Executive Summary

A: Principles of effective community planning

Community participation

Summary of Expectations

- The CPP and community planning partners work with community bodies to ensure that all bodies which can contribute to community planning are able to do so in an effective way and to the extent that they wish to do so.
- The CPP and community planning partners have a clear understanding of distinctive needs and aspirations of communities of place and interest within its area, as a result of effective participation with community bodies.
- Effective community participation informs decisions about the CPP's priorities, how services are shaped and resources deployed; this includes working with community bodies on co-production where these bodies wish to do so.
- Effective community participation informs how the CPP manages and scrutinises performance and progress, and how it revises its actions to meet its ambitions as a result of its performance management.
- The CPP embraces the principles of effective co-production which is aimed at combining the mutual strengths and capacities of all partners (including community bodies) to achieve positive change.

Introduction

1. The CPP and its community planning partners should demonstrate a clear commitment to securing effective participation with community bodies throughout community planning, by engaging actively with communities of place and interest. Effective community participation is essential to assist the CPP to secure improved outcomes and reduced inequalities. It can also stimulate improved self-esteem, raised aspirations within these communities, and capacity to try to do more.

2. This commitment to securing effective participation from community bodies should be led, planned and managed effectively at a partnership level, with strong shared leadership from all partners including community bodies. Approaches should be informed by the National Standards for Community Engagement and supported by such tools and frameworks as are appropriate. Leaders should promote a culture throughout their respective organisations which is committed to the ideal of communities as equal partners, and support innovate ways to involve and empower communities.

Identifying Community Bodies

3. The 2015 Act requires CPPs and community planning partners both to engage with those community bodies which are likely to be able to contribute to community planning, and to participate with these bodies in community planning to the extent that those bodies wish to do so (section 4(3) and (6)).

4. Section 4(9) defines "community bodies" for this purpose. These are bodies, whether or not formally constituted, established for purposes which consist of or include that of promoting or improving interests of any communities however resident or otherwise present in the area of the CPP.
5. Formally constituted bodies can include, for example, community councils, tenant or resident associations, and local business associations. These bodies can support the interests of communities of place and communities of interest (e.g. young people leaving care; vulnerable adults; the local business community; those with protected characteristics such as disabled people; or people from black and minority ethnic communities.)

6. The CPP should also engage with third sector organisations, where doing so can support effective participation from community groups that can contribute to community planning. Third Sector Interfaces should support effective community planning, by building links between third sector bodies and the CPP.

7. A substantial number of community bodies are also regarded as third sector organisations. While the CPP may determine that it cannot engage with every community body in the way and to the extent that each body might wish, it should be open and transparent in making clear to bodies why it has reached the decisions it has in order to support how it fulfils its broader duty to secure effective community planning.

Applying this Principle

8. Community participation should closely inform all aspects of community planning, including understanding of needs, circumstances and opportunities; setting priorities; responding to those priorities and reviewing progress. The CPP and its partners should shape their engagement activity with a view to securing active, constructive and ongoing participation from community bodies. This engagement will inform, for instance, when and how this activity is undertaken, and what local information and other support the CPP and partners provide to facilitate effective participation. Effective links may be made for example, with statutory consultation requirements on the development plan.

9. Securing participation from communities requires commitment from the CPP and partners to strengthen the capacity of community bodies, wherever this is needed to build effective community involvement in decision-making, policy development and service provision. Community capacity building is especially important to secure the participation of those sections of the community which are otherwise less engaged than other sections in community planning. This includes in particular community bodies which represent the interests of persons who experience inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic or other disadvantage. Community planning partners should seek to maximise the impact of community learning and development by focusing activity on the most disadvantaged communities.

10. Section 14(3)(b) gives a statutory basis to this requirement, by requiring community planning partners to contribute such funds, staff and other resources as the CPP considers appropriate to secure that participation. The CPP should ensure that there is a particular focus on supporting the participation of those people who face additional barriers to involvement. The CPP and its partners - including Third Sector bodies and, importantly, community bodies themselves - should view capacity building as a shared responsibility.

11. Through their engagement and capacity building activity, the CPP and partners should develop and maintain a strong understanding of local needs, circumstances and opportunities. These needs and aspirations are likely to be complex and constantly evolving, and so the CPP and its community planning partners will need to maintain ongoing engagement with community bodies. In turn community bodies and the communities they represent should feel that their voices have been heard and change has taken place as a result of their involvement.

12. Techniques such as charrettes, an innovative multi-disciplinary approach to development in the built environment or use of the Place Standard which supports the delivery of high quality places in Scotland and to maximise the potential of the physical and social environment in supporting health, wellbeing and a high quality of life, can support effective community engagement which is central to the delivery of successful, sustainable places.

13. Partners should collaboratively align their community participation activity. The aim is to: pool community engagement expertise and resources; reduce engagement fatigue amongst communities; provide a more efficient use of community as well as public partner resource; and maximise the impact of community participation in community planning.
14. The CPP should ensure that its structure and organisation ensure a strategic, full and clear role for community bodies in its organisation and in its decision-making across all levels. From this and how the CPP more broadly secures participation from community bodies in community planning, community needs and aspirations should strongly inform the CPP's understanding of local needs and circumstances as well as its clear vision for local communities and the priorities it sets for improvement in its LOIP. These decisions may not fully satisfy the wishes of every community body, so the CPP should be transparent and provide reasoning for their choice of actions.

15. The perspective of communities is also important for decisions on how to deliver and resource actions to achieve ambitions in the LOIP. This is especially true when tackling multi-faceted and deep-rooted challenges which result in cumulative impact and poorer outcomes for some sections of the community, in these circumstances it is particularly important that interventions are shaped around the needs, circumstances and aspirations of targeted groups.

16. CPPs should work with communities to consider and, where appropriate, develop opportunities to co-produce services with communities where those communities wish and have the capacity to do so. In simple terms, this means working with rather than doing to people and communities, to achieve better outcomes. This can harness communities' ambitions to fulfil their own potential, building on their knowledge, experience, talents and aptitude; and from this, support positive outcomes. It can be an effective way of pursuing prevention.

17. Section 4(6)(c) requires CPPs to take such steps as are reasonable to enable communities bodies who wish to participate in community planning to do so. In line with section 14(3)(b), community planning partners should provide such resources as the CPP considers appropriate to secure the participation of community bodies in community planning. This should include support where needed to support community bodies to engage in co-production (reflecting the duty in section 4(6)(c)).

18. One example of how CPPs can gain a community perspective is by using Participatory Budgeting as a tool for enhanced community engagement and as a development of participatory democracy. Participatory Budgeting gives local people a direct say in how and where public funds can be used to address locally identified requirements by providing the opportunity to identify preferences and allocate spend within defined parameters.

19. A commitment to community participation is also important to how the CPP monitors performance and progress against its ambitions, how it ensures sufficient challenge and scrutiny of this progress, and how it revises its actions to meet these ambitions in response. Intelligence about the views and experiences of local communities should form part of a portfolio of evidence which underpins the CPP's approach to effective performance management. This, for instance, should enable the CPP to review and evaluate how well local people feel they are involved in local decision making and how well local services are meeting their needs and aspirations. It should also assist the CPP to identify progress towards ambitions in specific communities of place or of interest that might be masked in data that covers the whole CPP area.

20. This intelligence about the views and experiences of local communities may be built in a variety of ways. However it should include opportunities for community bodies to participate fully within the CPP's formal monitoring channels.

21. CPPs should establish on-going monitoring and evaluation processes (including the annual progress report to their communities) as a means to communicate, explain and encourage further community participation in community planning. CPPs should describe the extent to which they have been effective in enabling community bodies to contribute to community planning in this progress report (section 8(2) of the 2015 Act refers). This measure of participation and impact is designed to encourage CPPs to place communities at the centre of community planning so that community perspectives can contribute throughout.

22. Effective community participation requires the CPP to demonstrate clearly ways in which it has improved local peoples' lives. The CPP is accountable to communities for the progress it makes towards its community planning ambitions for the local area. Section 14(4) makes it clear that each partner must provide such information about local outcomes as the partnership requests which could include contributions to the published annual report.
23. Annual published progress reports should be accessible and readily available to communities in formats which enable communities to understand the direction and scale of progress. Reporting requirements for communities may therefore differ from those for other partners. Securing the participation of communities on an on-going basis will require that those communities see and understand the impact of community planning activity on their lives.

24. Sections 8 and 12 of the 2015 Act require the CPP to publish annual reports which, respectively, describe progress made towards ambitions in their LOIP and locality plans. Progress reports should provide communities with an assessment of progress that is accurate and current. The annual progress report on the LOIP should also include an assessment of how the CPP and community planning partners have participated with community bodies during the reporting year, and how effective that has been in enabling community bodies to shape and influence community planning (s.8(2)(b) refers).