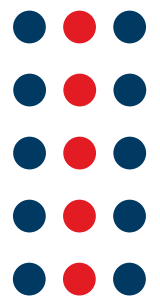


NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING SELF-ASSESSMENT



Dumfries and Galloway National Community Planning Self-Assessment Progress Case Study: Creating a More Strategic and Outcomes-Focused Community Planning Partnership



Dumfries &

Galloway

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Overview

Dumfries and Galloway CPP have demonstrated how redesigning governance and performance arrangements can create more meaningful strategic discussions. By reducing reporting burdens, strengthening scrutiny at the appropriate level, involving Board members in shaping priorities and focusing performance management on outcomes, the partnership has created greater space for collaboration, innovation, and collective action.

Background

Following the National Community Planning Self-Assessment in November 2024, Dumfries and Galloway CPP identified an opportunity to strengthen both performance management and the effectiveness of Board discussions as part of a workshop facilitated through the Improvement Service in March 2025. Partners recognised that improving scrutiny was not simply about presenting more data, but about ensuring performance information was meaningful, focused on outcomes, and used to support strategic conversations and decision-making. At the same time, the partnership wanted to create more space for innovation, collaboration and discussion around the delivery of Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities.

- **Action for Improvement 1:** Review how performance information is presented to the Board to ensure that it enables the partnership to effectively scrutinise performance.
- **Action for Improvement 2:** Consider ways the partnership can further encourage discussion and innovation at Board meetings around the best ways to achieve LOIP outcomes.

Rather than treating these actions as separate improvement activities, the CPP has taken a joined-up approach, redesigning governance, reporting, and meeting structures to ensure performance information drives discussion, and discussion drives action.



What Was Done?

Strengthening Performance Management

The CPP began by reviewing its position against national practice. A desktop assessment was undertaken to compare performance against national averages and help Board members understand where the partnership was performing well and where further improvement may be required. The new [national Community Planning induction resource](#) was also adapted to reflect local arrangements, helping members understand the CPP's performance and governance landscape.

To improve reporting, performance data was reorganised around the three overarching LOIP themes and used to inform the 2024/25 end-of-year report supported by a series of case studies and personal testimonies. This marked a shift towards presenting information in a way that better reflects local priorities and outcomes rather than reporting on large volumes of disconnected indicators.

The CPP also established a cross-partner performance subgroup involving representatives from community planning executive support, health, third sector interface, the council, and South of Scotland Enterprise. The establishment of this group has helped to demonstrate a more collaborative approach to performance management and sharing the responsibility as opposed to it sitting with a single organisation/team. The group has begun developing a logic model approach designed to strengthen the link between activity, outcomes and impact and the Local Employability Partnership is being used as a pilot for this on a multi-agency basis.

By restructuring performance information around LOIP themes and developing a logic model approach, the CPP is strengthening the connection between activity, performance, and community outcomes. This helps ensure that reporting focuses on impact rather than simply measuring activity.

In addition, responsibility for scrutinising governance and performance reports from the recognised Community Planning strategic partnerships was delegated to the Community Planning Senior Leadership Team. This enabled more detailed performance scrutiny while freeing Board time for strategic discussion and problem-solving.



Creating More Strategic Board Discussions

Recognising that Board meetings had become overly focused on papers and reporting, the CPP redesigned its meeting structure to prioritise discussion-based workshops and themed conversations. The volume of papers presented to the Board was substantially reduced and a programme of themed discussions introduced. This has enabled Board members to spend more time considering solutions, opportunities, and collective action rather than reviewing lengthy reports. Topics of the themed discussions during 2025/26 have included healthy weight, child poverty, inequalities, addressing de-population and community wealth building.

Board members were directly involved in developing the programme of topics and a dedicated reflection session has been incorporated at the end of meetings to gather feedback and identify future discussion areas. Actively engaging Board members in agenda setting and providing opportunities for structured reflection has strengthened ownership of the partnership's priorities and helped ensure discussions remain relevant and forward-looking.

The CPP also reviewed governance arrangements to strengthen accountability and escalation processes. An annual combined governance and performance report is now scrutinised by the Senior Leadership Team, with key strategic issues reported to the Board through a structured business briefing process. The review additionally brought the Community Justice Partnership into the reporting framework, ensuring greater consistency across partnership structures. Alongside these changes, Board members have begun exploring whether the partnership should adopt a narrower strategic focus, with poverty emerging as a potential overarching priority around which future partnership activity could be aligned.

Impact and challenges

The changes introduced have helped create a more strategic and focused Community Planning Partnership. Performance information is increasingly being used to inform discussion and decision-making rather than simply being reported for assurance purposes. Board members are spending more time discussing priority issues and identifying opportunities for collaborative action, while the Leadership Team has taken on a strengthened role in governance and scrutiny. The partnership has also established stronger foundations for an outcomes-focused approach, with growing emphasis on understanding impact, aligning resources, and focusing collective effort on the issues that matter most to communities.



Like in many partnerships, capacity remains a challenge. Developing logic models and refining performance frameworks requires significant officer time and specialist expertise. The CPP has also encountered some challenges relating to the availability and consistency of performance data and is continuing to refine its indicator set. There are also longer-term questions about leadership succession and how best to support future leadership roles within partnership structures.

The next steps

The CPP plans to:

- Finalise and implement a logic model approach for future LOIP reporting.
- Further refine the performance framework and reduce the number of indicators to focus on those most meaningful to outcomes.
- Explore the use of additional local and place-based indicators.
- Review the effectiveness of themed Board discussions and governance arrangements.
- Continue exploring the potential for a more focused partnership approach, particularly around poverty and inequalities.
- Learn from other CPPs that have adopted simplified planning and reporting models.

“The self-evaluation process landed at a good time for our partnership with Board Members already keen to streamline Board meetings and move into a more transformative space. The facilitated on-line workshop worked really well, with positive interaction from Board Members.

“Conscious of resource challenges and pressures across partners, the Board wished to initially prioritise two key areas from the self-assessment to ensure meaningful changes could be progressed. We are planning to reflect on progress and Board Member appetite to look at some of the other improvement areas identified at the end of 2026.”

Valerie White, Chair of the Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Senior Leadership Team



If you would like more information on this approach, please contact:

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