

**INTERIM REPORT FROM  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE  
SINGLE OUTCOME  
AGREEMENTS  
IN 2008-09**



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on behalf of COSLA and SOLACE**

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## Interim Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase SOAs in 2008-09

1. This is the interim report from local government on the progress made in implementing the 1<sup>st</sup> phase Single Outcome Agreements in 2008-09. This interim report is provided by COSLA, SOLACE and the Improvement Service so as to inform the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and local government's wider partners and communities of the initial benefits arising in 2008-09 from the move to SOAs. This report covers:

- Context
- Capacity
- Practicalities of reporting in 2009
- Learning and experience
- National partnership developments
- Local partnership developments
- Conclusion
- List of Annexes separately provided

### **Context**

2. Local government and the Scottish Government share an ambition for the outcome focused planning and delivery of public services in Scotland. That ambition, to focus the attention and resources of public services on the achievement of results for citizens and communities – on outcomes - was reflected in the Concordat of November 2007 and then in the accelerated pace of SOA development. Under the terms of the Concordat the Scottish Government “will stand back from micro-managing service delivery, thus reducing bureaucracy and freeing up local authorities and their partners to meet the varying local needs and circumstances across Scotland”.

3. The Concordat expected SOAs between Councils and the Scottish Government to be in place during 2008-09, i.e. by March 2009. However, Councils decided to present their draft SOAs to the Scottish Government for discussion by March 2008 – so as to create a momentum to the process and to acquire early learning and experience on what the shift to an outcomes approach will require. The Scottish Government then responded with a commitment to agreeing each SOA by June 2008.

4. The Concordat also envisaged the possibility that SOAs would be extended to include Community Planning Partnerships at some future date, as many of the outcomes which matter most to communities (such as health improvement and community safety) cannot be delivered by Councils alone. However, the ambition to move to an outcomes approach was already shared by many Community Planning partners, with the result that 15 of the SOAs presented in March 2008 were developed with CPPs.

5. As a result of this ambition and pace local government and the Scottish Government agreed that there should be a second phase of SOAs, all of which would be between CPPs and the Scottish Government, for 2009-10 onward. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs will reflect the learning and experience acquired from the accelerated development of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase.

6. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs will therefore shortly be superseded by the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs, which will be agreed between CPPs and Scottish Government in May 2009. Each Council will, however, provide a progress report on the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOA for 2008-09 in September 2009. Thereafter each Council will provide, on behalf of its CPP, an annual progress report on the implementation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOA in the preceding financial year each September, from 2010 onward. It is those progress reports on the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs which will best demonstrate the 'on the ground' benefits of the shift to an outcomes approach, given the practical constraints on reporting in 2009 set out in paras 12–15 below.

7. The key stages in this accelerated SOA process are:

November 2007	Concordat signed by COSLA and the Scottish Government
February 2008	Provision of initial SOA Guidance
March 2008	Draft 1 <sup>st</sup> phase SOAs presented to Scottish Government
June 2008	1 <sup>st</sup> phase SOAs signed
October 2008	Provision of ' <i>SOA Guidance for CPPs</i> '
February 2009	Draft 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs presented to Scottish Government
April 2009	Interim report from local government on 1 <sup>st</sup> phase SOAs
May 2009	2 <sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs to be signed
September 2009	Annual reports from Councils on 1 <sup>st</sup> phase SOAs
September 2010	Annual reports from CPPs on 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs.

### **Capacity**

8. This acceleration of the scope and pace of Single Outcome Agreements is potentially the most profound and radical shift in the culture and practice of public service delivery in Scotland in the past 60 years. It is to the credit of all Councils and their Community Planning partners that they have welcomed and risen to the challenge of reshaping their individual and joint activities within these timescales.

9. Some of the capacity to make this shift was released by the removal of the bureaucracy which surrounded over 40 ring fenced funds, which were rolled up into the Local Government Settlement in 2008-09. This has freed time and attention for the business of clearly identifying and addressing real local priorities.

10. However, local government has not been able to release as much capacity as was expected and needed in the crucial period when 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs had to be developed and agreed. The Concordat said that "in addition to reductions in ring-fencing, bureaucracy will be reduced in other ways including the extent of monitoring and reporting currently required of local government by the Scottish Government, including a reduction in monitoring and reporting not directly linked to ring fenced funding".

11. Local government therefore looks forward to an early reduction in these burdens of monitoring, reporting and scrutiny - which should be achieved by refocusing those activities so as to support CPPs in the collective governance and aligned performance management of their delivery of outcomes. In particular, there is a clear need for a rapid review of the Statutory Performance Indicators, so as to focus on outcomes and to support partnership working. In that context local government welcomes the support which Audit Scotland will provide for the Improving Local Outcome Indicators Project described in para 24.

### **Practicalities of reporting in 2009**

12. Councils and their partners will report to their communities and to the Scottish Government on their contribution to the achievement of national and local outcomes. This reporting will complement the Scottish Government's reporting on its National Indicators and Targets and the national progress in achieving the Scottish Government's Purpose and National Outcomes.

13. The Concordat envisaged that annual progress reports on SOAs would be provided around the turn of the financial year. However, many data sets do not become available until several months after the close of the financial year, with key data for educational attainment only becoming available in the summer. Local government and the Scottish Government have therefore agreed that each Council will provide its annual SOA progress report around each September, once all the data on the achievement of targets is available. The first of these annual reports, around September 2009, will again be on the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs which will shortly be superseded by the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs.

14. Local government and the Scottish Government also agreed that, for this one year only, an interim report should be provided by local government in April 2009 on progress and achievements in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs in 2008-09. CPPs were then asked to provide information on progress and achievements in their draft 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs so as to inform this interim report.

15. There are inevitable practical constraints on what can usefully be reported at this stage. Firstly, it is unlikely that the quantified information on progress and achievements between April 2008 and the presentation of draft SOAs in February 2009 was attributable to SOAs which were only signed in June 2008. And secondly, this report is provided in April 2009, on the basis of drafts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs, which may be further modified by CPPs in May.

16. This interim report therefore identifies the qualitative progress and achievements which, so far as possible, can be attributed to the SOA approach and were not already planned for other reasons. Underpinning the progress and achievements at both national and local levels has been the learning and experience which national and local partners acquired from the early development of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs.

### **Learning and experience**

17. The context for this interim report on progress and achievements is one of ambition and pace, which provided valuable early learning and experience. The real achievement in 2008-09 was the early agreement of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs and then, crucially, the use of the learning and experience which that gave us.

18. In September 2008, at the request of COSLA and SOLACE, the IS provided a '*Single Outcome Agreement Briefing*' on the SOAs which had been signed in June (see **Annex 1**). That briefing noted that the SOAs were not all the same, because they responded, as intended, to different local priorities and reflected different local circumstances. However, it also noted that many 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs lacked a strategic focus and contained excessive detail. With the extension of SOAs to all CPPs it would be important to ensure that all SOAs were more than just a summation of existing activities.

19. The learning and experience which had been captured in the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs was quickly applied in the subsequent 'SOA *Guidance for CPPs*' which was issued in October 2008 by the (former) High Level Steering Group (comprising the Scottish Government, COSLA, SOLACE, the IS and Audit Scotland – which now comprise the Concordat Oversight Group) (see **Annex 2**).

20. On the basis of the experience of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs the High Level Steering Group took a clear view that:

“the key points of our learning from the first phase SOAs, which we emphasise throughout this Guidance, are that:

- A SOA must have a **strategic focus** – with a manageable and meaningful number of outcomes and robust and measurable indicators – rather than being a compilation of unprioritised plans and activities;
- A SOA must be about **actual outcomes** – it should clearly focus on people's quality of life and opportunities, and on the supporting social, economic and environmental conditions;
- A SOA must be **evidence-based** – it should be based on an integrated area profile of social, economic and environmental conditions and trends, and consideration of future challenges and opportunities;
- A SOA must be **capable of delivery** – it should show a clear line of sight to the supporting plans and activities which should lie 'below the waterline'; and
- A SOA must promote **continuous improvement** – it is a significant advance on previous arrangements for planning and delivering public services, but it should also identify the further work needed, including arrangements to secure full ownership from all local partners and communities.”

21. The High Level Steering Group also recognised that:

“the move to an outcome based approach for public services will not be completed with the agreement of SOAs between the Scottish Government and all Community Planning Partnerships in 2009 – important though that is. This is only the start of a fundamental change in our ways of thinking and working, with inevitable needs for further advice and support. The Scottish Government, COSLA, SOLACE, Audit Scotland and the Improvement Service are committed to providing that support as it is needed. *Our guiding principle in this change process is that, both nationally and locally, we should be clear about the outcomes which our communities need and then review and align our arrangements to ensure that they are fit for purpose to support the delivery of those outcomes.*”

22. The early indications from the draft 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs are that the learning and experience from the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs is being widely applied locally.

### **National Partnership Developments**

23. The move to an outcomes approach across Scotland, and to SOAs in particular, has prompted more purposeful partnership working at both national and local levels. Much national activity has been required in order to enable local partners to work together effectively. No interim report on progress in 2008-09 could therefore be complete without acknowledgement of the enabling national partnership initiatives, in many of which local government has been very closely involved, alongside Audit Scotland and the Scottish Government.

24. Beyond the provision of the 'SOA Guidance for CPPs' in October 2008 the following key national partnership initiatives have supported the shift to an outcomes approach in 2008-09.

- Provision by the Scottish Government in September 2008 of the '*Working Guidance for Public Bodies on an Outcome Based Approach*' and supplementary advice in February 2009. All parts of the public sector are expected to show how they are contributing to the achievement of national and local outcomes and to consider whether and how best they can engage with CPPs in the development and delivery of SOAs. (See **Annexes 3 and 4**)
- Formation of the National Community Planning Group in September 2008, at the instigation of SOLACE, comprising SOLACE, the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS), the Chief Fire Officers' Association Scotland (CFOAS) and the NHS Board Chief Executives Forum. This group brings chief officers together to consider issues arising from the joint agreement and delivery of outcomes for communities.
- Provision by the Scottish Government in November 2008 of the '*2009-10 HEAT targets and Local Delivery Plan Guidance*' for NHS Boards. NHS Boards are expected to engage in SOAs and were invited to identify and report on their contributions to shared local outcomes. (See **Annex 5**)
- Provision by the IS in December 2008, on behalf of the National Community Planning Group, of an improved '*Version 3 of the Menu of Local Outcome Indicators*' which can be used to measure the delivery of common local outcomes. (See **Annex 6**)
- Initiation by the IS, on behalf of SOLACE, of the Improving Local Outcome Indicators Project. Much of the focus of performance management has been on managing and reporting on inputs, activities and outputs, rather than on the achievement of intended results for citizens and communities. Working with the Scottish Government, Audit Scotland and stakeholders from across the public sector, the project is refining the Menu of Local Outcome Indicators, reviewing and further developing outcome indicators, assessing the availability of robust outcome data at a local level, and promoting good practice in the use of indicators to support performance management and track delivery of outcomes. (See **Annex 7**)
- Provision by the Concordat Oversight Group (comprising the Scottish Government, COSLA, SOLACE, the IS and Audit Scotland) in February 2009 of advice for CPPs on governance and accountability for SOAs. This advice was developed with the National Community Planning Group and makes clear that, in signing the SOA, each partner is doing so on the basis that:
  - partners are signing up to the whole SOA, not selected parts of it.
  - signing up is equivalent to adopting the SOA as a formal corporate commitment of the Council or Board.
  - such a commitment is to support the delivery of the SOA in all possible ways compatible with their duties and responsibilities.

- all partners are willing to review their pre-existing structures, processes and resource deployment to optimise delivery of outcomes.

(See **Annex 8**)

- Provision by the Scottish Government and COSLA in March 2009 of advice on '*Equality and Single Outcome Agreements – Getting to Best Practice*'. This advice is intended to help Community Planning partners to consider how they may move beyond fulfilling their individual equalities obligations and toward jointly incorporating and reflecting equality in the ongoing development of SOAs. (See **Annex 9**)
- Provision by the Concordat Oversight Group in March 2009 of advice on annual SOA reporting to the Scottish Government. This annual reporting will inform both local reporting to communities and the annual review process, in which CPPs will consider both measurable progress and a qualitative assessment of how the SOA is being supported by continuous improvement in key areas such as partnership working, engagement of the business and voluntary sectors, and community engagement. Since that advice was issued local government has decided that Councils will be invited to identify case studies of good practice as part of their first annual reports in September 2009. (See **Annex 10**)
- During 2008-09 the Scottish Government Implementation Group has co-ordinated the liaison of Scottish Government Directors with individual Councils and then CPPs so as to strengthen local and central understanding of the requirements for moving to an outcomes approach. This direct engagement has helped build mutual trust and confidence between local and national partners.
- Throughout 2008-09 and on behalf of COSLA and SOLACE, the IS has directly supported or contributed to all of the national partnership initiatives cited above. The IS has also provided direct support for individual Councils and their CP partners on both their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs, through 'critical friend' support, the facilitation of CP Board working sessions, promotion of self-assessment of local capacity and performance using the Public Service Improvement Framework, SOA workshops for all Council and CPP lead officials, a web-based 'community of practice' which facilitates knowledge sharing for officials in Community Planning partner bodies, preparation of the SOA Masterclasses for over 100 senior Elected Members in 25 Councils, and provision of an SOA Briefing for all Elected Members. (See **Annex 11**)

25. All of this partnership work at the national level has reflected a growing understanding, confidence and trust between local government and the Scottish Government. This has been informed by the growing understanding, trust and confidence between local partners as they jointly engage in the SOA process.

26. For example, the first SOA Guidance of February 2008 assumed that there would have to be "nationally agreed arrangements for attributing and addressing the causes of non-delivery of local outcomes, and that a pre-arranged process will apply for resolving disputes and for securing arbitration between the Scottish

Government, the Council and Community Planning partners.” It is a significant indication of more mature relationships, arising from shared learning and experience, that these provisions were not seen as helpful or necessary for inclusion in the ‘SOA Guidance for CPPs’.

### **Local Partnership Developments**

27. The implementation of SOAs and their extension to CPPs has given effect to the intention of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 that Community Planning is “a process by which the public services provided in the area of the local authority are provided and the planning of that provision takes place”.

28. During 2008-09 it is clear that Councils and CPPs have made progress in the key areas of strengthening their evidence base and pooling information; prioritising the outcomes which most need improvement; more clearly linking, streamlining and integrating their plans and planning processes; aligning their performance management arrangements; and reviewing and refocusing their partnerships’ structures and governance.

29. However, the speed of SOA development has meant, particularly in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, that some things could not happen in the time available. Councils and CPPs necessarily had to rely initially upon their existing Community Plans and on the supporting evidence base and consultations which had shaped their priorities and objectives. But in many areas the evidence base is now being reviewed and communities, business and voluntary organisations are being engaged in shaping the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOA.

30. One of the immediate benefits of the implementation of SOAs has been the sharing of intelligence between different parts of the public sector and a resultant reappraisal of local priorities. A notable feature of the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs was the acknowledgement in a number of areas that alcohol abuse underlay many of the challenges faced by individual partners, e.g. community safety, illness, absenteeism, child protection, house fires, accidents and road safety. The SOA then provided the means for the community to mount an effective response and to identify how the Scottish Government could use its powers to support local action.

31. Another key local issue highlighted by SOAs and prompting co-ordinated local responses through the SOA has been the challenge posed to partners’ service delivery by ageing and falling populations with shrinking workforces.

32. Examples of progress and achievements can be drawn from the draft 2<sup>nd</sup> phase SOAs, recognising that further information may be available in the final SOAs to be agreed in May. These examples can be identified as being the application of the key learning points from the 1<sup>st</sup> phase SOAs. In particular:

#### **Strategic Focus**

CPPs have generally agreed and prioritised fewer and clearer outcomes this year. For example:

- Dundee, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Inverclyde CPPs have focused on a limited number of key strategic outcomes for their areas.
- Argyll & Bute and Renfrewshire CPPs have ranked the national outcomes according to their local priority against their area profiles.

### ***Actual Outcomes***

CPPs have generally sought to be clearer about what their outcomes will mean in terms of improvements in the lives of citizens. For example:

- Edinburgh and Dundee CPPs have identified many 'end' targets which aim to quantify what the achievement of local outcomes will look like.
- Angus and Dundee CPPs are developing 'closing the gap' indicators to measure reductions in inequalities.
- Edinburgh CPP has highlighted the equalities indicators which will track planned improvements in the lives of its most vulnerable citizens.
- Aberdeen CPP has committed to disaggregating performance information on the basis of gender, ethnicity and disability.

### ***Evidence Base***

CPPs have generally provided strong integrated area profiles of the social, economic and environmental conditions of their areas. For example:

- West Lothian CPP is developing shared online CPP area profiles from which outcome indicators will be drawn and reported.
- North Ayrshire and Clackmannanshire CPPs have made good use of trends data to highlight challenges and identify priority outcomes.
- Dumfries & Galloway and North Lanarkshire CPPs have integrated the surveys carried out by CP partners.

### ***Deliverability***

CPPs have generally sought, where appropriate, to support the development and delivery of their SOAs through rationalising and integrating their governance and performance arrangements. For example:

- Falkirk CPP has implemented a Common Strategic Planning and Management System.
- Perth and Kinross CPP is consolidating and integrating performance indicators for use at the Partnership level.
- North Lanarkshire CPP has implemented a common performance management framework.
- Inverclyde has a single shared Programme Team and performance monitoring system.
- Argyll & Bute CPP has adopted a common Planning and Performance Management Framework.
- East Renfrewshire CPP undertook 3 pilot projects to see how thematic partnerships could streamline activities and realise the potential of a more outcome-focused approach to service planning and delivery.

### ***Continuous Improvement***

CPPs have generally taken the opportunity, post-1<sup>st</sup> phase, to widen community and partner engagement in their SOA and to create the mechanisms for continuous improvement. For example:

- Glasgow and North Ayrshire CPPs agreed partnership compacts with the voluntary sector on its role in helping develop and deliver the SOA.
- Moray CPP has engaged with community, voluntary and equalities groups to develop the SOA priorities, including asking them to think how they can help deliver those priorities.

- Glasgow CPP has formed 16 'community reference groups', for 10 localities and the 6 equalities groups, to challenge and validate the SOA.
- East Dunbartonshire CPP's Equality Engagement Group represents the equalities groups on the Partnership Board.
- South Ayrshire CPP has engaged the Youth Forum and secondary schools in reviewing and improving the draft SOA.
- Aberdeenshire CPP is building on its successful approach with young people to engage older people through 'Ageing Well in Aberdeenshire' events and the planned establishment of area Older People's forums.
- Perth and Kinross CPP has implemented a common business management improvement planning process.
- West Dunbartonshire CPP has identified the developmental areas needed for each outcome e.g. development or localisation of indicators.
- Orkney CPP has begun shared capacity building for CP partners through the 'Working in Orkney' programme.

### ***Other Innovations***

CPPs are developing a range of innovative ways to strengthen the understanding, ownership and delivery of outcomes. For example:

- West Lothian CPP is developing 'life stage outcome planning' which allows a proactive partnership focus on supporting children and adults at critical life transitions.
- East Lothian CPP is developing 'logic modelling' which can be used to check whether and how partners' services will contribute to the joint delivery of intended outcomes.
- Perth and Kinross CPP is developing a new Public Performance Reporting framework based on 'Scotland Performs' and linked to a joint community engagement framework.
- Fife CPP is using scenario planning to identify desired outcomes and the factors affecting their delivery.
- Scottish Borders CPP will monitor the impacts of the recession through a set of 'signal' crimes/offences (such as shoplifting, vehicle defects, missing persons, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour) to check the well being of the area.

33. These are only some examples of the widespread local partnership developments, many of which have been enabled by the national initiatives outlined above. However, there has been a further and potentially more significant local partnership development in 2008-09 – one which was neither planned nor expected by the national partnership.

34. Many CPPs have taken the opportunity created by the SOA process to bring Community Planning and the outcomes approach down to the locality level. In areas such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, Dundee, West Lothian, Inverclyde and Argyll and Bute we have seen a devolution of the outcomes approach to the new multi-member wards. In some areas the SOA is being translated into more local outcomes which are relevant to localities' circumstances. In other areas the SOA is being built up from the identification of outcomes for each locality.

35. This localisation of SOAs is building on the new political structures and creating a new infrastructure for community engagement, for governance, for service planning and delivery, and for performance management and reporting. Most significantly, as this infrastructure appears to be shared with Community Planning partners, it potentially represents a new dimension to the outcome focused planning and provision of public services.

### **Conclusion**

36. This interim report is provided by COSLA, SOLACE and the Improvement Service so as to inform the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and local government's wider partners and communities of the initial benefits arising in 2008-09 from the move to SOAs. We have not sought to take credit for progress and achievements which were unlikely to be attributable to SOAs which were only signed in June 2008. Instead we have taken this opportunity to highlight the many national and local initiatives which have been prompted by the implementation of SOAs and which we believe will stand our communities in good stead in the difficult period ahead.

37. The implementation of Single Outcome Agreements has been and will continue to be a learning process. Outcomes, by their nature, take time to deliver and the SOA process is still developmental. But we can already identify that the shift to an outcomes approach appears to be delivering the benefits of greater understanding, trust and confidence between local government and the Scottish Government, and between local Community Planning partners. Furthermore, the SOA process appears to be mobilising the potential of the Community Planning process, and the resources of the Community Planning partners, to engage local communities in the planning and delivery of their services through the localisation of SOAs. We look forward to following, shaping and reporting these developments in 2009-10 and to sharing the emerging good practice across the public sector.

COSLA  
SOLACE  
Improvement Service

April 2009

## List of Annexes separately provided

1. *'Single Outcome Agreement Briefing'*  
September 2008
2. *'Single Outcome Agreement Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships'*  
October 2008
3. *'Working Guidance for Public Bodies on an Outcome Based Approach'*  
September 2008
4. *'Working Guidance for Public Bodies on an Outcome Based Approach – Supplementary Note'*  
February 2009
5. *'2009-10 HEAT Targets for NHS Scotland and Local Delivery Plan Guidance'*  
November 2008
6. *'Version 3 of the Menu of Local Outcome Indicators'*  
December 2008
7. *'Improving Local Outcome Indicators Project – Project Initiation Document' (updated)*  
March 2009
8. *Advice letter on Governance and Accountability for SOAs*  
February 2009
9. *'Equality and Single Outcome Agreements – Getting to Best Practice'*  
March 2009
10. *Advice letter on SOA Reporting to the Scottish Government*  
March 2009
11. *'Elected Member Briefing Note No.1 – Single Outcome Agreements'*  
February 2009