Transcript: Report Launch – Key Findings from the Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland

See the film on the What Works Scotland website http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/events/report-launch-key-findings-from-the-survey-of-community-planning-officials-in-scotland/

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Great, so welcome everybody. Thanks very much for joining us for this webinar.

This is the official launch of the results from the survey we did and it is a survey of community planning officials. I'll explain in a second what that means. We did share the draft last December at the Community Planning Network, and we got really useful feedback. That feedback has now been incorporated, alongside feedback from a number of other organisations and people working in community planning, so thanks to all of them for what they reported.

The summary of the report will be available online, or probably is already available online, and we will provide you with the links as part of this presentation. I should say that the research team was broader than just myself – I'm Oliver by the way. I was looking at the registration list. I know many of you, or quite a few of you, so it's great to see you here, and also some of the people who so far we haven't managed to meet or work with. It's great to welcome you as well and I'll explain in a second what What Works Scotland is about. But the research team also included others, so I just want to acknowledge that.

For those of you who haven't heard about What Works Scotland, we are a four-year research programme. We are coming to an end now so we will be wrapping up and concluding the programme in December this year.

Over the last three years, we've been trying to work with a number of organisations and people at the front line of public services, both in the public sector and the third sector, to try to improve the way evidence is used to inform public sector reform, public service reform and indeed to try and see if we can contribute to improving public services and advancing a number of current policy agendas on the ground. You have the link to our website right there on the screen and if you are not subscribed to our newsletter, I would encourage you to do so if you are interested in anything related to the implementation of the guidance from the Christie Commission on the reform of public services.

A lot of our remit is about balancing those different elements from Christie, from prevention to participation, partnership, performance and so on. And this is our hashtag. That's the hashtag for Twitter for What Works Scotland and that's my hashtag as well, so feel free to do some tweeting as I speak especially if you get bored, which hopefully you won't.

I want to start by thanking everyone who helped us to do this survey. It was a long survey. It really is [here] thanks to the 107 community planning officers and community planning managers who took the time to fill it in, and also to the 12 organisations that helped us to shape the questions for the survey.

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I should say that this is the first wave of the survey. There is going to be a second wave and that is going to go live quite soon and so some of you working in community planning will see it coming in to your inboxes in one way or another. We hope that you will help us with the second wave as well because although the findings here are, I think, interesting, we will have a more robust set of findings once we can compare the two waves.

Now to place things in context. I imagine that most of you will be familiar with community partnerships and community planning work, community planning officers and managers, but some of you might not and therefore I just want to remind ourselves a little bit about the context for this.

Community planning partnerships in essence are the governance structures that mirror our local authorities in Scotland. There are 32 community partnerships and 32 local authority areas. They are supposed to be, and designed to be, spaces where we combine partnership across sectors across a range of stakeholder organisations in combination with community engagement, so that communities feed into developing priorities and influencing decision making at a local level.

That's the theory with what CPPs are and they are not a unique feature in the sense that they aren't unique to Scotland. We find all around the world attempts and efforts and arrangements that try to combine partnership work and community engagement as part of a coherent structure to try and improve public services and achieve better outcomes.

Community planning officials (CPOs) – they are the coordinators, the people who are driving a lot of the everyday work of CPPs, coordinating the work amongst different partners, providing the facilitation for many of the spaces where different stakeholders and communities come together and so on and so forth. And they are at the front of three very important policy agendas in Scotland at the moment: public service reform following from Christie, social justice all the talk we now hear about inequalities and tackling inequalities and so on, and also community empowerment, including advancing the latest legislation from the [Community Empowerment] act.

And yet despite being such a crucial group of policy workers, at the local level we know very little about this community of practice. I only realised this when I was doing my PhD. I spent two years shadowing a group of community planning officers and community planning managers. There is a lot of evidence from single case studies in one community planning partnership or another in one local authority area or another, but often when I was presenting findings from these qualitative studies and previous qualitative studies, what people often say is, *"well, you know these are single cases, these are the findings for a particular CBP for a particular local area".* We need to know more about how community planning officials across the country feel about some of these issues.

So the motivation for the survey was to build on the qualitative research that was there before, case studies, interviews and ethnographic work, by shadowing people and learning about their everyday work and to then take the learning from those case studies in qualitative data and turn it into a survey that aims to give community planning officials a chance to speak to some of those issues.

This is what we tried to do in this report and it is the first survey of community planning officials that includes both managers and officers. This is not just about managers, it's also about officers.

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It's not just about those working at a strategic level in CPP worlds or thematic groups or executive groups, it's also about officers working at the local level and at the more grassroots level of the CPP. In the survey, we ask questions about the role of community planning officials. We ask questions about key dynamics in CPPs, about the use of evidence, about community engagement and the role of community engagement in CPPs and about a range of policies frameworks and reforms that are currently reshaping how community planning works. We also ask about some of the achievements of the challenges and so on.

But the important thing to reiterate here is that this is the baseline for a second survey that will be open quite soon. So the findings that we will be able to present in October once we compare this first survey and the second survey will be on a robust set of findings. At the final conference of What Works Scotland, which will take place in November, we will be presenting this final broader and more robust picture of community planning from the perspective of community planning officials.

Now some methodological notes: we first tried to see if there were available lists or if there was a list of community planning officers and managers. The lists that we were able to access were not very up to date and so we concluded and also the information I needed to see in CPP web pages was also not very up-to-date. We ended up writing to all community planning managers and asking them to define who was in their team, who is in the community planning team? These are the managers and the team leaders defining who forms their team and their own. The only criteria that we asked them to consider was that we wanted people who spend most of their time on community planning and this led us to reach out to 171 community planning officials, managers or some officers at both the strategic and local level.

We were fortunate to get 107 responses, which is a good response rate, and those responses came from 29 out of the 32 community planning partnerships. The split between men and women as you can see on the screen – around 40 percent [men] and 60 percent women. We are not sure if this is reflective of the entire population of community planning officials because it's really difficult to get data on the full population of practitioners. At the age group as you can see there's a majority who are 36 or older, but there is still a 20 percent contingent of younger community planning officials.

We want to note the limitations of this study because it was really genuinely difficult to map a workforce that changes quite often. Many community planning teams change often. People move on to other posts or teams grow or become smaller and so on, and so it was quite a challenge. Also we need to say that a lot of what we do in this report is basic descriptive statistics. We cannot do a lot of very sophisticated statistical testing because we have a small sample. There is also a challenge with the categories that we created in making a difference between local and strategic community planning officials because these categories are not clear-cut. Some people who work at the strategic level are also doing work at the grassroots and vice-versa.

So what did we find?

Let me say something quickly about the workforce as a whole. This is a highly educated workforce. There is a wide range of professional backgrounds and experiences. [*I can hear some shouting from outside so let me close the window. I thought we finished the strikes. Some people are still on*

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strike.] Okay, so it is a very diverse workforce in terms of professional backgrounds and experiences.

Two-thirds were in post for more than four years but that also reveals that there is a big chunk of the community planning workforce that actually is new to the job, and therefore their implications for training and support and so on. When we ask about job satisfaction you can see on the screen that the majority said that they were satisfied with the job, either fairly or very satisfied. Only a small minority of eight percent say that they were completely satisfied, and then around 14 percent felt dissatisfied with the job.

We expected to find more dissatisfaction. We started with a hypothesis that we were going to find much more because qualitative studies have shown that there is a lot of burnout in this community of practice. The pressures of the job and the multiplicity of roles that you need to take when you're a community planning worker, all those things, plus the challenges of navigating the political context, the local governance context and all the challenges of making partnerships work and so on. All of that we know from experiences of shadowing and interviewing people [that it] produces quite a bit of burnout and a lot of people move on from these jobs or try to take on other roles after they become disenchanted with this role. But the survey doesn't quite capture that.

In the second survey we're going to try to be blunter in trying to capture this. We are going to ask people about burnout and see what we can find out. It might well be that we were completely wrong in many of the qualitative studies and actually this is a workforce that is pretty satisfied with the job and they cope well with the tremendous pressures they are under.

We also found out that community planning workers are based in a wide range of a departments and institutions. You don't always find them in the same department everywhere. In some places they're in the chief exec's office. In some other places, [they're] attached to broader umbrella terms like communities, or people, or some of them are also attached to democratic services and so on and so forth. So there is no natural institutional space for these teams, and that's not surprising because they do have cross-cutting roles that are not easily boxed within the boundaries and functions of traditional local authorities. We find this in the literature.

We find that this is a new type of policy worker because the role is not just about one particular policy area, such as housing or environment or transport or health. Actually, it cuts across all policy or most policy areas because it's about the processes of partnership and participation around a range of policy areas. This is why in the literature they are called boundary spanners –people who try to foster collaboration and work across boundaries. They are also called deliberative practitioners or public engagers – people who work to involve communities of place practice and interest. And inside the literature their role is also recognised as knowledge brokering, trying to connect different types of evidence and bring it into policy and practice.

In many ways the community planning official combines these different roles and this is a fairly new configuration for the profile of a public servant. We find it in other countries – it's not a challenge exclusive to Scotland – but it does mean that they are often unrecognised because it's not easily identifiable as the traditional label: *I work in housing* or *I work in transport* or whatever. When we asked the respondents to tell us about the three most important aspects of their work, as you can

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see on the table and I'll give you a second to take it in, the top aspect is the boundary spanning role working across organisational boundaries.

Now this is surprising – sorry this is unsurprising, because we know that one of the challenges of partnership work is to try and bring together people from a range of organisations with different lines of accountability, different priorities and so on. The other top aspect of the work is involving communities in policy and decision making and so those two come at the top. When people are asked about the three most important aspects, as you can see there is a range of them but those two come at the top. We also asked respondents to tell us where they should be putting more energy and more time.

You can see at the bottom of this line there that they thought more energy, more time and more effort is necessary on those four items involving communities in policy and decision-making, managing dialogue and deliberation between different groups, encouraging culture change, and using evidence to support policies and projects.

The culture change issue is, as many of you who will be aware, the label we often use when we don't quite know how to get at this softer side of the challenges in community planning and other policy areas. In the sense that, as we say in the introduction to our report, very often reforming community planning and reforming governance structures more broadly, focuses on structures, arrangements – the kind of hardware if you like to use a computing metaphor. But we have a fairly good sense of what really matters and this is recognised in the literature and is recognised in this survey is the software if you like, the mind sets, the approaches, the ways of thinking the values, the ways of working. All that kind of soft stuff that is more difficult to understand and improve.

So the survey does give us a sense that this community planning for a workforce does see culture change as a key aspect of improving community planning. And that kind of work can be quite demanding. I remember from the two years I spent shadowing community planning workers.

One of the things that was apparent is that when they were hired, no one told them that they were going to be at the forefront of this mega culture change programme that is seeking to reinvent the way we do public services and the way we cover ourselves locally. Usually the job applications for community planning positions will have to do with coordination and number of management skills and so on and so forth. But this notion that they will also be expected to do the kind of culture change work that is about values, and in that sense political insofar it is about values. That's often not in the job description.

We wanted to test this idea because in one of our studies we found that there is a spectrum of approaches to community planning. Some people take a fairly administrative approach and that means that they go by the book and take a fairly administrative approach to doing things. We say more about this in the report if you're interested. And then on the other side of the spectrum we find those who are activists within community planning, so they are community planning workers who are much more prepared to act as internal activists trying to make things happen.

We ask these two questions. We asked the respondents to tell us their level of agreement with these two statements. And, as you can see on the top statement, it is important to sometimes bend

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the rules to make things happen in this job and a majority of respondents agreed with that. That's a strong statement because bending the rules is not the kind of expression you would usually hear public servants using. So this gives us a sense of the strength of feeling in terms of what it takes to make things happen in the community planning context. You do need to push the boundaries. You need to go beyond the nine to five administrative kind of mind set, and that again has some relationship to the potential for burnout in the role.

When we asked them the converse question or the statement about whether community planning work is mainly administrative, a majority of them disagree, as you can see here, which leads us to tentatively conclude that there is a strong presence of activist approaches. In our experience with qualitative in-depth studies, that's sometimes what it takes to make things happen in the community planning context: to be flexible; to be creative; to push the boundaries and to throw the book out of the window; and try to make things happen in innovative ways.

Now in terms of the skills present in the workforce as you can see the top skills that the respondents noted were writing for differing audiences. This is not surprising. The role of the community planning worker like most policy workers today is a life of meetings and documents and meetings that produce documents, and documents that produce meetings. That's the reality of policy work in the 21st century, not just for community planning workers but across policy spaces.

Then, this is followed closely by consultation and engagement skills, facilitation, negotiation, team management and so on. So [there's] a broad range of skills present in the workforce. When we asked about what skills are most important, you can see there was almost unanimity that consultation and engagement were key skills necessary for the role, followed closely by negotiating, persuasion, facilitation – all these skills that go into taking an activist approach to community planning when you're trying to make things happen by interacting and persuading, facilitating and so on.

There are a number of other important skills of course. Presentation, public speaking, finding and sharing evidence and so on. We asked about training as well as we wanted to understand the level of training that people get when they get into these roles. Half of respondents said that they have no training in the traditional sense.

No-one trained them on community planning as such. Quite a few of them learn the job from documents or were trained by, well a few of them were trained by, someone in the same position. And then there's some other smaller group of people who have some level of group training or were trained by someone else. We asked as well, what kind of training opportunities that they would be happy to have. And this was an open question, but we rank responses here thematically. A lot of desirable training [put forward] related to leadership and management, mediation and facilitation, research methods, community engagement and so on and so forth.

I won't read through everything because of course you'll have the slides and the report. I'll keep moving forward so that hopefully you're still with us. I should say that I reckon that I have 10-12, perhaps 15 minutes max left, so please hold on in there and then we can open up the questions.

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Now we ask about the use of evidence. You can see here and you can read the detail in the report that the sources of evidence that are used most often come from partnership with others and to some extent as well from internal research in their organisation and often as well through public consultation. That doesn't mean that the other sources are not used, but these were the ones that were highlighted as being used most often. But there there's some more nuance in the report about some of these elements because only 33 percent say that they make full use of the data sources that other partners in the CPP have.

In a sense that is perhaps a concern because it raises the question of whether people are feeling confident and feel trust in terms of sharing evidence between partners. It seems that there is an opportunity to improve how this is done and we'll come back to this in the recommendations. A lot of the focus is about using evidence to assess outcomes and, to some extent as well, to assess value for money and to achieve SOA outcomes.

I should note that the survey took place before the LOIs before the local outcome improvement plans were in place so that's why it refers to the SOA, but the next survey will reflect the changes.

Some 50 percent reported that their team have expertise in evaluation. This was somewhat surprising because community planning teams don't tend to be very large (with some exceptions) and therefore expertise in evaluation and other important areas is often from other parts of the council or even other partners. But the majority of respondents concluded that community planning could be improved by better use of evidence and evaluation, so this is an area with a lot of potential for improvement.

I don't think I want to go into the detail of this table. I just want to give you the headline in terms of the challenges that community planning partnerships face in using evidence. The top challenges, as you can see there, are capacity and resources to undertake their own research and capacity and resources to commission research from others.

When we ask specifically our statistical data at the bottom you can see that again capacity and resource to undertake our own data analysis comes at the top, alongside the difficulty of finding data that is appropriate for the spatial scale. Meaning that too often the data that we have is for a geographic area that doesn't correspond with the geographic area that we are working on.

Then we wanted to understand as well what happens in community planning meetings. We had a lot of evidence from qualitative research in previous studies, but we wanted to take this further and ask for the perspective of these community planning officials. We find that community planning meetings at all levels, and this goes from the board to thematic groups to local area partnerships to neighbourhood partnerships or local forums, and all these things are different in different places and they go by different names.

But we wanted to check and the detail is in the report and you can see the breakdown across all those different spaces. Here I just bring in the headline which says something not really surprising. We know this from [other reports] that these are spaces where there is a lot of information sharing and, to some extent, joint coordination and planning. And to a lesser extent there is some sharing

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of decision-making particularly in local forums and area partnerships. That seems to be where there is more shared decision-making. And there's also some reviewing of each other's initiatives.

The one thing that is very clear (and you can see that in the graph which only picks up basically the percentage of meeting types) that where respondents selected the option 'a lot' as in 'this is what happens in this meeting' and 'this is what happens a lot'.

As you can see, sharing information comes on top and at the very bottom comes sharing budgets. So community planning meetings are not seen as the spaces where partnership working is about sharing budgets. In the next survey, we're going to ask more broadly about resources because we understand that is not just about budgets of course.

Now in terms of inclusion – who takes part? We measure both external inclusion and internal inclusion and what that means. External inclusion is about who makes it into those spaces and whether you get a place at the table. And internal inclusion in contrast is about once you are at the table. Do you get an equal opportunity to participate and influence? External inclusion is about making it into the space. Internal inclusion is about having influence at this space and having an equal opportunity within that space. In terms of external inclusion, the CPP boards are very diverse. There is of course a strong public and health sector prism and there is weaker community representation but more than we were expecting. And 50 percent said that their community planning board features community representation.

This used to be, I think worse, although I can't prove it because we don't have a previous survey. But I think that this is a good sign and we might see some change in the next survey.

In terms of internal inclusion, in terms of the dynamics that take place at the board, you can see on the left the blue column is about the statement 'the different partners of the board have an equal opportunity to influence the board's decisions' You can see that it's a mixed picture with less than half agreeing to the statement and just over one third disagreeing with the statement. So the picture is quite mixed across different CPPs.

When it comes to the third sector in particular and whether they are treated as an equal partner. I said just seventy percent of respondents agreed with the statement, which was surprising to us because in some other studies, including our own studies, we have come across third sector interface representatives who don't feel equal partners in the CPP. So this was interesting and there is more detail about this in the report.

In terms of what we call deliberative quality, which basically is about the extent to which the board and this spaces are spaces where there is robust challenge, scrutiny and opportunities to engage with disagreement and so on. We have these two items, these two statements I won't take you through the detail but the detail is in the report. They do indicate that these are not spaces that are seen as places where people can scrutinise each other, disagree and sort of engage in the difficult job of scrutinising different approaches to achieve outcomes. That to me is worrying but there is more detail in the report about this and we can come back to it in the Q&A.

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We also asked about more broadly relationships between partners and again we got a mixed picture. But to some extent, it's fair to say that there seem to be quite a few unproductive relationships between partners in a number of CPPs and that's nothing surprising. We've seen that from previous reports but this kind of confirms that to some extent. Although again it's a mixed picture and there were people who didn't want to either agree or disagree, which is always intriguing.

There are also issues to do with sharing the SOA as a shared framework: We will check for the local outcome improvement plans whether things are changing in that sense. Then, when it comes to the added value we asked whether CPPs are having an impact and what is the added value, what will happen that couldn't happen without CPPs. And we were delighted to receive a lot of responses with lots of examples of projects that are dealing with very complex issues of very important issues: from safety to care for children and the elderly, refugees, drugs and alcohol, employment, tackling poverty, and so on and so forth.

Nonetheless, many respondents were sceptical about the extent to which community planning partners see the value of partnership work. So CPPs sometimes are in many cases, I think it's fair to say, that they are seen as secondary spaces for policy and decision making. What that means is that we get a sense from the survey but also from previous qualitative studies, that for some of the players in the CP space this is not a space where things happen. A lot of the important decisions are made elsewhere in bilateral engagement between some of the bigger players and so on.

So one of our conclusions is the CP space at the moment, and this doesn't apply to all because again I should say that many of them have made a lot of progress since the committee empowerment act was introduced and we haven't been able to reflect on those changes because of the timing of the survey, so this doesn't apply to all CPPs. But many CPPs do find you more spaces for sharing information and planning and coordinating, rather than as places where co-production and shared decision-making takes place.

The final two things I want to talk about is community engagement and then a quick overview of the recommendations we're making. I'll wrap it up.

In terms of whether community engagement is central to how community planning partnerships work, there was a strong disagreement with the statement that community engagement is a key part of how CPPs work. You can see there this is not new. We know that CPPs have made much more progress in terms of collaboration and partnership across organisations than they have made progress in terms of community engagement at the grassroots, feeding into how CPPs work. And this is reflected on the figure at the bottom, that connection between local partnerships and forums feeding into the work of the community planning partnership board. Whether this is a system that coherently takes priorities and ideas and recommendations and so on from the grassroots from communities of place and communities of place practice and interest, and whether that's properly connected to the strategic levels of the CPPs. So quite a small but nonetheless significant majority of respondents did indicate that there is to some extent that connection, but there is some way to go on this. Again, more details in the report.

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Now in terms of the types of community engagement, surprisingly most processes are some of the traditional forms of engagement. Task groups, working groups, targeted workshops, and public meetings are beginning to be quite widespread. We have also participatory budgeting.

What we find over all from the data on community engagement is that community planning officers are very active in organising lots of community engagement processes. So what I said earlier about community engagement not being clearly connected to decision making is not precluding the fact that they saw a lot of community engagement going on so. There is a lot of skill in the workforce and indeed a lot of potential to reach across sections of the local population, but the reality is that traditional forms of engagement are still dominant. Democratic innovations such as participatory budgeting "mini publics" like citizens duties and so on are still quite marginal in this space. So we see a lot of traditional engagement and less experimentation.

Whether that's good or bad, that's open to debate of course, and we also notice an over-reliance on intermediaries. What this means is that there are plenty of opportunities for those who are either community representatives, such as community councillors or others. But there are less opportunities for citizens who don't see themselves represented by existing groups. So we have built a system that is highly reliant on intermediaries.

Final slide before the recommendations. In terms of the challenges of community engagement in community planning partnerships, unsurprisingly resources and capacity. There is a real issue in terms of to deal with public fatigue.

There is a lot of consultation going on, perhaps too much, especially those that are inconsequential, that are not clearly connected or transparent, not clearly connected to this decision making or not transparent about how they fit into decision making.

We also got quite a lot of feedback on the challenges of ensuring that the engagement process is of high quality because that takes resources. It takes time and it takes a context where community engagement is valued and works very closely with elected members and others so that it is part of a coherent system of connecting the grassroots to the strategic decision making. In terms of the community empowerment act.

Again, I should note that the survey took place in the early stage of the implementation of the act and therefore we cannot capture the more recent developments but the second wave will do that. Nonetheless, the concerns around implementing the Act had to do with resources, level of cooperation between partners, whether the new responsibilities were going to be fairly shared across partners, the capacity of communities to engage when they are already under high demands to participate in a number of processes, and also the concern that the Community Empowerment Act may empower the already powerful.

So if the Community Empowerment Act is not supported by measures that help to bring those communities who are already disadvantaged into a position where they can make the most of the new opportunities that the act brings then we're going to be in trouble because the inequalities might increase. So communities that are already have a lot of social capital and capacity will take advantage of the act and they will run away. Whereas communities that are at the moment behind

won't be able to take up those opportunities and will be left far behind. That's the risk and this was strongly felt by a number of respondents.

So our recommendations – and I should say that I'm not going to go into the detail because obviously you can you can read them and you can check that in the report. Here they're out of context really because in the report you can see why we're making that particular recommendation. But I just want to give you a super quick overview and then we'll open up at the Q&A. So we have a couple of recommendations. Regarding developing resources and evidence, we think it will be helpful to have a national census of community planning officials so that then we could systematically ask for their views more periodically as well.

We think as well recommendation number two is one of our overarching conclusions. Community planning partnerships are quite good as collaborative governance spaces, spaces where there is collaboration with most organisations and strategic stakeholders and so on. But not as good as a system of participatory governance, which is not just about collaboration amongst sectors and organisations but also about participation by citizens and communities of place, practice and interest.

We have a couple of recommendations regarding staff development and support and providing new networking spaces for CPOs and opportunities to develop some of the skills that they noted as desirable.

The next set of recommendations are about the deliberative quality so I added this slide, which hopefully if you're interested in this kind of thing you can check later. This is what we mean by deliberative standards which boils down to conversations that are based on the best available evidence, whether that's formal evidence or local knowledge experiential knowledge, conversations that are inclusive and that don't shy away from dealing with disagreements, and that end up in informed and considered judgments. So those are the kind of deliberative standards that are widely recognised in the literature.

We applied these standards to measure the extent to which CPPs comply with this high level of deliberative quality and that's why we have four recommendations on this point. I'm not going to dwell on them. I'll leave them there as this is a very specialised area. Not everyone is interested in communication or deliberation or public dialogue, and so I'll leave it to you to check them out in your own time and we can always come back to it.

We also have some recommendations on participation and engagement. We are suggesting that the local governance review should look at reforming community councils so that they can be fit for purpose, not just in community planning but more broadly in local democracy. We also say a number of things about the quality of community engagement, about being clear about the level of power sharing at stake: whether it is consultation, whether it is cooperative action, whether it is delegation. Being transparent about the level of decision-making that is actually being shared so that then there is no distrust and cynicism built around these processes.

We also say something about an area that we feel quite passionate about, which is the fact that we are in this strange paradoxical time when we are paying so much attention to community

empowerment. We have legislation, we have policies and so on. And yet a lot of our community work force has been quite diminished across the country. In some places CLD departments have been shod and in other places, they have been swallowed into other things – community development, community organising, community education, good old-fashioned kind of community work that arguably is necessary to advance this agenda has become a bit of a Cinderella section in many local authority areas.

That's a bit of a contradiction because we have never needed them more than now and our community planning teams need to tap into those skills and those in that capacity. We are urging CPPs to review their engagement teams and to make sure they are adequately resourced and supported, so that the Community Empowerment Act can be implemented.

And finally we are also asking that when we monitor the implementation of the community empowerment act we pay attention to the issues I mentioned earlier. About whether we're reducing, Increasing, or reproducing existing inequalities because, and some of our other work looks at this in particular, inequalities in power and influence will result in inequalities in outcomes. So we need to be careful that the Community Empowerment Act doesn't take us in the opposite direction of what it is intended to do and that has a lot to do with resourcing, investing in local democracy, investing in community planning and so on.

That points to the final recommendation, which is about making sure that we communicate what is the added value of CPPs. A lot of people don't know about CPPs. I don't need to tell you that, you know that, and it's very striking to me that CPPs having a responsibility, an overview and oversight of a number of areas across multiple policy spaces and initiatives and projects. And yet most people don't even know they exist so their value needs to be better understood and communicated, so that people can see the value that that comes out of collaborating and trying to do things in this way.

That took longer than I thought so thank you for those of you who are still there and I'm now going to switch the screen so that we can hopefully have a bit of a chat Q&A; or whatever you want.

Thanks Oliver. There were a couple of questions and comments that came in so maybe have a look at those as well. [Yes.] *There was one question, though I confess I was trying to type and listen and respond to people at the same time, so you may have said the answer to this already and I missed it, but one was asking whether all the CPOs are employed by councils so apologies if you didn't cover that.*

No I didn't and it's a really good question. Yes they are and the main reason for that, as many of you will know, is because the original legislation for community planning which was in the 2003 Local Government Act (it was literally two paragraphs I think if I remember correctly others will put me right if I'm not right) but it was very, very, very limited. It placed the responsibility in councils. So when it came to creating a workforce to advance community planning we started by the default of placing them as part the council workforce.

Having said that, there are some exceptions to this. We have seen places in our qualitative studies not in the survey but you know qualitative studies where community planning workers are based

and they have a hybrid post in some places. We see it in the NHS and the council, although they are not so common, so I think that's an area that is worth exploring; creating community planning teams that are truly cross-sectoral.

Okay, I have another comment that came in that if anyone else wants to have any further thoughts on all of what I said they're obviously free to chat or if you want to speak pop the question mark [into the box]. Just another comment that sort of arose as we're going along, I think this was related to engaging with communities. Perhaps this will be interesting to see in the second wave, whether social media has more of a role as a method of engagement. I don't if you've got any views on that if you want to wait to see what the second wave brings.

And actually I remember we are finalising the new questionnaire. We are trying to keep a lot of what was in the first survey so that we can compare but there is also a lot that that was improved by the feedback we got and by thinking in the light of some of the more recent developments to do with new legislation and so on.

So we have some new questions that we added to do with communication channels. And I think Lucy did help us to look into that question will come out at the end of the questionnaire and that ties into the extent to which social media and other channels might be having an influence, but I will double-check because I want to make sure that I did them. We've been also cutting it to try and make it not too long and therefore I will make sure that it is there.

Anybody else? Something you'd like to bring up?

Let me just say one more thing while we allow people to get a chance to bring other questions. On social media I suppose one of the challenges is that there are two types of social media – there is the mainstream social media, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and so on. Some of those platforms are quite good for serving bilateral or unilateral directional communication. But they are not necessarily the best space where careful dialogue and deliberation on local issues and so on [can take place]. There are other online platforms that allow that kind of quality dialogue, so I think we need to try and get a sense of what platforms are best for what.

Social media is great for publicity, for creating a momentum around a particular [issue], but then we also need platforms that accommodate the kind of more high-quality dialogue that is needed so that people get a chance to engage with the issues properly, more than just clicking a bottom or responding shortly to online or tweet or something.

Oh, something's coming up. Brian, I think, is asking so any thoughts on formal qualifications that could be developed to support a recommendation about training and capacity building?

I don't know what this requires. I'm not sure, to some extent, because the role combines skills from different traditions. It combines the skill of the more traditional policy worker that can handle complex writing for policy audiences as well as writing for communities and so on. All that alongside the skills of the community organiser that needs to be able to bring very different people together to make things happen, alongside the skills of the facilitator who needs to know how to create a space where difficult conversations can take place. [Then] the skill of being able to get a

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sense of the quality of a particular set of evidence before that's taken to a theme group or a board and so on. So it's kind of analytical and research skills and so on and so forth.

All these different skills are not packed in a particular discipline. They draw on different disciplines and hence does the challenge so I suppose What I'm saying is these skills can be developed through practice and in some cases through some of the existing training. But no training puts all those skills together. I suppose there is a scope for that, I would say.

And there was another question, about some examples of good practice on how to engage members of the community, perhaps who are not engaged in traditional groups. We did ask but it's always difficult in this service because you know there are many questions. Then when you get to the open question, you don't have the energy to go in-depth and so on, so we didn't get a lot of examples of innovative engagement going on beyond some of them. I suppose more recent developments around participatory budgeting, and in some cases the use of mini-publics.

This is not different from evidence in other countries where we see that we are in a moment of transition because some of these more innovative ways of engaging, whether it's online through digital crowd-sourcing through some of these democratic innovations. We're in a period of transition and only when the right circumstances come together, these things get a chance and the right circumstances are not just about teams that are up for it and have been supported to develop those skills or have those skills for their own trajectory, but also a political context locally that enables that kind of innovative engagement to take place. There's no point in doing engagement unless this is properly, coherently connected to existing decision-making spaces, council chambers and other spaces so that's the challenge and that's where we are. We are in transition from traditional to innovative methods but a lot of things still need to align before we get to a position where we can become the more traditional engagement.

Ooh, quite a few questions here. Okay, I'll try to give shorter answers if that's okay and also we should invite [you to speak]. If someone wants to switch on the microphone and make a comment, that's welcome. I'll take some of these questions that I can see on the screen very quickly.

Evelyn is asking about the recommendations. Yeah, this is the challenge. We have presented these recommendations to the Community Planning Network (CPN) where many managers where present and also we have our on-going conversation with the CPN so that we make sure that hopefully they can cascade some of these findings.

Not everything applies to every CPP, so then it's up to community planning teams in each CPP to take whatever feels relevant locally because that's something we can't tell you. We didn't look at the specific localities precisely because we wanted that anonymity so that people could feel free to really make the points they wanted to make. And there are recommendations that are for national agencies in government so we are hoping that some of them are taken forward as well. Once we have the second wave of the survey with a stronger set of findings that allows us to compare over time, we are hoping that this will feed into not just the development of community planning but more broadly some of the ongoing public service reforms.

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We were asked about whether we could use the second survey to get to CP partners who are not council based. Initially, that was one thing we considered. The issue, though, is that we want people whose job is community planning. There are a lot of partners involved there. As you know, there are hundreds and hundreds of people involved in CP space, but we wanted to gather the coordinators, the facilitators, the brokers, rather than people who are participating as part of a particular stakeholder group that is represented and working in partnership. We wanted to get at those kind of key coordinators of that space, rather than people who come into that space with a different role and just focus on a particular area.

These people who responded, they do cut across the CPP working in all sorts of policy areas and so their role is not attached to a particular policy area. The role is attached to a particular type of process, whether that's collaboration or participation, so their expertise is on process rather than substance. If we invite community planning partners, I think then we cannot make statements or claims about the community planning workforce because this will be just one thing amongst a number of other things that those people do. That doesn't mean that we don't need a [sister] survey about community planning partners. I think that's worthwhile, but that's different from what we're trying to do here.

Then there's a question about community councils. Yeah, oof. [The] community council is one of my favourite subjects and I've had the fortune of working with many community councillors over the years. We are currently reviewing the state of community councils to feed into the local government's review and so we're doing this in collaboration with the College Community Development Centre. We shall have a report before the summer, but we've done this before. We've helped with the community councils' work for the COSLA Commission strengthening local democracy so we have a full report with recommendations. I think it's available on our website. There is a link to it in the webpage in What Works Scotland where we talk about our current review so there's a link [to the] report. And so we have quite a few recommendations from community councillors and from ourselves.

Jane is asking about how to make these spaces 'spaces' for participatory governance. Well, there are some clues in the report, although I didn't want to go too far because I think we need the second wave [so you can] have your say. If I make big claims on the basis of the first survey, they might be actually contestable. I think the second survey might give us the opportunity to analyse change and development over time will allow us to say more about that aspect of how to improve the participatory aspect of CPPs so I want to be cautious on this one for now.

And then we have BBM who's tuning in wearing her professional hat as a communications and engagement lead for the NHS health and social care. She wanted to get a better understanding of the priorities and challenges that committee planning workers face. Hopefully the report will do that. Obviously we don't expect you to go through the 56 pages of the report but I should say that there is an eight page summary separate from the report and so if you have very little time that eight pager is your best option. If you have a little bit more time, at the beginning of the report there are ten pages that can include a little bit more analysis as well as some of the stuff that is in the separate summary. If you have a little bit more time or in one way or another a lot of what you

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do really when I get into the detail of the report (and hopefully you can check the full text in some of the sections). So basically I'm giving you homework. I'm sorry!

Okay, did I miss any questions or does anyone want to use the microphone? It would be nice to hear a voice. Everybody is confused and puzzled and wondering if it's the best way of spending lunch time! There are no more questions. Can we just perhaps super quickly get those of you on the other side of this webinar to tell us very quickly whether the webinar format worked for you what can we improve? I think definitely we can make the presentation shorter. I realised I was a bit too long so that is something I'll take away.

What else can we do better? Did this work for you? I should say that the point of this was to try [it out]. We try to distribute a lot of our events across the country, but unavoidably we do end up doing quite a bit in the central belt. Although we do have ongoing work in the Highlands and we've been to Moray and Perth and Kinross, and the west coast and so on [for] a number of things that we do. But we want to try and use webinars a bit more often as opportunities to do this in a different way.

Some feedback coming through. I'll make a note of it. That's great. It seems that it worked for most people. We will be following up with those who didn't manage to log in because there were quite a few people registered and then obviously you know we all have really busy calendars, so naturally some people couldn't make it and perhaps the prospect of having this recorded also made them prioritise something else and they will hopefully watch this recording. But we will also follow up with those who registered and didn't log in just to check whether there were any technical issues.

Oh sorry, Lucy, anything that you want to add?

Yeah, as I said it was a bit of an experiment for us so we're pleased obviously. Some people it seems to work well for people and that's great. As you say we'll follow up [and] in time work out what some of the issues are for other people.

If there's anything we can do to make it work more smoothly next time and any feedback that you have, feel free to get in touch and thanks so much for coming.

Great. Lucy, I take it that we can put all this valuable feedback that we got in the chat? Maybe there's a way that we can. *Yes, we can save that and some, and extract any kind of bits and pieces err I can be most useful for us. So thanks very much to everyone who participated.*

That's great. I just want to add my thanks, and encourage you to sign up for our newsletter and What Works Scotland website and come along to our events and other things are going to be happening between now and December. We are really excited to be sharing a lot of findings on lots of different projects within the programme and all of that is going to be happening in the next few months and especially in the winter. So I hope that you can join us for some of that. And thanks again, a pleasure. It's always a bit of trepidation doing these things.

You never know if technology is going to be on your side, but if it seems that it kind of worked so thanks again to Lucy. Thanks to everyone and those of you [who are here] live and those of you watching the recording. Take care and speak soon.