategy Delivery Plan, a draft of which was considered by the Board at its last meeting, was published in late March. The document is available [here](#).
11. COSLA officers have discussed the position agreed by the Board on the draft Plan with Scottish Government officials. For reference Members agreed that:
 - Given the breadth of the actions covered by the Plan, we would suggest that a RAG status is given to each of the actions to more easily highlight to partners where potential risks and challenges may be affecting delivery of certain actions.
 - In light of record prison population numbers, the updated Plan – perhaps in its introduction or ‘strategic context’ sections - needs to acknowledge current pressures on the system, its likely drivers and set out how the actions in the Plan are seeking to address the issue in the medium to longer-term (seeing as contingency measures may be taken in the shorter term), and its likely implications on capacity for community justice partners, including local authorities.
 - As we flagged in February 2023, we continue to have reservations about the ability of local authorities to be able to meet fully the ambitions of the plan. We are concerned that without a strong commitment to working with Local Government on adequate resourcing of local justice services, this plan risks widening the existing ‘implementation gap’ between national policies and legislation and local delivery. This is also the case for other services that are critical to reducing reoffending, such as housing.
12. Scottish Government officials have acknowledged the above points and have advised that, due to timing, the feedback from the Board will be considered as part of the next update to the Plan, which is due in June 2024. It was also noted that:
 - The suggestion of including a RAG status has been put forward by another organisation involved in the delivery of the Strategy, and it is something that SG is open to explore including in future iterations of the Plan if it can be done in a way that adds value to the document, provides additional context and can be applied uniformly by contributing organisations.
 - On the prison population issue, SG advised that the Plan is focused on the medium to longer term, but that consideration will be given to how the Plan can also reflect current pressures.
 - Similar to the above point, concerns around resources were also noted, with a commitment to exploring how best these can be acknowledged in the document going forward. For the Board's awareness, the Scottish Government's budget includes additional investment of £13m in justice social work services for 2024-25, with £11.4m

to support the expansion of justice social work services and £1.6m to support the bail supervision and structured deferred sentences incentivisation scheme. This new investment is intended as recurring and, subject to annual budget setting processes, will be incorporated within future Section 27 funding.

Sentencing and Penal Policy Review

13. On 27 February the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs made a statement to the Scottish Parliament relating to the prison population. In addition to providing an update on ongoing work to reduce the pressure on prisons, she announced that the Scottish Government intends to commission an independently led review of sentencing and penal policy,¹ with initial findings to be available during the current parliamentary session (i.e. before May 2026).
14. The exact aims and scope of the review are still being developed but it will offer an opportunity to explore issues that are currently in focus in relation to the prison population, to consider key questions about our approach to offending behaviour, and to make recommendations for both short and long-term reform. This is likely to include consideration of how and when custodial sentences and community interventions are used, and whether the current options available are sufficient.
15. Work is currently ongoing to develop suitable terms of reference for the review, exploring the likely composition and support arrangements (e.g. the appointment of a chair, panel members, and any supporting team of officials), and making any necessary logistical arrangements. COSLA will be engaged in discussions on the Review and its scope.

Fireworks Licensing

16. The Minister for Victims and Community Safety wrote to COSLA and other stakeholders that were represented on the Firework Review Group at the end of February on the issue of fireworks licensing. Ms Brown advised that after careful consideration and assessment of the significant financial pressures the Scottish Government is facing, the Government has decided to extend the timeframe for delivery and implementation of the firework licensing requirement (Part 2 of the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022) to 2026.
17. The licensing provisions were developed in response to the Firework Review Group's recommendation for the introduction of mandatory conditions before consumers are able to purchase fireworks.
18. A similar letter was issued to the Convener of the Criminal Justice Committee and is available [here](#).

Antisocial Behaviour

19. The Community Wellbeing Spokesperson and Children and Young People Spokesperson met with the co-chairs of the Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour, Fiona Dyer, Director of Children and Young People's Centre for Justice, and Lorraine Gillies, Chief Officer, Scottish Community Safety Network, on 5 March.
20. There was mutual agreement that a broad strategic sustainable approach was needed focusing on preventing ASB from occurring by looking at 'root' causes and trying to promote positive opportunities and outcomes. Support for victims was also discussed as being an important element of this work as well as support for people at risk of committing ASB.

Violence Against Women and Girls

21. Work is ongoing to develop an Equally Safe delivery plan which will sit below the refreshed Equally Safe strategy, published in December 2023. The new delivery plan will enable its aims and vision to be progressed in a practical way. The new delivery plan will build on the previous delivery plan. It is expected that the delivery plan will run for 2 years, including work to develop a more sustained funding approach. It is intended that the new delivery plan will be published in the spring 2024. The priorities of the Equally Safe 2023 refreshed Strategy are:

- achieving greater gender equality
- intervening early and effectively to prevent violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people
- tackling perpetrators

Universal Credit Managed Migration

22. From 9 April 2024 the Department for Work and Pensions, (DWP) started to notify working age householders across the UK of their need to make a claim for Universal Credit, (UC). This represents the latest phase in the "Move to UC".

23. Whereas previously, claimants have either transferred to UC on a geographic basis or when reclaiming DWP benefits, this phase will see the start of the "managed migration" of working age households. Any clients who receive a Universal Credit migration notice should ensure they claim Universal Credit by the deadline, (three months from date of their letter). If they do not apply for Universal Credit, they will lose entitlement to benefits.

24. Moving to Universal Credit will ensure people's entitlement to Council Tax Reduction and other welfare reliefs administered by Local Government. It will also protect people's entitlement to Scottish benefits including Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Foods, Best Start Grants and Funeral Support Payment.

25. People can find out more on the [DWP website](#) or they can call the helpline on 0800 169 0328 Mon-Fri, 8am to 6pm. They can also get independent help by calling Help to Claim on 0800 144 8444 or go to their website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helpclaim.

2024 COSLA Excellence Awards open for applications

26. Scotland's councils are invited to submit their top projects and teams for COSLA Awards. This year, entries will be judged in five categories:

- Service Innovation and Improvement Category;
- Achieving Better Outcomes for the Most Vulnerable in Partnership Category;
- Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health and Wellbeing;
- Strengthening Communities and Local Democracy Category; and
- Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy.

27. When announcing that the awards are now open for applications, COSLA president Shona Morrison said: "If your council doesn't usually submit, please take the chance this year - our staff are ready and waiting to hear from you and guide you through the application process. We are hopeful that some of our finalist and winning projects can be part of a campaign to help showcase the incredible transformation and innovation councils are undertaking, and how they are constantly adapting to changing need - so this is the perfect forum to showcase the brilliant individuals and teams who make positive change a reality

in your area."

Further information can be found [here](#) and you can use this link to [Watch a short video to hear more from Councillor Morrison here.](#)

2028 UEFA European Football Championship

28. The above commonly referred to as UEFA Euro 2028 or simply Euro 2028, will be the 18th UEFA European Championship. It is a quadrennial international football championship. The tournament will be hosted by England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Republic of Ireland. Scheduled to take place between June and July 2028, this event marks the third time England hosts the championship (following Euro 1996 and Euro 2020), while Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and Wales will also host matches for the first time.

29. The key details about UEFA Euro 2028 are:

- Host Countries: England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.
- Venues: Matches will be held in 10 stadiums across 9 host cities.
- Scotland's Role: Scotland will co-host the championship as part of the joint UK and Ireland Championship. Matches in Scotland will take place at Hampden Park.
- Economic Opportunity: EURO 2028 presents a significant economic opportunity for Scotland, allowing Glasgow to showcase itself as a vibrant, cosmopolitan city with a dynamic reputation internationally.
- Legislation and Protections: UEFA has specific requirements to protect its commercial rights during the event and to prohibit ticket touting.

30. Regarding the specific requirements for EURO 2028, they are not yet confirmed. However, based on the experience from EURO 2020, which Scotland co-hosted, there were legislative measures in place. The UEFA European Championship (Scotland) Act 2020 and related regulations addressed matters such as trading, advertising, ticket touting, and enforcement actions. These legal provisions drew from similar legislation used during the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games. Initial discussions with UEFA for EURO 2028 suggest that legislation related to rights protection will likely be necessary to host matches in Scotland.

31. Consultations over the measures are due to start around the beginning of May 2024 and will be accompanied by the Partial Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA)

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