

**‘Embedding an Outcomes Approach in
Tackling Poverty and Community Regeneration’**

Project Evaluation Report

Improvement Service / Scottish Government

December 2011

**Improvement Service
Westerton House
Westerton Road
East Mains Industrial Estate
Broxburn
EH52 5AU**

About this Report

This report was written by Dr Andrew McGuire of the Improvement Service.

The report reflects input received from:-

- The local lead officers involved in each of the five local partnerships that were assisted via the project;
- The Project Manager, Andrew Noble, who was seconded from Renfrewshire Council to support the 'Embedding Outcomes' work for a fifteen month period;
- Participants in the various national workshops that the project delivered;
- Scottish Government staff involved in the Project Steering Group; and
- Informal feedback relating to the series of 'Issues Papers' produced as part of the project.

For further information on this report or on the project contact:

andrew.mcguire@improvementservice.org.uk

Or visit:-

www.improvementservice/embedding-an-outcomes-approach-in-tackling-poverty-and-community-regeneration/.

(Copies of the full Evaluation Report and the Executive Summary can also be accessed via this webpage)

Contents

	<u>Page No.</u>
Executive Summary	4
1. Introduction	10
2. Project Background	10
3. Project Aims and Objectives	11
4. The Outcomes Approach and Key Project Principles	12
5. Summary of Application Process	13
6. Project Resources	14
7. Agreed Project Outputs	14
8. Project Governance	15
9. Engagement with Local Partnerships	16
10. Key Themes that Emerged	16
11. Published Papers	19
12. Project Workshops	21
13. Assessment of the Project's Performance	21
14. Conclusion	23
<u>Annexes</u>	
A. Detail of Application Process	26
B. Broader Context for 'Outcomes-Focused Working'	28
C. Case Studies of the 5 Local Partnerships	30
D. Feedback from the 5 Local Partnerships	37
E. Feedback from National Workshops	43

Executive Summary

'Embedding an Outcomes Approach in Tackling Poverty and Regeneration' was a project that was resourced jointly by the Scottish Government (SG) and the Improvement Service (IS).

This project evaluation report summarises the main features, activities and outputs of the project and concludes with reflections on the main areas of learning arising from the work.

The project operated over a fifteen month period, from March 2010 to June 2011. The project was resourced by a financial contribution of £70,000 provided by the SG. The IS contributed a similar level of funding in the form of in-kind support.

The project provided a wide range of practical, hands-on support to five local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) throughout Scotland. The geographic areas covered by the project were Dumfries & Galloway, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian and West Lothian. The support was delivered principally to the CPP thematic groups that led on poverty / community regeneration in each of the local areas.

The precise focus of the support work in each area was determined in conjunction with the local partnerships and all of the support was delivered by the IS. The detail was set out in a project plan for each of the five areas. There was a number of recurring themes in the work with the local partnerships, with the main common areas of support provided relating to:-

- Achieving more effective, outcome-focused partnership working;
- Identifying and building understanding of the key issues contained within the evidence base in order to identify outcomes;
- Prioritisation of key outcomes;
- Developing outcome-focused action plans, to help deliver the priority outcomes;
- Developing outcome-focused indicators and targets, which reflected the priority outcomes and which were capable of demonstrating progress made towards their achievement; and
- Training, development and communication of key messages relating to the outcomes approach.

Across the pilot areas, the project supported a number of tangible outputs and improvements which enabled the following achievements:-

- Development of a greater understanding of the outcomes approach and how to work effectively within it;

- Clarification within local partnerships of the roles, structures and expectations concerning the outcomes approach;
- Development of a more robust and effective operating environment for driving the achievement of key outcomes;
- Raising the profile and priority of poverty and inequality issues within Community Plans / Single Outcome Agreements;
- An improved understanding of the evidence base on which to establish key challenges / priority outcomes; and
- A clearer articulation of priority outcomes, together with a clear set of messages for communicating across the partnership.

Whilst the project plans developed for each area provided the broad outline of support to be delivered, flexibility was also built in to take account of emerging needs that arose in each area. In practice, as support was delivered in each area, it often turned out to be the case that additional - or slightly different - issues emerged. Wherever possible, these were responded to positively and supported.

(A more detailed breakdown of the main achievements within each local area is available in the full evaluation report at Annex C).

Many of the issues identified by the local partnerships were largely generic in nature, rather than being specific to the policy area of poverty / regeneration. For example, issues such as developing partnership effectiveness, use of evidence base and prioritisation of outcomes are all matters that could equally be applied to other CPP thematic groups, such as Health & Wellbeing, Economic Development or Community Safety. In effect, therefore, much of the work focused on fundamental issues concerning what implementation of an outcomes approach actually consisted of and how local partnership working could develop to embrace the key concepts.

This was a recurring feature of the project and it was subsequently reflected, not only in the work within the local areas, but also in the published 'Issues Papers' and the national workshop events.

The evaluation questionnaire returns completed by the five local areas, indicate that the project was generally well received and that it helped the local partnerships to make progress in embedding a more outcomes-focused approach to their work.

"The project very much helped to reinforce the need for an outcomes approach and helped us to move beyond rhetoric." Local participant

Overall, the local areas reported that the project was effective or very effective in delivering on the agreed outputs set out in the initial project plan. All areas reported that the project had helped them further embed an outcomes approach in their area and that they now have a clearer idea of what an outcome approach entails. It is also recognised that fully embedding an outcomes approach across a partnership is likely to involve a long-term process of continuous improvement and refinement.

Four out of the five local areas reported that the IS facilitators had helped ‘a great deal’ to provide insights into the outcomes approach. They also reported that, in most cases, they were able to facilitate solutions that may have been otherwise lacking and help progress issues which would have taken longer to resolve without external support. All areas responded that the level of support offered by the IS was ‘about right’.

(The detailed responses setting out the local partnerships’ views on the project are set out in the full evaluation report at Annex D).

The support provided to the local partnerships focused principally on helping to sharpen the various processes that underpin the delivery of outcomes. Inevitably, there will be time lags and attribution challenges in seeking to determine eventual impacts of the project, in terms of enhanced outcomes delivered within local areas. Nevertheless, the feedback from the local areas is positive in this respect and the strengthened processes, etc are generally seen to have been of value. This is reflected in the fact that all five of the local areas indicated that they would recommend this type of support to other partnerships.

In addition to the direct support provided in the five local areas, the project published a series of six ‘Issues Papers’, each of which covered a range of topics relevant to the ‘Outcomes Approach’. The ‘Issues Papers’ and other key project documentation can be accessed at:

www.improvementservice/embedding-an-outcomes-approach-in-tackling-poverty-and-community-regeneration/

The project also delivered a series of four national Workshops, which were advertised openly and which also focused on a range of topic areas relevant to the ‘Outcomes Approach’.

In overall terms, the financial support provided by the Scottish Government was the key factor that enabled the project to proceed. Without this funding, the project would not have been able to support the full-time, dedicated project manager post, which was central to delivering the project outputs. Similarly, the Scottish Government’s investment helped to lever an equivalent resource input from the IS as the funding of the project manager post provided a focus and impetus for drawing in the wider IS support.

In terms of specific learning identified by the Improvement Service as a result of the project, the following points are made:-

- There is a significant demand across local partnerships for practical, flexible, hands-on support relating to implementation of an outcomes approach.
- There is a significant gap between the theory of outcomes and the practice. All areas involved in the project – including those generally considered to be ‘ahead of the curve’ – experienced significant challenges in the translation from the SOA document to actually implementing outcome-focused working.
- The barriers and challenges experienced by partnerships in embedding an outcomes approach range from relatively basic problems of articulating outcomes, partnership organisation, etc to much more complex change management challenges.
- The problems encountered by partnerships and the potential solutions tended to be primarily generic issues rather than related to the particular thematic area. For example, this includes issues relating to leadership, articulation of outcomes, prioritisation, performance management, etc - as opposed to technical issues relating to a particular outcome area. Accordingly, the generic approach of the project is replicable across the full range of outcome areas.
- Change management was a major feature of the project and the support provided. The challenge of embracing and embedding an ‘outcomes approach’ generally requires a commitment to ‘doing things differently’ relative to what has gone before. For some partnerships, this can simply be a minor evolution from a path that they are already well down. But, for others, it can require more fundamental changes in practice.
- The publication of a series of six ‘Issues Papers’ was beneficial in that it demanded the discipline of articulating what it means exactly to ‘embrace outcomes-focused working’. Informal feedback from a range of sources indicates that these ‘issues Papers’ have been generally welcomed.
- The project also produced a broader range of materials relating to implementation of outcomes-focused working, which can be used for a much wider audience. This includes presentations, templates and the ‘Outcomes-focused Partnership Checklist’, which is now being offered more widely to CPPs.
- Learning from the project indicated that it is often not enough just to point out areas that require change in order to embed outcomes-focused working. Rather, it seems also to be important to offer hands-on support, challenge and encouragement to ensure that such change actually occurs. In this respect, the independent IS facilitators were often seen as a mechanism that could help partnerships ‘move on’, develop consensus, reach agreement in resolving issues, etc. Effectively, the role of the IS

facilitators as ‘independent change agents’ seems to be one that was valued across the local areas and which helped them to progress solutions more quickly than they might otherwise have been able to without such independent support.

- Key areas of ‘added value’ generated by the IS for the local partnerships derived from:-
 - Providing information and insights concerning what it takes to implement an outcomes approach;
 - Playing the role of ‘honest broker’ in facilitating open discussions that may otherwise have been difficult / Creating forums which provide ‘permission’ within local partnerships to instigate open discussions on where there was scope for improvement; and
 - Generally, challenging the partnership ‘to do more’ in embracing the outcomes approach.

The range of outputs achieved by the project include detailed, hands-on work over the course of 15 months with 5 local partnerships, four national workshops and publication of six Issues papers.

Overall, the work with the 5 local partnerships, whilst positive, has been a ‘drop in the ocean’ in comparison to the challenge of embedding the outcomes approach across the public sector. To scale up the work would require significant political commitment and resources across the public sector. Discussions are now taking place between the IS and the SG to consider a second phase of the embedding outcomes work. If this proceeds, it is likely to include many of the elements from phase one, which have proven to be popular and successful. But it is also likely that a second phase of work would have a number of differences, aimed at further improving its impact. This may, for example, include:-

- Working with a more intensive resource within a local area in order to avoid spreading the resource too thinly and to ensure the depth of input that is often necessary to drive genuine change;
- Providing a longer-term commitment to supporting change within local partnerships, recognising the significant, long-term nature of the challenge of fully embedding an outcomes approach.
- In line with the recommendations of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (Christie Commission), ensuring a greater emphasis on key factors such as targeting the most severe concentrations of multiple deprivation, recognising the strong inter-relationships of negative outcomes that affect such communities, recognising the scale of the challenge and reflecting this in the resource level allocated to support

change, and developing practical examples demonstrating how to achieve the shift to early intervention and prevention.

In conclusion, it is considered that the 'Embedding Outcomes' project represented a very good return for the investment made in the project by the SG and the IS and that it would compare favourably with other interventions. Prioritising sufficient resource to scale this positive work up is now the major challenge.

1. Introduction

'Embedding an Outcomes Approach in Tackling Poverty and Regeneration' was a project that was resourced jointly by the Scottish Government (SG) and the Improvement Service (IS).

The project operated over a fifteen month period, formally commencing with the appointment of a Project Manager in March 2010 and ending in June 2011.

The project provided a wide range of practical, hands-on support to five local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) throughout Scotland. The geographic areas covered by the project were Dumfries & Galloway, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian and West Lothian. The support was delivered principally to the CPP thematic groups that led on poverty / community regeneration in each of the local areas. The precise focus of the support work in each area was determined in conjunction with the local partnerships and the support was delivered by the IS.

In addition to the direct support provided in the five local areas, the project published a series of 'Issues Papers', each of which covered a range of topics relevant to the 'Outcomes Approach'.

The project also delivered a series of four national workshops, which were advertised openly and which also focused on a range of topic areas relevant to the 'Outcomes Approach'.

This project evaluation report summarises the main features, activities and outputs of the project and concludes with reflections on the main areas of learning arising from the work.

2. Project Background

As the emphasis shifted within CPPs from developing the SOA document, towards actual implementation, CPPs required to consider what an 'outcomes approach' actually entailed and what they needed to do to ensure that the full potential of the 'outcomes approach' was fulfilled. At the same time, through feedback provided by members of the SG's 'Tackling Poverty and Community Regeneration Network', there had been an increasing awareness of the practical challenges faced by local partnerships in seeking to translate the theory of outcomes-focused working into reality.

Following an initial discussion, the IS was asked by the SG to develop a proposal for undertaking a joint project, which would provide hands-on support for a small number of local poverty/regeneration partnerships. The key focus of the project would be on providing practical support to help the local partnerships implement and embed an outcomes approach. Whilst the project would provide hands-on support to a relatively small number of local partnerships, it was designed in such a way as to capture and disseminate the learning and broader issues to a much wider audience.

The detailed proposal developed by the IS sought funding from the SG of £70,000 to allow for the employment of a fixed term senior project manager, who would be responsible for developing and delivering the project. This funding was matched by an equivalent amount of in-kind support provided by the IS, principally delivered through the input of a Programme Manager, but also drawing in ad hoc support from a wider range of IS staff who would be involved in supporting various aspects of the project.

The focus of the proposal was to deliver flexible, hands-on support to four local partnerships (*which later became five*) and to disseminate the wider lessons via a combination of a project webpage, published papers and a series of open workshops.

Whilst there had been for some time considerable discussion of an 'SOA capacity building programme' to support CPPs in implementing an outcomes approach, the Embedding Outcomes project was the first significant intervention that had actually sought to provide CPPs with hands-on support in this area.

3. Project Aims and Objectives

'Embedding an Outcomes Approach in Tackling Poverty and Community Regeneration' was developed as a pilot demonstrator project, which sought to assist a small number of local thematic partnerships in thinking through and addressing the implementation challenges surrounding SOAs. The overall aim of the project, therefore, was to encourage and facilitate the embedding of an 'outcomes approach' in the local partnerships assisted. Following an open invitation to all CPPs, the partnerships were selected based upon the strength of their applications and also taking account of the desire to ensure a mix of participant within the pilot phase, based upon criteria such as size, urban / rural mix, etc. (*Further detail on the application process is set out in Annexe A. Further detail on the broader context for outcomes-focused working is set out in Annexe B*).

The ultimate aim was that the support provided to the local partnerships would help them achieve the delivery of more effective and sustainable outcomes within their local communities. The main approach to achieving this aim was to work with the partnerships to strengthen and streamline the wide range of processes and other factors that underpinned and influenced directly their ability to deliver outcomes effectively. In this way, the project offered practical support aimed at encouraging the adoption and embedding of an outcomes approach.

The project also sought to deliver such support in a manner that would help to encourage the development of *capacity* within the local partnerships. In effect, the ethos was less on 'doing things to/for' the local partnerships, and more about working together with the local staff to share insights and help

facilitate progress and solutions in relation to developing and implementing outcomes-focused working.

In addition to the hands-on work with the five local partnerships, the project also aimed to encourage wider adoption of the learning emerging from the work by capturing the key findings and experiences from each project. This learning was then disseminated amongst a wider range of stakeholders via the project webpage, workshops and published papers.

4. The ‘Outcomes Approach’ and Key Project Principles

A central tenet of the outcomes approach is that it is focused less on issues of process and more on the impact of what is achieved within communities. Accordingly, the key focus is less concerned with issues such as descriptions of the activities or services that are provided and more on the ‘difference made’ to people and communities. Key features of the ‘outcomes approach’ include:-

- A focus on results - the difference made for and with citizens and communities;
- A client-centred approach;
- An evidence – based approach regarding both identifying the focus on the particular challenges / priorities faced by a locality and regarding ‘what works’, in terms of policy and service interventions that best address those challenges / priorities;
- Tackling the root causes, rather than just addressing the symptoms of issues, such as poverty, crime and poor health. This is closely linked to policy and service formulations based on early intervention and prevention in order to stop problems arising in the first place or to limit the negative impact of particular social and economic circumstances, in areas such as parenting, alcohol, drugs, crime and anti-social behaviour;
- A more effective use of joint resources achieved via better co-ordination and integration of public services in order to attain common outcomes. This typically includes a more strategic and holistic approach to public service provision - a ‘whole system’ approach, rather than focusing on individual elements in isolation; and
- A focus on continuous improvement.

Each of these elements were at the fore in terms of the work undertaken in the five local areas, the content of the Issues Papers developed and the national Workshops that were delivered under the project.

More generally, the key principles that drove the design of the project and the work with local areas included:-

- An evidence-based approach, which drew upon available data, research and evaluation evidence and which generally promoted good practice;
- A desire to deliver practical, hands-on support that was of genuine use within local partnerships in enabling them to deliver more effective and sustainable outcomes;
- A desire to 'add value' to local partnerships' existing expertise by offering flexible, tailored support in areas that the partnerships themselves identified they would find beneficial;
- Providing an element of external 'challenge' within local partnerships to help them achieve their potential;
- A desire to ensure that the support provided to local partnerships resulted in a transfer of knowledge and had a positive, sustainable impact; and
- A desire to ensure that good practice and learning was disseminated widely.

5. Summary of Application Process

The application process was intentionally simplistic, in order to make it easy for local areas to get involved and to avoid placing any significant application burden that could act as a barrier to participation for smaller, less well resourced partnerships. A prospectus setting out the aims of the project, the flexible nature of the support available and a short application form were sent to all CPPs via the Council Chief Executives. A total of fourteen applications were received.

The original scope of the project was that four CPPs would be involved. However, the standard of application was high and the assessment process identified five partnerships that the panel wished to include in the project.

All applicants – successful and unsuccessful - were advised of the outcome of the application process within 10 days of the application deadline.

The overall quick turnaround, light touch, transparent application and selection process worked well both for applicants and the assessors. This approach has since been replicated in similar IS-led projects.

(Further detail on the application process is set out in Annexe A.

6. Project Resources

The project was funded jointly by the SG and the IS. The SG provided funding totalling £70,000 for the 15 month life of the project. The IS provided a similar level of input, primarily in the form of in-kind support.

The bulk of the SG financial contribution was utilised to employ a full-time senior project manager for a fifteen month period. The project manager had responsibility for helping to shape the overall project, delivering many of the key elements of support to the local partnerships, workshop facilitation and writing a number of the Issues Papers.

The IS resource contribution principally took the form of considerable participation from the IS Programme Manager, who provided input in terms of overall project direction and management, contributing to the hands-on support work in the local areas, writing a number of the Issues Papers and workshop facilitation. Further IS resource included input to various aspects of the project from other IS staff, including Chief Executive, Director, IT / Business Support staff, another Programme Manager and the secondment of a graduate trainee to one of the local partnerships that was being supported by the project. Additional IS non-staffing input to the project included travel and subsistence and provision of IT equipment, telephone and general office facilities.

In addition to the financial contribution, SG staff also provided input in terms of project governance, commenting on various draft 'Issues Papers' and logistical support relating to the promotion / administration of the workshops.

In overall terms, the financial support provided by Scottish Government was the key factor that enabled the project to proceed. Without this funding, the project would not have been able to support the full-time, dedicated project manager post, which was central to delivering the project outputs.

7. Agreed Project Outputs

The key deliverables agreed for the project were:-

- Undertaking hands-on work with 5 local partnerships to help them embed an outcomes approach, focused upon issues that they themselves had identified that would benefit from support;
- Publication of 6 Issues Papers, each of which focused on a topic that was relevant to the outcomes approach;
- Delivery of 4 workshops, each of which focused on a topic that was relevant to the outcomes approach.

All of the agreed project outputs were delivered within the life of the project.
(Further detail on this is set out below).

8. Project Governance

The strategic direction of the project was overseen by a Steering Group, comprised of two IS staff and two SG staff.

In order to ensure that the project's resources were focused firmly on delivering support, the project governance arrangements were deliberately light touch.

The governance arrangements were primarily based around:-

- The IS/SG contract and an accompanying project plan, which was produced at the outset of the project. This included a schedule of the key deliverables / timescales;
- Delivery of quarterly progress reports throughout the fifteen month life of the project. (Payment of the £70,000 SG grant to the IS was staged quarterly and linked to achievement of the outputs and timescales specified in this schedule); and
- Quarterly meetings of the Project Steering Group. These meetings generally took place shortly after production of the quarterly progress reports. Discussion at the meetings typically focused upon overall project progress, delivery of outputs and any other issues that arose during project delivery.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, ad hoc, informal contact was maintained between the IS and the SG.

In overall terms, the arrangements worked well and to the satisfaction of both the IS and the SG. The light touch, informal approach meant that 'bureaucracy' was kept to a minimum consistent with ensuring proper management of the project, thereby avoiding a 'meetings culture' and freeing up resource to be focused on ensuring attainment of the project's deliverables.

In terms of the work with each of the five local areas, the project manager maintained regular contact with the lead officers in each area, ensuring that there was clarity concerning the detailed work requirements and agreed local deliverables.

9. Engagement with Local Partnerships

Initial scoping meetings took place with each of the five local partnership thematic groups. These focused primarily on identifying the key areas of support required, which was scoped out in project plans for each of the five areas. In addition, desk research on each of the five CPPs' SOAs and Community Plans was undertaken by the project manager, in order to get a clear picture of the challenges and priorities in each area and also to gain an understanding of how each CPP operated, including its governance and management structures. The project plans became the focus of delivery over the life of the project. Details of the work carried out with each local partnership are set out in Annexe C.

For each of the five areas, the core aim was to deliver on the agreed local action plan and achieve the 'anticipated change'. This involved the project manager working closely with the lead local partnership officers to provide support and deliver the agreed outputs. In the majority of cases this meant working with the partnership group, both through formal workshops and by attending and inputting to group meetings and discussions. This approach was taken with Midlothian, Fife and Dumfries & Galloway, while the work with West Lothian was taken forward with the project lead officer and reported to the West Lothian Life Stages Strategic Board. In contrast, the work in Falkirk was carried out almost exclusively just with the local lead officer. This had not been the original intention, but the approach was adapted to respond to local requirements. On reflection, this latter approach worked least effectively, as the benefits and ownership of the project outputs turned out to be more limited.

Whilst the project plans provided the broad outline of support, flexibility was also built in to take account of emerging needs that arose in each area. In practice, as support was delivered in each area, it often turned out to be the case that additional - or slightly different - issues emerged. Wherever possible, these were responded to positively and supported.

10. Key Themes that Emerged

There was a number of recurring themes in the work with the local partnerships, with the main common areas of support provided relating to:-

- Achieving more effective, outcome-focused partnership working;
- Identifying and building understanding of the key issues contained within the evidence base in order to identify outcomes;
- Prioritisation of key outcomes;
- Developing outcome-focused action plans, to help deliver the priority outcomes;

- Developing outcome-focused indicators and targets, which reflected the priority outcomes and which were capable of demonstrating progress made towards their achievement; and
- Training, development and communication of key messages relating to the outcomes approach.

Most of the support requested by the local partnerships was for generic areas of improvement, rather than being specific to the particular policy area of poverty / regeneration. For example, issues such as developing partnership effectiveness, use of evidence base and prioritisation of outcomes are all matters that could equally be applied to other CPP thematic groups, such as Health & Wellbeing, Economic Development or Community Safety.

It became evident through the work with local areas that some of the most difficult challenges they faced were about how the partnership operated and broadening and deepening an understanding of the key aspects of the outcomes approach. In effect, much of the work focused on fundamental issues concerning what implementation of an outcomes approach actually consisted of and how local partnership working could develop to embrace the key concepts.

Therefore, whilst the context of the discussions with the local groups was poverty / regeneration, the main areas of support demand tended to relate to generic aspects of implementing an outcomes approach. This was a recurring feature of the project and it was subsequently reflected, not only in the work within the local areas, but also in the Issues Papers published and the national workshop events.

Some aspects of the local area work, however, were about specific poverty / regeneration matters. In particular, an emerging issue affecting a number of areas was to help to raise the profile of the anti-poverty and community regeneration agenda within the CPPs / Community Plan / SOA. This generally related to the issue of sharpening the focus of the poverty / community regeneration agenda and better articulating the priority outcomes. This was generally achieved by working with the local partnerships, facilitating local workshop sessions and meetings involving a range of senior officers and Elected Members. But even with support work in specific areas such as the development of poverty profiles or poverty strategies, it was the general principles about use of the evidence base and clarity of objectives, etc that was the main issue. These, of course, are issues that would be equally applicable to any other policy area.

In Fife, for example, there was a desire to raise the profile of the anti-poverty and inequality agenda and to help place it centre stage in terms of the CPP's priorities. The work of the project in Fife coincided with the development of the new Community Plan for the area and the project was able to influence the development of that Plan. The new Fife Community Plan now has a focus

on just three overall priorities, one of which is to tackle the significant inequalities within the area.

In Dumfries & Galloway, the view of the local group was that the poverty, inequality and deprivation agenda did not have sufficient emphasis and priority within the SOA/CP. As such, the support work sought to help influence this and raise the priority of the policy area within the CPP. This included the project manager inputting to the Council's Leadership Panel, which consists of the senior elected members from all political groupings and the Council Chief Executive. This meeting provided an opportunity to explain the work of the project and to set out the key poverty and deprivation challenges facing the local area. The messages delivered to the meeting were received positively and the work has helped focus the development of the area's refreshed SOA on key poverty and inequality priorities.

Change management was a key feature across the work of the project. In most areas, the challenge of embracing and embedding an 'outcomes approach' generally requires a commitment to 'doing things differently' relative to what has gone before. For some partnerships, this simply required a minor evolution from a path that they are already well down. But, for others, it required more fundamental changes in practice. For example, the changes required to fully embrace outcomes-focused working can require significant adjustments to established organisational cultures and ways of working across a partnership. This can include changes in terms of leadership, resource management, the roles of different partners, prioritisation of outcomes and activities, performance management, etc. Typically, fundamental change of this nature can be challenging for organisations and partnerships and is often met with some resistance. The nature of the 'Embedding Outcomes' project meant that the five local areas had volunteered to participate and had explicitly recognised a need for support to help them achieve the transformation to more outcomes-focused working. Whilst this generally meant that each area ought to be open to change, it did not guarantee that affecting change would be easy to achieve.

Learning from the project seemed to indicate that it is not enough just to point out areas that require change in order to embed outcomes-focused working. Rather, it seems also to be important to offer hands-on support, challenge and encouragement to help ensure that such change actually occurs. In this respect, the independent IS facilitators were often seen as a mechanism that could help partnerships 'move on', develop consensus, reach agreement in resolving issues, etc. This is likely to be partly due to the social dynamics of partnership working, including the fact that the IS staff were typically regarded as 'honest brokers', with 'no particular axe to grind'. Effectively, the role of the IS facilitators as 'independent change agents' seems to be one that was valued across the local areas and which helped them to progress solutions more quickly than they might otherwise have been able to without such external support.

In one local area, West Lothian, the change management challenge had been explicitly recognised at the outset. The leaders of the partnership acknowledged that, whilst they themselves had clearly ‘got the point’ about outcomes-focused working, the far greater challenge was to effectively communicate and cascade the key messages across the thousands of public sector employees employed within their area. Recognising this as a classic ‘change management’ challenge, the support requested was to help develop and pilot a range of training and development materials that could be used by the partners to deliver a support programme. The design of the programme focused on communicating the key elements of ‘outcomes-focused working’ in a way that challenged staff to creatively adopt the messages and apply them to their own particular work situations.

Having provided support in drafting and initial testing of the training and development materials, the local partners in West Lothian were then left to manage the roll-out. The scale of the challenge in rolling this out, potentially, to over 10,000 employees, highlights the significant implications and long-term commitment required in order to achieve an effective change management programme. In this respect, West Lothian provides a microcosm of what is likely to be required across the country to fully embed outcomes-focused working. Sustained commitment of the leaders and investment of resources across partnerships will be required to ensure the success of such programmes.

11. Published Papers

In addition to the local area “hands on” support element of the project, a very significant driver for initiating the project was the wider national audience for the learning that derived from the work with the five partnerships. Accordingly, there was a considerable knowledge management element to the project. The outputs from the project included the writing and publication of a number of ‘Issues Papers’.

The papers covered a wide range of issues that are of relevance to outcomes-focused working. The topics were selected on the basis of discussion between IS and The SG staff. A total of six papers were published:-

- Partnership Working: Achieving shared outcomes through ‘Collaborative Gain’;
- Outcome Focused Targets;
- Prioritisation of Key Outcomes;
- The Evidence Base for an Outcomes Approach;
- Outcome Focused Working in a Local Context; and
- Effective Performance Management of Outcomes.

The papers provide more detail on some of the key elements of the outcomes approach. Prior to the work undertaken to produce these papers, there had been little bespoke information of this kind to support the implementation of SOAs. For the IS authors, the exercise of producing the papers helped to articulate and clarify thinking around the practical issues of actually implementing an outcomes approach. The issues covered in the papers are largely generic in nature, mainly covering general issues and principles relating to outcomes-focused working. Because the content is not specific to poverty / regeneration outcomes, there is a much wider audience for these papers.

All six of the papers were written by IS staff. Feedback on the drafts of each paper was provided by the SG staff.

The papers can be downloaded from the project webpage:
www.improvementservice/embedding-an-outcomes-approach-in-tackling-poverty-and-community-regeneration/.

The documents are also available from www.employabilityinScotland.com

In addition to being published on the SG and IS websites, the papers were also disseminated through a wider range of mechanisms.

Informal feedback on the published papers indicates they have been well received and have been of practical use to participating CPPs and also a broader audience.

Alongside the published papers, a wider range of materials have been developed as part of the project's work. This includes the following:-

- Outcome-focused Partnership checklist. This checklist was developed to help identify areas for improvement in the way that partnerships operate. It was used with a number of the participating local partnerships. It is now being offered to all 32 CPPs as part of a joint IS / Scottish Government project. Similarly, the Checklist has also influenced the design of the Public Services Improvement Framework (PSIF). PSIF had hitherto only focused on helping to drive improvements in single organisations rather than partnerships.
- Life Stages Support Guide and accompanying training presentation for West Lothian.
- Group remits / protocols for Dumfries & Galloway and Midlothian groups.
- Fairer Falkirk Poverty Strategy 2011-21
- An Outcome-focused action plan template, guidance and support material for the Midlothian IOM group.

- Prioritisation presentation used with the Fife Sustainable Communities Group.

These and other wider materials are also available on the project webpage:
<http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/embedding-an-outcomes-approach-in-tackling-poverty-and-community-regeneration>

12. Project Workshops

Four national workshops were undertaken by the project. They were as follows:

- Prioritisation of Outcomes - 25th November 2010, Glasgow
- Partnership Working - 24th February 2011, Glasgow
- Localised Outcomes Approach - 25th March 2011, Edinburgh
- Initial project findings - 31st March 2011, Glasgow

The workshops were facilitated by IS staff. SG staff supported the administration, organisation and promotion of the workshops. Each workshop had a maximum capacity of forty people. The workshops were open to all and were advertised through the SG's Tackling Poverty and Community Regeneration Community of Practice and also the IS website.

The first three workshops were fully subscribed, in fact slightly over-subscribed. However the final workshop on the project findings was only approximately half-full.

Evaluation forms were provided to all those attending the workshops, and the feedback from these were collated. The key elements of the feedback is summarised in detail within Annexe E.

Taken together, it is considered that the national workshops element of the project was successful and well regarded by the vast majority of participants. Materials from the four national workshops are included in the project webpage.

13. Assessment of the Project's Performance

Towards the end of the project, the lead officers from each participating local partnership were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire.

"The project very much helped to reinforce the need for an outcomes approach and helped us to move beyond rhetoric" Pilot Participant

Overall, the pilot areas reported that the project was effective or very effective in delivering on the agreed outputs set out in the initial project plan. All areas reported that the project had helped them further embed an outcomes approach in their area and left them with a clearer idea of what an outcomes approach entails. At this stage, it is not possible to say that an outcomes approach has been fully embedded in the pilot areas, as this is clearly a long-term process of continuous improvement and there is undoubtedly further work to be done.

Four out of five areas reported that the IS facilitator had helped ‘a great deal’ to provide insights into the outcomes approach. They also reported that, in most cases, they were able to facilitate solutions and progress issues that may have been lacking locally or would have taken longer to resolve. All areas responded that the level of support offered by the IS was ‘about right’ and that they would recommend this type of support to other partnerships.

Detailed analysis of the five local areas’ assessment of the project performance is set out in Annexe D. In overall terms, the feedback received from all of the five areas was positive

The Scottish Government staff that had been involved in the work were also asked their views on how well the project had performed. The two lead officers from The SG were provided with the prompt questions from the local area survey, but also asked to provide views on any wider issues that they felt were appropriate. The main comments provided by the SG officers are set out below:

- “There was a strong demand for the project. 14 CPPs applied, even though it was a short window for applications that also fell over the Christmas period. That demand was reflected in the fact that the project took on an extra CPP.” (*i.e. The project worked with 5 local areas rather than 4, which had initially been planned*).
- “The appointment of the project manager as a secondee was smooth. He seems to have worked well with the areas and been well received. This is demonstrated by the fact that one has asked him to stay on to do additional work;
- “Joint publications have occasionally proved challenging in reaching a balance between what the IS can say as an independent organisation and what the Scottish Government can be seen to say.”
- “There was delay in receiving some of the written outputs. However, on reflection, we should have changed the timescales for these to be weighted more towards the end of the project.”

- “Generally, dialogue has been constructive and we have welcomed the update meetings and found them a useful way to gain more detail on the work of the pilot areas.”
- “The project and the people working on it have been flexible and focused in the support that they have offered. They have also demonstrated a clear commitment to this type of work - often going beyond contractual obligations.”
- “Workshops have generally been well received. Delegates would also like to see even more practical exercises and methods which they can use to translate high level, national concepts into their local area.”
- “Work in some areas has progressed more quickly than in others.”
- “It is encouraging that the project has stimulated other elements of work. For example, the Partnership Checklist, which was developed as part of this project, has now been offered more widely to all 32 CPPs. Another example is the IS commitment to continuation of support work within the Levenmouth area of Fife beyond the formal project end.”

14. Conclusion

In overall terms, the project performed well. The wide range of outputs delivered by the project over a fifteen month timescale was ambitious. Nevertheless, all agreed outputs – intensive work with 5 local partnerships, 6 Issues Papers and 4 national workshops - were delivered within the overall project timescale.

The evaluation returns completed by the five local areas, indicate that the project was generally well received and that it had helped the local partnerships to make progress in embedding a more outcomes-focused approach to their work. The support provided to the local partnerships focused principally on helping to sharpen the various processes that underpin the delivery of outcomes. Inevitably, there will be time lags and attribution challenges in seeking to determine eventual impacts of the project, in terms of enhanced outcomes delivered within local areas. Nevertheless, the feedback from the local areas is positive in this respect and the strengthened processes, etc are generally seen to have been of value. This is reflected in the fact that all five of the local areas indicated that they would recommend this type of support to other partnerships.

In terms of specific learning identified by the Improvement Service as a result of the project, the following points are made:-

- There is a significant demand across local partnerships for practical, flexible, hands-on support relating to implementation of an outcomes approach.

- There is a significant gap between the theory of outcomes and the practice. All areas involved in the project – including those generally considered to be ‘ahead of the curve’ – experienced significant challenges in the translation from the SOA document to actually implementing outcome-focused working.
- The barriers and challenges experienced by partnerships in embedding an outcomes approach range from relatively basic problems of articulating outcomes, partnership organisation, etc to much more complex change management challenges.
- The problems encountered by partnerships and the potential solutions tended to be primarily generic issues rather than related to the particular thematic area. For example, this includes issues relating to leadership, articulation of outcomes, prioritisation, performance management, etc - as opposed to technical issues relating to a particular outcome area. Accordingly, the generic approach of the project is replicable across the full range of outcome areas.
- Change management was a major feature of the project and the support provided. The challenge of embracing and embedding an ‘outcomes approach’ generally requires a commitment to ‘doing things differently’ relative to what has gone before. For some partnerships, this can simply be a minor evolution from a path that they are already well down. But, for others, it can require more fundamental changes in practice.
- The publication of a series of six ‘Issues Papers’ was beneficial in that it demanded the discipline of articulating what it means exactly to ‘embrace outcomes-focused working’. Informal feedback from a range of sources indicates that these ‘issues Papers’ have been generally welcomed.
- The project also produced a broader range of materials relating to implementation of outcomes-focused working, which can be used for a much wider audience. This includes presentations, templates and the ‘Outcomes-focused Partnership Checklist’, which is now being offered more widely to CPPs.
- Learning from the project indicated that it is often not enough just to point out areas that require change in order to embed outcomes-focused working. Rather, it seems also to be important to offer hands-on support, challenge and encouragement to ensure that such change actually occurs. In this respect, the independent IS facilitators were often seen as a mechanism that could help partnerships ‘move on’, develop consensus, reach agreement in resolving issues, etc. Effectively, the role of the IS facilitators as ‘independent change agents’ seems to be one that was valued across the local areas and which helped them to progress solutions more quickly than they might otherwise have been able to without such independent support.

- Key areas of ‘added value’ generated by the IS for the local partnerships derived from:-
 - Providing information and insights concerning what it takes to implement an outcomes approach;
 - Playing the role of ‘honest broker’ in facilitating open discussions that may otherwise have been difficult / Creating forums which provide ‘permission’ within local partnerships to instigate open discussions on where there was scope for improvement; and
 - Generally, challenging the partnership ‘to do more’ in embracing the outcomes approach.

The range of outputs achieved by the project include detailed, hands-on work over the course of 15 months with 5 local partnerships, four national workshops and publication of six Issues papers.

Overall, the work with the 5 local partnerships, whilst positive, has been a ‘drop in the ocean’ in comparison to the challenge of embedding the outcomes approach across the public sector. To scale up the work would require significant political commitment and resources across the public sector. Discussions are now taking place between the IS and the SG to consider a second phase of the embedding outcomes work. If this proceeds, it is likely to include many of the elements from phase one, which have proven to be popular and successful. But it is also likely that a second phase of work would have a number of differences, aimed at further improving its impact. This may, for example, include:-

- Working with a more intensive resource within a local area in order to avoid spreading the resource too thinly and to ensure the depth of input that is often necessary to drive genuine change;
- Providing a longer-term commitment to supporting change within local partnerships, recognising the significant, long-term nature of the challenge of fully embedding an outcomes approach.
- In line with the recommendations of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (Christie Commission), ensuring a greater emphasis on key factors such as targeting the most severe concentrations of multiple deprivation, recognising the strong inter-relationships of negative outcomes that affect such communities, recognising the scale of the challenge and reflecting this in the resource level allocated to support change, and developing practical examples demonstrating how to achieve the shift to early intervention and prevention.

In conclusion, it is considered that the ‘Embedding Outcomes’ project represented a very good return for the investment made in the project by the SG and the IS and that it would compare favourably with other interventions. Prioritising sufficient resource to scale this positive work up is now the major challenge.

ANNEXES

Annexe A – Detail of Application Process

All 32 of Scotland's CPPs were invited to apply to participate in the project via an e-mail sent to Council Chief Executives in December 2009. The e-mail included a project "prospectus", setting out a description of the project, including examples of the type of support that could be provided. This emphasised the highly practical nature of the support on offer. It also emphasised the desire to build a tailored support package, which would respond flexibly to the specific requirements of each local partnership, rather than seek to impose a prescribed 'one size fits all' methodology.

The invitation also included a short application form, together with a list of the criteria that would be used to select applicants. The project application form requested the following basic information:-

- Name of the partnership, geographic area covered and lead contact details;
- Topic focus of partnership and brief summary of key outcomes sought;
- Relationship of the partnership to the CPP;
- Length of time the partnership has been operating;
- An indication of the commitment of key local partner agencies to get involved actively in the project; and
- A brief statement outlining the reasons for wanting to participate in the project, including a summary of the challenges currently faced and the benefits anticipated as a result of participation.

The application process was intentionally simplistic in order to make it easy for local areas to get involved and to avoid placing any significant application burden that could act as a barrier to participation for smaller, less well resourced partnerships. The partnerships were given a five week period to submit an application.

By the application deadline, a total of 14 CPPs had applied to participate in the project. This is considered a very good level of response, particularly in light of the relatively short timescale (which did straddle the Christmas / New Year holiday period). The level of response was seen as an early indication of demand for the approach taken and the type of support offered.

The completed applications were assessed by a panel of four IS / SG staff, applying a range of criteria. In order to help ensure transparency, the criteria to be used in assessing support bids had been set out within the circulated prospectus document. The criteria were intended to result in a varied mix of CPP participants, taking account of size, urban / rural mix, principal area(s) of

support required, etc. Other key criteria used in the participant assessment process included:-

- Partnership Commitment - Evidence that the local partnership included the appropriate key stakeholders and that the partners were genuinely committed to involvement in the project;
- Clarity of Purpose - Evidence that the local partnership had thought through what support it required and what it was seeking to gain from involvement with the project; and
- Anticipated benefit likely to arise - Assessment of the likely value that could be achieved via involvement of each partnership in the project.

The four members of the assessment panel individually scored each of the 14 applications against these criteria. They then came together as a group to compare and moderate their scoring and to select the successful applicants.

The original scope of the project was that four CPPs would be involved. However, the standard of application was high and the assessment process identified five partnerships that the panel wished to include in the project. It was, therefore, agreed between the IS and the SG that the scope of the project would be expanded to cover five local partnerships. These were:

- Dumfries & Galloway - Poverty, Inequality and Deprivation group
- Falkirk - Community Regeneration group
- Fife - Sustainable Communities group
- Midlothian - Improving Opportunities in Midlothian group
- West Lothian - Life Stages programme

All applicants – successful and unsuccessful - were advised of the outcome of the application process within 10 days of the deadline for submission of applications.

The overall approach taken in the project application process was seen to be successful and it has since been replicated in other IS projects.

Annexe B - Broader Context for 'Outcomes-Focused Working'

The project was developed at a key time in the development of public policy in Scotland, given the wider economic ramifications of the recession and the significant level of public sector budget reductions. The key elements of the context for the project can be summarised as follows:-

- The significant scale of public sector resource challenges - budget cuts of 2.5 - 3% per annum across local authorities and other key public sector agencies over the medium term;
- The desired shift to an “outcomes approach” across Scottish public policy, including the development of SOAs;
- An increasing recognition of the key importance of early intervention / preventative approaches in public policy;
- A recognition that ‘outcomes’ for many people in Scotland had improved over the last ten years across a range of indicators, including educational attainment, life expectancy and - up until the start of the recession - in terms of employment and rates of child poverty. What had also, however, become increasingly evident was that the degree of inequality between different areas and communities within Scotland had increased markedly. This was of particular importance to the project given its locus within the policy area of tackling Poverty / Community Regeneration;
- The development of three separate social policy frameworks, jointly agreed between CoSLA, and the Scottish Government - ‘*Achieving our Potential*’, ‘*the Early Years’ Framework*’ and ‘*Equally Well*’. Subsequently the Scottish Government published its Child Poverty Strategy, which set out the long term objectives for tackling child poverty;
- The reduction in ring-fenced funding to Local Authorities and CPPs, including the Fairer Scotland Fund, and the consequent increased need for anti-poverty / regeneration initiatives to be funded via local ‘mainstream’ resources;
- Economic and demographic changes, which meant that there was a rising demand and expectation on services, at a time when radical changes to the Benefits system were likely to have a negative impact on many of the poorest and most vulnerable individuals and communities in Scotland; and
- A recognition that “more of the same’ in terms of public service provision would not produce the desired outcomes, and was unlikely to be sustainable due to the pressing nature of the country’s demographic and financial challenges.

This broader context shaped many of the discussions within the local partnerships and helped to provide impetus for change. For example, this was typically reflected in areas such as:-

- a desire to prioritise key outcomes and interventions,
- a desire to ensure genuine 'added value' in partnership working; and
- a recognition that new models may be required to reflect reduced staffing and budgetary resources.

Annexe C - Case Studies of the 5 Local Partnerships

The tables below set out a summary the main areas of support requested by each of the local partnerships, the associated ‘improvement’ that the project sought to deliver. These case studies also summarise the main work undertaken and challenges encountered. They also set out a summary of the extent to which the anticipated change has actually been achieved.

For most of the actions undertaken, ultimate impact on communities in terms of improved outcomes will be subject to time lags in feeding through. Accordingly, by necessity, at this stage, the case studies focus principally on describing the inputs, activities, outputs and intermediate outcomes that will drive achievement of the ultimate outcome improvements. This reflects a key point about how the project engages and seeks to support improvement; it is not a question of directly providing more / better outcomes for communities via direct delivery of those outcomes. Rather, the way of working was to strengthen the underlying processes, etc that determine what and how outcomes are achieved. Essentially, this involves a diagnostic, assessing how this works and how change can be introduced and managed that will further strengthen the underpinning processes, etc and the outcomes that they deliver.

Dumfries and Galloway

Support was provided to the D&G CPP’s Poverty Inequality and Deprivation (PID) group. The Group comprises a core of around a dozen key partners that have an interest in these issues. Following initial contact with the Council lead officer, the third sector officer that chaired the group and a meeting of the full group, a project plan was agreed, setting out the main areas of support required.

Over the course of the project, there were around 6-8 meetings with the PID Group in Dumfries, as well as numerous other 1-2-1 conversations and e-mail exchanges with the lead officer. This included a series of facilitated discussions on the topic areas set out below, the purpose of which was typically to thrash out agreed improvement actions, which the group could act upon. In addition to the various meetings, much of the detailed support work was carried out remotely (e.g. drafting remits, reviewing poverty profile, etc)

Area of Support	Improvement Desired	Support provided	Improvement Achieved
Reviewing the ‘fitness for purpose’ of the existing poverty / regeneration thematic partnership to ensure that the Poverty	A refreshed and refined outcome-focused role, remit and structure for the group. Partners will have a common understanding of their	Initial engagement and discussions took place concerning the structure and work of the partnership. A partnership checklist was drawn up	All of these actions helped to clarify roles and expectations, develop a more robust operating environment, which included an expectation that

<p>Inequality and Deprivation (PID) Group made an effective, added value contribution and focused clearly on priority outcomes.</p> <p>Assisting the partnership with data analysis and interpretation to support the development of a robust local poverty profile.</p> <p>Assisting the group to develop an outcome-focused action plan.</p> <p>Assisting the group and others to influence the wider D&G CPP in order to raise the profile of poverty issues within the refreshed SOA/CP.</p>	<p>respective contribution to specific outcomes. The partnership will have a much clearer locus in the D&G CPP and in their contribution to the CP/SOA.</p> <p>An evidence-based Poverty Profile agreed and disseminated across the CPP. This will also form the basis for the development of a robust, outcome-focused action plan.</p> <p>An evidence-based, outcome focused action plan, which sets out the key priorities and associated actions for the PID group. All partners' contributions are clearly identified and there is agreement and ownership of the related actions.</p> <p>The successful implementation of these tasks will result in the poverty, inequality and deprivation agenda having a much more significant profile within the CPP and its refreshed SOA/CP.</p>	<p>and used to carry out a survey of the PID members. The analysis of the survey responses then formed the basis of facilitated half day workshop. This resulted in an improvement action plan, setting out a range of agreed actions, all of which were aimed at strengthening the partnership.</p> <p>Thereafter, hands-on support was also provided to help the group progress a number of the agreed improvement actions. For example, this included drafting a revised remit, statement of meeting protocols, etc.</p> <p>The project manager worked with the PID to develop a robust poverty profile, which had, hitherto, been a weakness.</p>	<p>partners should actively challenge each other to 'raise the bar' in terms of their work and impact.</p> <p>The partnership strengthened its membership and operating protocols and is now operating to a higher level and more effectively.</p> <p>Poverty, inequality issues now have a prominent place and are seen to be a CP / SOA priority, which they previously hadn't been.</p> <p>The Action Plan, setting out key priorities and actions for the PID group was delivered.</p> <p>The revised profile provided an up to date and focused summary of the key challenges / priority outcomes areas that the group agreed to focus on.</p>
--	---	---	---

Falkirk

Support was provided to Falkirk's Poverty Reduction Strategy Group, principally through liaison with the Group's lead officer. Numerous meetings took place to clarify requirements and to discuss various drafts of the three main documents produced. The bulk of the work involved was desk-based, combining research and writing. Most of the focus of the discussions was with the Group's lead officer, who then acted as conduit with the wider Group.

Area of Support	Improvement Desired	Support provided	Improvement Achieved
<p>Reviewing the evidence base and developing a poverty profile for Falkirk.</p> <p>Assisting in the development of a local Poverty Strategy.</p> <p>Assisting with communication of priority outcomes across the CPP and developing key messages to support this.</p>	<p>Development of an evidence-based Poverty Profile, agreed by and disseminated across the CPP. This will also form the basis of a robust outcome focused Poverty Strategy.</p> <p>Development of an evidence-based, outcome-focused Poverty Strategy. The Poverty Strategy will include an action plan which identifies partners' activities that will help deliver the key priority outcomes.</p> <p>Development of a communication strategy which sets out the key priorities for tackling poverty and community regeneration in Falkirk and which clearly identifies the key stakeholders and communities.</p>	<p>Meetings, desk research, analysis and write-up. Besides the initial sessions, almost all of the work was done directly with the local lead officer, rather than the partnership.</p> <p>This resulted in the production of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A detailed, robust Poverty Profile document - A Poverty Strategy, which sets out the priority outcomes - A Communications Plan, which articulates the key outcomes and messages 	<p>The work with Falkirk resulted in a much clearer analysis of the key issues, a clearer articulation of the priorities to focus on and a clear set of messages to communicate across the partnership. The key documents desired were delivered.</p> <p>With hindsight, however, it may have been more effective to build in more active participation of the wider group, rather than to just rely on the lead officer undertaking the liaison role. Having said that, a series of three strategic, complementary outcome-focused documents have been produced, which provides the group with a clear basis for focusing on the priority outcomes that matter most to Falkirk communities.</p>

Fife

The Fife CPP's Sustainable Communities Group (SCG) was charged with driving the anti-poverty agenda for the Fife Partnership. This was a group comprised of senior officers and Elected Members. Whilst Fife is generally viewed as being 'ahead of the curve' in this area relative to most partnerships, they too were experiencing difficulties in operationalising various aspects of outcomes-focused working. In particular, they had recognised a need for greater focus and prioritisation and were keen to engage external support to help think through the issues and make the change. The other major priority for Fife was to ramp up the focus on one of the areas most deprived geographic communities (Levenmouth) in order to dramatically turn around the long-standing situation of high concentrations of negative outcomes.

Area of Support	Improvement Desired	Support provided	Improvement Achieved
<p>Assisting with the identification and articulation of priority Outcomes for the Sustainable Communities group.</p> <p>Supporting work to link broad strategic approaches and priorities to local planning and delivery in the Levenmouth area of Fife, including a localised PMF.</p> <p>Supporting the development of a robust Performance Management Framework (PMF) for a refreshed Fairer Fife Framework.</p>	<p>A clearly defined, evidence-based set of key priority outcomes for the revised "Fairer Fife Framework" agreed by all partners.</p> <p>A robust, fit for purpose PMF for the Fairer Fife Framework that will enable the partnership to have a clear understanding of how well it is performing in relation to the priority outcomes.</p> <p>Development of an operational level, local group, located in Levenmouth - the most deprived area of Fife - with an agreed role and remit to deliver on the priority outcomes identified for Levenmouth, including strong linkages to the strategic centre and the developing Fairer Fife Framework.</p>	<p>A facilitated workshop session was delivered to the SCG on the subject of outcomes prioritisation. This set out the issues and context and made the case for what prioritisation actually meant in reality, getting beyond the words in strategy documents to flesh out the implications for factors such as resource allocation, being clear about what is no longer priority, etc.</p> <p>Work in Levenmouth included various meetings, discussions and research, which resulted in an IS paper setting out a critique of the challenges and barriers, together with suggested ways forward. Due to the importance of this work, the IS committed to supporting the work in Levenmouth beyond the life of the project.</p>	<p>The work helped the Fife group to articulate its priorities clearly. Most notably, this is now reflected in the new Fife CP, where tackling inequalities is one of only three priorities for the CP.</p> <p>The work also spurred discussion on the most appropriate structure for achieving the aims. This resulted in the disbanding of the SCG, with the issue instead now embedded within each CPP theme group as a key cross-cutting theme.</p> <p>Tackling concentrated deprivation is a major challenge for the public sector. A vision, action plan and group has now been established for Levenmouth to drive fundamental improvements in outcomes,</p>

		<p>As a result of an increased focus on the first two issues, it was agreed not to pursue the PMF work to any extent.</p>	<p>seeking to ramp up concentrated support and overcome decades of failure to impact on these issues. The new ways of working and the focused action plan approach, strengthening and empowering local partners is being viewed as a potential model for testing out many of the challenges set out within the Christie Commission report.</p>
--	--	---	--

Midlothian

The Improving Opportunities in Midlothian (IOM) Group comprises around a dozen of the main partner agencies concerned with the poverty agenda. The project's work with the IOM focused upon a series of meetings with the IOM Chair, lead officer and facilitated sessions with the whole group.

Area of Support	Improvement Desired	Support provided	Improvement Achieved
<p>Reviewing the structure of the Improving Opportunities in Midlothian thematic group and related working groups to ensure that the benefit and impact of partnership working is maximised.</p> <p>Reviewing the relevant actions, indicators and targets, to ensure a clear focus on the main activities and outputs that will deliver the key outcomes.</p>	<p>The IOM will have a refreshed and refined outcome-focused role and structure. Partners will have a common understanding of their respective contribution to specific outcomes. Partners will also have a refocused commitment to more effective partnership working. The IOM will have a clear locus in the Midlothian CPP.</p> <p>An evidence-based, outcome-focused action plan, which sets out the key priorities of the IOM group. All partner contributions are clearly identified and there is agreement and ownership on the related actions and their related indicators / targets.</p>	<p>Initial engagement and discussions took place concerning the structure and work of the partnership. A partnership checklist was drawn up and used to carry out a survey of the IOM members. The analysis of the survey responses then formed the basis of a facilitated half day workshop. This resulted in an improvement action plan, setting out a range of agreed actions, all of which were aimed at strengthening the partnership.</p> <p>Thereafter, hands-on support was also provided to help the group progress a number of the agreed improvement actions. For example, this included drafting a revised remit, statement of meeting protocols, etc.</p> <p>Support was also provided in reviewing the actions, indicators and targets to ensure a clear focus and logical link vis a vis the priority outcomes.</p>	<p>The IOM group had a particularly complex structure and a very wide-ranging list of activities that fell within its remit. The support helped the group improve its focus and concentrate on a much narrower set of priority outcomes. The group has also rationalised its structure and the range of issues it covers.</p> <p>All of these actions helped to clarify roles and expectations, develop a more robust operating environment, which included an expectation that partners should actively challenge each other to 'raise the bar' in terms of their work and impact.</p> <p>The Action Plan, setting out key priorities and actions was delivered. The partnership strengthened its membership & operating protocols and is now operating more effectively and at a higher level. The work on indicators, targets and actions that drive outcomes also helped to bring focus and discipline.</p>

West Lothian

The support to the West Lothian Partnership took the form of drafting training and development materials focused on embedding outcomes thinking across the partnership, linked to its 'life stages' model for prioritising and engaging with communities. The support focused primarily on 1-2-1 discussions and engagement with the Life Stages manager and the CP Manager, but also included input and presentation to the Life Stages Board. Further engagement took place with the partnership's Organisational Development staff in terms of drafting and delivering training and development programmes.

Area of Support	Improvement Desired	Support provided	Improvement Achieved
<p>Assisting with the development of a communication and engagement strategy for the Life Stages project.</p> <p>Assisting with the development of a training strategy and the delivery of initial training for the partnership.</p>	<p>Officers from across the CPP have a clear understanding of the Life Stages project, its priority outcomes and its role in changing the culture of service provision in West Lothian.</p> <p>Key officers in the West Lothian CPP have received training on the programme in order that they can act as champions for the operational delivery of the project in services and across localities in West Lothian. Officers have a clear understanding of the Life Stages project and the outcomes based approach.</p>	<p>Write-up of a range of materials aimed at communicating the life stages approach, focus on outcomes, early intervention, etc.</p> <p>Training and development materials were also produced, including presentations, guides, cases studies, etc.</p> <p>Initial 'train the trainers' sessions were also delivered by the IS project manager.</p> <p>In addition, an IS graduate trainee was seconded to assist with this broad area of work for a 4 month period.</p>	<p>This work has resulted in a much clearer articulation of what will be required to fully operationalise the Life Stages thinking. It has also resulted in a range of training materials and trained staff, who are now responsible for cascading this way of working throughout the partnership. In effect, this is an attempt to ramp up ownership of the outcomes agenda and commence a large scale change management programme, which supports the change in direction.</p>

Annexe D - Summary of Evaluation Survey responses from the 5 Local Areas

This annexe sets out the detailed responses received from the 5 local areas following them being issued with an evaluation questionnaire.

In one area, the lead officer had recently retired just prior to the survey and the questionnaire for that area was completed by a colleague who had been involved in some of the work, albeit to a lesser extent. The lead officers were given the option of either completing the questionnaire on their own or by seeking input from their wider local partnership – whichever they felt was most appropriate.

The questionnaire contained a mixture of questions about the project, the work undertaken in the local area and the difference that it had made. The survey also included a series of statements and the local areas were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed / disagreed with those statements, based upon their experience of working with the project.

Statement	Response	Additional comments received
How effective was the project in meeting the needs of the local group?	1 local area stated 'very effective' 2 local areas stated 'effective'. 1 local area stated 'partially effective' 1 local area stated 'don't know' (<i>too early to assess impact</i>)	"The project manager's help and support was very useful" "The project brought some necessary focus to the group in terms of assisting it to determine what its key priorities and aims should be and what it needs to do to achieve these." "I think it was difficult to get the desired actions agreed." "Events within the Council overtook the project to a certain extent... that said, it was useful to have external input and we achieved what we wanted."
How effective was the project in delivering on the agreed outputs set out in the initial project plan?	2 respondents stated very effective. 2 respondents stated effective. 1 respondent stated don't know	"There were two main outputs...they were delivered effectively and on time" "Generally the project delivered well against the original plan." "Significant progress was made in all four agreed output areas."
Statement	Response	Additional comments received

<p>The project helped embed an outcomes approach within our area.</p>	<p>5 respondents stated 'Yes, partially'</p>	<p>"The project very much helped to reinforce the need for an outcomes approach and helped us to move beyond rhetoric." "It helped us think much more about our outcomes."</p>
<p>Because of the input received, we now have a clearer idea of what an outcomes approach entails.</p>	<p>2 respondents stated 'Yes, fully' 3 respondents stated 'Yes, partially'</p>	<p>"The input of the project has helped to elaborate, clarify and confirm what is needed to embed an outcome approach. The visibility of the project manager and other IS managers has assisted that." "Yes, as part of a much bigger programme – but still a long way to go to fully embed."</p>
<p>The CPP theme group is now operating more effectively as a result of the support provided by the project</p>	<p>1 respondent stated 'Yes, Effective' 1 respondent stated 'Partially Effective' 3 respondents stated 'Don't Know (<i>too early to say</i>)'</p>	<p>"Difficult to quantify exactly. The board [responsible for this area of work] has now been subsumed directly into the CPP – due to wider changes. The project worked less with the board and more with partners." "Likely that it is - too early to say, although the signals are positive." "It has raised areas of improvement that will take time to implement fully and thus secure I-t improvements."</p>
<p>The IS facilitators helped to provide useful insights concerning the outcomes approach</p>	<p>4 respondents stated 'Yes, a great deal' 1 respondent stated 'Yes, partially'</p>	<p>"High level of expertise and knowledge." "The contribution was always positive and appropriate and made a difference." "It was useful to have an external view and facilitation. The project manager clearly knew his stuff and it reinforced the direction we wanted to travel in."</p>
<p>Statement</p>	<p>Response</p>	<p>Additional comments received</p>

<p>The IS staff helped to facilitate solutions that might otherwise have been lacking</p>	<p>1 respondent stated 'Yes, a great deal' 3 respondents stated 'Yes, partially' 1 respondent stated 'Don't know'</p>	<p>"Mostly - the series of events allowed me to reflect on what I know and what everyone else knows and gave some tools for highlighting gaps."</p> <p>"This was best demonstrated through the work with local elected members."</p> <p>"Yes - still some outstanding areas for improvement."</p>
<p>The IS facilitators helped us to progress issues that might otherwise have taken longer to resolve</p>	<p>2 respondents stated 'Yes, a great deal' 2 respondents stated 'Yes, partially' 1 respondent stated 'Don't know'</p>	<p>"Yes a bit but, again, not fully there yet!"</p> <p>"Slipped local timescales worked against a fuller contribution."</p> <p>"The facilitators in their 'neutral role' helped the Group work through issues more timeously than might have been the case without the support."</p>
<p>The level of IS input received was:</p>	<p>All 5 respondents stated 'About Right' (No respondent stated either 'Too much' or 'Too little')</p>	<p>"The input would have been even greater had we not had to reduce the contribution towards the strategic level work and if timescales had been able to be accelerated on the local work. Given those conditions, the level of input was about right"</p>
<p>The Issues Papers produced under the project have been helpful.</p>	<p>1 respondent stated 'Very helpful' 3 respondents stated 'Helpful' 1 respondent did not answer this question</p>	<p>"Yes, but mostly to reaffirm what we already were working through"</p> <p>"Yes, locally helpful but likely that they should be helpful to a wider audience too and perhaps more so"</p> <p>"At a recent meeting one Group member commented how helpful a particular paper had been, not only to him as a Group member but in his work generally and with other partners (as well as other partner organisations finding the paper helpful to them)."</p>
<p>Statement</p>	<p>Response</p>	<p>Additional comments received</p>

<p>The Workshops held as part of the project have been helpful.</p>	<p>5 respondents stated 'Yes, helpful'</p>	<p>"Yes, although it felt like everyone in the room already knew it all - was useful to take back though".</p> <p>"Helpful - both to local and external audiences".</p>
<p>Knowing what you now know about the support provided and the progress made, would you have chosen to be involved in this work?</p>	<p>4 respondents stated 'Yes' 1 respondent did not answer</p>	<p>"I valued the input, however as events within the Council overtook the project, we perhaps did not make best use of the support available."</p> <p>"Yes, although likely that we would have set out from the start a different balance in the strategic / local focus and thought more about the role of the IS project to support work but also how it could have done more to provide its acceleration / sat more at the heart of progress."</p>
<p>Would you recommend this type of support to others?</p>	<p>5 respondents stated 'Yes, fully'</p>	<p>"It's a hard slog to 'turn an elephant', it was useful to have the project manager on board."</p>
<p>Overall, how would you rate the performance of the project?</p>	<p>2 respondents stated 'excellent' 3 respondents stated 'good'</p>	<p>"Strong contribution throughout that suggests pitching this between good and excellent – locally, changing circumstances and general slowness did not enable us make quite as much of the opportunity as we might have done"</p>
<p>Statement</p>	<p>Response</p>	

<p>What was the most effective element of the project?</p>	<p>“The shared understanding.”</p> <p>“Clarity of purpose for the Group and its work.”</p> <p>“Practical pro-formas developed by the project manager for implementing the improvements identified.”</p> <p>“Engagement of local Elected Members.”</p> <p>“The project was sensitive to the fact that internal events can impact on projects like this - so from our point of view this perspective was valued as, if the project had not been sensitive to this, it could have been difficult.”</p>
<p>What was the least effective aspect of the support provided?</p>	<p>“Felt that it was sometimes tricky for the project manager to manage time and to make the switch from 5 very different sets of projects. Might have been better to provide more focus and support on a lesser number of projects.”</p> <p>“The only negative point was following the first meeting when it was clear that the initial reports and approach to be adopted suggested by the IS facilitators did not meet the expectations or understanding of the Group. However, this was easily resolved through appropriate dialogue which ensured that both parties fully understood what each wanted to achieve through collaboration.”</p> <p>“Workshops’ time and content could have been managed better.”</p> <p>“Developing strategic, long term, high level outcomes towards intermediate outcomes, indicators and interventions - and that was because of changing local circumstances.”</p> <p>“Do not think there was anything.”</p>
<p>Statement</p>	<p>Response</p>

<p>How do you think future support to CPPs with outcome based approaches could be improved?</p>	<p>“Support should continue to be targeted at specific subject areas (as per existing project) identified / evidenced by individual CPPs as being of a priority in their local areas. Support should help with SOA development.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring outcomes within national performance framework • Culture Change • Cost analysis on impacts • More focus on budgeting <p>“Finding ways of working which doesn’t require bringing the partners together physically. It has been a very positive experience.”</p> <p>“Perhaps more pre- or early engagement on what is understood / not understood and what key components are in place or not. That is probably about a more assertive approach to identifying the support needed.”</p> <p>“My initial understanding - perhaps wrongly - was to think that through a joint IS / Scottish Government lead, the project would enable us to draw on a wide range of skills from within Government. Thinking here about, for example, the Scottish Government’s analytical services’, developing expertise, evidence, emphasis on early intervention approaches and their “additional hands” to apply learning locally. Not entirely convinced that the project’s offer was as clear as it might have been in this respect.”</p>
<p>Do you have any further comments, views, criticisms of the project?</p>	<p>“On a personal basis it has helped me to understand the potential contribution of the improvement Service and has been helpful introduction to it.”</p>

Annexe E – Detailed Evaluation Feedback from National Workshops

This Annexe sets out the key findings of each of the national workshops that took place as part of the project.

Prioritisation of Outcomes Workshop

There was a total of 13 evaluation responses for this workshop, however 40 people attended. At this event the evaluation questionnaire was accessed on line after the event rather than as a paper copy in the workshop packs. (*This approach was changed for subsequent workshops*). The response was as follows:

- 54% (7) of the respondents thought that the event fully achieved its aims, a further 46% (6) respondents thought that it partially achieved its aims.
- 15% (2), respondents thought the speakers and presentations were excellent, 77% (10) thought that they were good. 1(8%) respondent thought that the presentations and speakers were average.
- 25% (3) thought the group discussion at the workshop was excellent, a further 67% (8) thought it was good, while 1 respondent (8%) thought it was poor.
- 92% (12) of respondents stated that attending the workshop had been beneficial as it had increased their knowledge of the subject.
- 85% (11) respondents said that they planned to cascade what they had learned to other colleagues in their workplace.
- Overall, 1 respondent (8%) rated the event as excellent while 69% of respondents rated it as good. 3 respondents (23%) rated it as average.

Outcome-Focused Partnerships Workshop

There were a total of 17 evaluation responses for this workshop. The responses were as follows:

- 59% (10) of the respondents thought that the event fully achieved its aims, a further 41% (7) respondents thought that it partially achieved its aims.
- 29% (5) respondents thought the speaker and presentation was excellent, 47% (8) thought that he was good. 17% (3) of respondent thought that the presentations and speaker was average and 6% (1) respondent thought he was poor.
- 47% (8) respondents thought the group discussion at the workshop was excellent, a further 35% (6) thought it was good, while 3 respondents (18%) thought it was average.

- 94% (16) respondents said that they planned to cascade what they had learned to other colleagues in their workplace. 35% (6) respondents stated that they would consider a change in work practices.
- Overall 3 respondents (18%) rated the event as excellent while 76% (13) respondents rated it as good. 1 respondent (6%) rated it as average.

Localised Outcomes Approach Workshop

There were a total of 18 evaluation responses for this workshop. The response was as follows:

- 61% (11) of the respondents thought that the event fully achieved its aims, a further 39% (7) respondents thought that it partially achieved its aims.
- 45% (8) of the respondents thought the speakers and presentations were excellent, 50% (9) thought they were good. 1 (5%) respondent thought that the presentations and speakers were average.
- 56% (10) thought the group discussion at the workshop was excellent, a further 44% (8) thought it was good.
- 78% (14) of respondents stated that attending the workshop had been beneficial as it had increased their knowledge of the subject. 50% (9) of respondents said that they had benefited from learning new techniques/ approaches and a further 33% (6) respondents said they had made new contacts.
- 67% (12) respondents said that they planned to cascade what they had learned to other colleagues in their workplace, while 33% (6) stated they would consider a change to work practices. A further 17% (3) stated that they would prepare or amend written guidance based on what they had learned at the workshop.
- Overall 44% of respondents (8) rated the event as excellent while 33% (6) respondents rated it as good. 22% of respondents (4) rated it as average.

Initial project findings Workshop

There were a total of 11 evaluation responses for this workshop. The response was as follows:

- 25% (3) of the respondents thought that the event fully achieved its aims, a further 67% (8) of respondents thought that it partially achieved its aims. 1 respondent (8%) thought that it had not achieved its aim.
- 8% (1) of respondents thought the speakers and presentations were excellent, 75% (9) thought that they were good. 16% (2) of respondents thought that the presentations and speakers were average.

- 33% (4) thought the group discussion at the workshop was excellent, a further 58 (7) thought it was good, while 1 respondent (8%) thought it was average.
- 42% (5) of respondents stated that attending the workshop had been beneficial as it had increased their knowledge of the subject. 50% (6) of respondents said that they had benefited from learning new techniques/ approaches while 75% (9) had made new contacts.
- 25% (3) of respondents would consider a change in work practices based on what they had learned at the event. A further 67% (8) respondents stated they would cascade it to colleagues.
- Overall 1 respondent (8%) rated the event as excellent while 67% (8) of respondents rated it as good. 3 respondents (25%) rated it as average.