

Falkirk Community Planning Partnership



 ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

 AUDITOR GENERAL

Prepared by Audit Scotland
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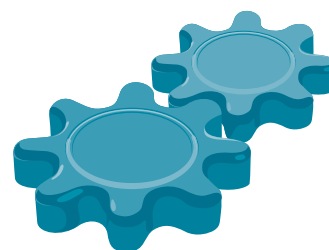
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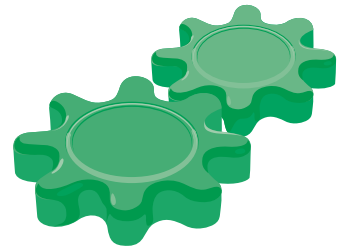
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Exhibit data

When viewing this report online, you can access background data by clicking on the graph icon. The data file will open in a new window.

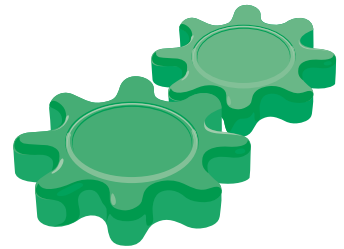
Commission findings



- 1** The Commission notes the report by the Controller of Audit and the Auditor General for Scotland on community planning in Falkirk.
- 2** The Commission recognises a strong record of collaborative working in Falkirk which has been of benefit to the area. We believe, however, that Falkirk Community Planning Partnership needs to demonstrate a shift from facilitating to leading partnership working, driving the pace of change and delivering better outcomes for the people of Falkirk.
- 3** While it is encouraging that the partnership has a well established vision for the area, it now needs to determine its most important priorities and set clear targets and milestones. It is, for example unclear how inequalities in the Falkirk area are being prioritised and tackled.
- 4** The Commission believes that the partnership has a good understanding of how it can work better and where it needs to improve. But its Leadership Board needs to show stronger leadership in the following areas:
 - setting a clear and strategic improvement agenda
 - holding partners to account for their contribution
 - helping partners overcome barriers to information sharing
 - putting in place an effective system of performance management and scrutiny to measure and monitor progress against priorities
 - ensuring its improvement group fulfils its crucial role in implementing the operational improvements the partnership knows it needs to make.
- 5** The Commission notes individual partners' engagement with communities in Falkirk. We underline the potential to the partnership of evaluating this activity when developing its approach to involving local people in community planning.

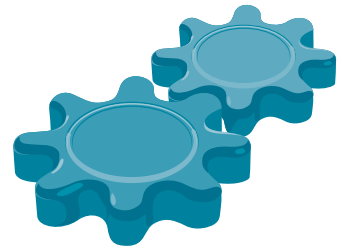
- 6 As with other Community Planning Partnerships that have been subject to this audit, the partnership needs to do more to align partners' resources to agreed local priorities and how it identifies, allocates and redirects resources to these priorities. We also stress the importance, especially for Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley, of clarity of relationship and effective joint working between the Community Planning Partnership and the proposed health and social care partnership.

Key messages



- 1** Falkirk Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has a long-term vision that aims to address the key challenges facing its area. The CPP worked collaboratively using its clear understanding of the Falkirk area to develop its new Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). It now needs to develop priorities to target specific areas of concern and put plans in place to convert its aspirations for Falkirk into improved outcomes. The CPP also needs to provide more direction in key areas, such as prevention and early intervention, to ensure a strategic approach across the partnership.
 - 2** The CPP promotes a strong culture of collaboration in Falkirk and there are many examples of innovative and effective operational partnership working across the area. This has helped Falkirk to respond quickly to local problems and secure funding for major local initiatives.
 - 3** Falkirk's performance against most indicators in the previous SOA improved. Strengthening the CPP's performance management arrangements will help the partnership to monitor progress in improving outcomes and tackling inequalities. The CPP also needs to improve its performance reporting, including how it communicates its priorities, activities and performance to local people and communities.
 - 4** There is recent evidence that individual partners are involving local people in the design and delivery of services. The CPP should evaluate partners' existing activities in developing its own approach to engaging with local communities.
 - 5** The CPP must strengthen its accountability arrangements by holding individual partners and thematic groups to account for their contribution to agreed outcomes. Effective scrutiny will also help the CPP to identify areas of concern and to develop specific priorities.
 - 6** In addition to scrutinising partners' performance, it is essential that the Leadership Board provides strong oversight of the Improvement Group, which has a crucial role in implementing the operational improvements that the CPP knows it needs to make.
 - 7** Public sector bodies in Falkirk collectively spend about £1 billion annually on services for local people. The CPP must provide strong leadership to ensure that partners' resources are aligned to local priorities and to help partners, in particular Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley, overcome barriers to joint resourcing. The CPP must also influence the council's and health board's progress in achieving the integration of health and social care services, and ensure close links between the partnership's priorities and the new arrangements.
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Background



Falkirk

1. Falkirk is midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh, and is well connected to other areas of Scotland by rail and motorway.¹ With a population of 156,000, Falkirk is the eleventh largest council area in Scotland. Its population has been increasing for almost 20 years, and is projected to increase by over eight per cent to about 169,000 by 2035. Major changes in the area over the past 15 years include a new NHS hospital, all the area's schools built from new or refurbished, and regeneration projects to improve town centres. Other developments include the opening of the Falkirk Stadium, the Falkirk Wheel and, more recently, The Helix, which has transformed an area of underused land into 350 hectares of park and visitor attractions.

2. Falkirk compares well with Scotland as a whole for some important indicators ([Exhibit 1, page 8](#)).² However, in common with Scotland as a whole, Falkirk has pockets of persistent deprivation that are associated with poorer outcomes, such as lower life expectancy and higher unemployment ([Exhibit 2, page 8](#)).

3. Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) exist in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland to coordinate and improve how local public services are planned and delivered. They aim to improve outcomes, such as raising life expectancy and reducing crime, for people living within their areas, and to reduce inequalities. Community planning arrangements are well established in Falkirk, with the council and its partners, including NHS Forth Valley and local police and fire services, first coming together in 1999 to establish a vision for the area. The Falkirk CPP was formally established in 2003.

4. Following the Christie Commission report in 2011, the Scottish Government reviewed community planning.³ In March 2012, the Scottish Government and COSLA set out their expectations for community planning.⁴ Their expectation was that CPPs would become the main focus for improving public services at a local level.

5. There are a number of ongoing changes in how public services are delivered that affect CPPs. These include:

- welfare reform
- Scotland's new national police and fire services
- the integration of adult health and social care
- the reform of colleges
- the introduction of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act
- the Scottish Government's recent announcement that it is abolishing community justice authorities.⁵

Exhibit 1**Comparison of indicators between Falkirk and Scotland as a whole**

Falkirk compares well relative to the whole of Scotland for some indicators but poorly for others.

	Falkirk	✓/✗	Scotland
Life expectancy (men)	76.4	✓	75.9
Life expectancy (women)	80.4	–	80.4
Overall unemployment rate (2013)	3.7%	✗	3.2%
Youth (18 to 24) unemployment rate (2013)	7.7%	✗	5.6%
Proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (2010/11)	10%	–	10%
Average gross weekly pay (2012)	£479.80	✗	£498.30
Percentage of children living in poverty (2011/12)	17%	✓	20%
Number of recorded crimes per 10,000 population (2012/13)	473	✓	520



Compares well to Scotland

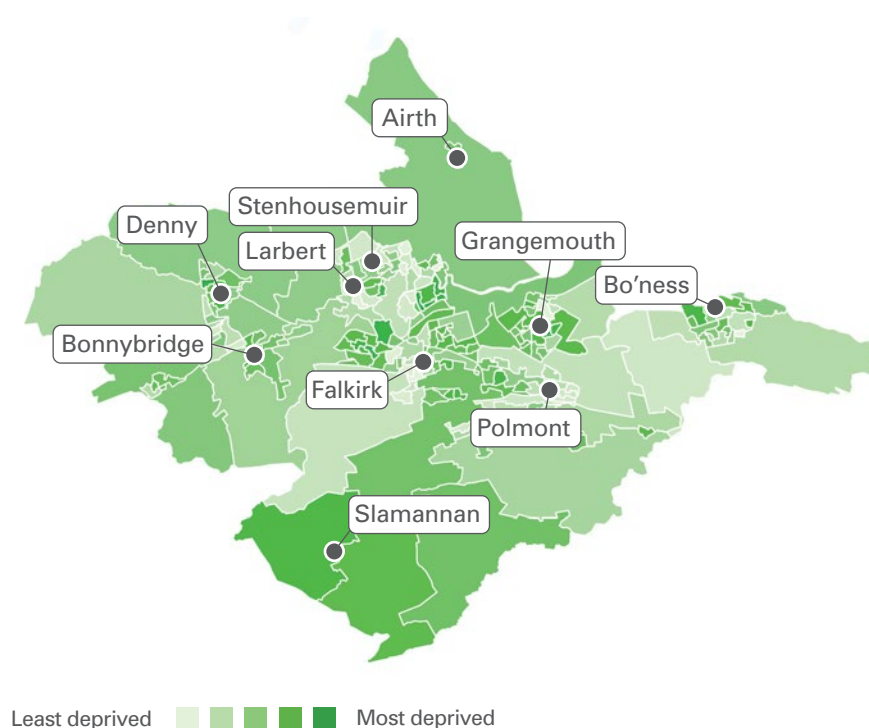


Compares poorly to Scotland

Source: National Records of Scotland; Recorded Crime in Scotland 2012-13, Scottish Government; Department for Work and Pensions; Office for National Statistics; Child Poverty Action Group and Scottish Government School Leavers Destination Survey 2010/11.

Exhibit 2**Deprivation levels across the Falkirk area**

Parts of Falkirk are in the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland (dark green areas).



Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2012

About the audit

6. In 2012, the Scottish Government asked the Accounts Commission to lead audits of individual CPPs to assess their performance. During 2012/13, Audit Scotland reviewed three CPPs.⁶ Our audit of the Falkirk CPP is one of five that Audit Scotland is conducting during 2013/14.⁷ We carried out the audit shortly after Falkirk agreed its priorities for community planning for the three-year period from 2013 to 2015.

7. This is a joint report prepared by the Controller of Audit and the Auditor General for Scotland under Section 102(1)(c) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (as amended) and Section 23 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, respectively.

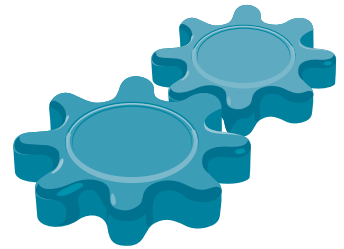
8. The objectives of the audit were to assess:

- to what extent has Falkirk CPP set a clear strategic direction, agreed by all partners, which reflects Falkirk's needs? [\(Part 1\)](#)
- are Falkirk CPP's governance and accountability arrangements appropriate and do they allow it to improve outcomes for local people? [\(Part 2\)](#)
- to what extent Falkirk CPP encourages collaborative behaviour among staff and uses its resources, including money, staff and property, to deliver joint priorities and outcomes? [\(Part 3\)](#)
- how well is Falkirk CPP delivering the outcomes contained in its Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) and whether it is reporting these clearly and accurately to the public? [\(Part 4\)](#)⁸

9. The [Appendix](#) outlines our approach to the audit. As part of the audit, we reviewed in detail two themes particularly relevant to Falkirk – economic development and early years services – to assess the effectiveness of partnership working in the area. We arranged focus groups of local managers involved in our thematic reviews to explore how well collaborative working is operating in practice. We also held focus groups for residents from two areas of Falkirk (Maddiston and Dawson) to explore their views of local community planning. We have included quotes from these focus groups to illustrate important points from our audit. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to our work.

Part 1

What is the CPP aiming to do?



Key messages

- 1** Falkirk CPP demonstrated shared leadership to establish a long-term vision that aims to meet the major challenges facing the area.
- 2** The CPP worked collaboratively using its clear understanding of the Falkirk area to develop its new Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). It now needs to develop priorities to target specific areas of concern and put plans in place to convert its aspirations for Falkirk into improved outcomes for local people.
- 3** The CPP recognises the importance of prevention and early intervention but must ensure there is a strategic approach to implementing preventative approaches across the partnership.

The CPP has a well-established, long-term vision for Falkirk

10. In 1999, Falkirk Council and its partners worked with local communities to establish a 20-year vision for Falkirk that reflected the challenges facing the area. These included a declining population and significant job losses, including redundancies at the Grangemouth oil refinery. In January 2011, the CPP published the third version of its Strategic Community Plan, *Moving Forward Together*, which reaffirmed its vision for Falkirk for 2010 to 2015 and beyond. The community plan focuses on six themes that reflect the Scottish Government's strategic objectives: sustainability, health, economic development, children and young people, safer communities, and promoting a fairer society.⁹

11. The Strategic Community Plan recognises the challenges that reductions in public funding will present. It also recognises the need for partner organisations to coordinate resources such as money, property and skills, and adopt new approaches to delivering local services. The plan highlights the potential for increasing the voluntary sector's and local communities' contribution to community planning. It is accompanied by an action plan setting out the high-level priorities and outcomes for delivering the vision.

The CPP used a collaborative approach and its clear understanding of the Falkirk area to develop its SOA, but it has yet to identify specific priorities

12. The CPP developed its latest SOA in 2013 (covering 2013 to 2015) to support the delivery of the Strategic Community Plan. The CPP adopted a collaborative approach to develop its SOA. Falkirk Council organised workshops for all partners

the CPP needs to develop specific priorities and plans to convert its aspirations for Falkirk into improved outcomes

to discuss the SOA, and relevant partners took responsibility for drafting individual sections. For example, NHS Forth Valley took the lead on health inequalities and physical activity, in collaboration with other partners.

13. In developing its SOA, the CPP used a good range of national and local data and demonstrated a clear knowledge of Falkirk and the main issues facing the area. However, there was limited evidence that it considered longer-term opportunities and risks and, for some issues, there was scope to include more detailed information. For example, in the early years, children and young people section, the CPP provided no information on child health indicators (for example, obesity or dental decay) or important early years services such as pre-school education, parenting classes, or midwifery and health visitor services.

14. For its latest SOA, the CPP took account of the six policy priorities set out by the Scottish Government and COSLA in their December 2012 guidance to CPPs.¹⁰ The CPP adapted these priorities to reflect the local context and challenges and to link with existing local strategies, for example it included poverty and welfare reform to reflect Falkirk Council's Poverty Strategy ([Exhibit 3](#)). Each of the six priorities includes a range of thematic challenges and the SOA also lists 14 of the area's strategic challenges.

Exhibit 3

Falkirk CPP's priorities in its SOA 2013-15

The CPP adopted the six national priorities and adapted them to reflect local circumstances.



Source: Falkirk Community Planning Partnership

15. The latest SOA is more focused on local issues and priorities than previous SOAs, which were more closely linked to national priorities and outcomes. However, the wide range of priorities and challenges in the SOA makes it difficult to establish Falkirk's main priorities. For example, the new SOA includes a

clear commitment to tackle the most significant inequalities in the Falkirk area. However, it contains limited information about which groups or communities are most disadvantaged, or how the CPP plans to reduce the outcomes gaps between different communities. It is important that the CPP Leadership Board targets and prioritises actions within its priority areas to provide clear direction that will address specific local concerns.

Recommendation

- The CPP must establish the main priorities for Falkirk that target specific areas of concern.
-

The CPP has yet to convert its aspirations for Falkirk into clear delivery plans that will improve outcomes

16. Each of the six priority areas in the SOA includes a list of broad outcomes that the CPP aims to achieve. Each priority also lists a range of 'key activities' that are intended to lead to improved outcomes. The Scottish Government and COSLA's *Statement of Ambition* for community planning states that CPPs must clearly understand respective partners' contributions and how partners will be held to account for delivering improved outcomes. However, Falkirk's SOA is not yet accompanied by a practical work programme or implementation plan setting out individual partners' or thematic groups' responsibilities and the timescales for completing specific activities. Therefore, it is not clear how the CPP will convert the aspirations in its vision and SOA into improved outcomes.

17. The CPP has helped promote a culture of collaboration across the Falkirk area, and there are many examples of effective operational partnership working that have helped improve local outcomes ([paragraphs 49 – 52](#)). The CPP must build on these achievements and show strong and sustained leadership, and a continued collaborative approach, to implement its SOA and deliver its vision for Falkirk. The CPP is currently reviewing its governance arrangements to clarify partners' roles and responsibilities. As part of this review, it needs to develop an implementation plan for the SOA to clarify the specific actions each partner or thematic group will take to:

- address the main local priorities
- improve outcomes
- reduce inequalities.

Recommendation

- The CPP should develop a clear plan for implementing its SOA. This should specify priorities and set out each partner's roles and responsibilities and the actions they are required to take to improve outcomes.
-

The CPP recognises the importance of prevention and early intervention but must ensure a strategic approach across the partnership

18. The CPP shows a strong commitment to prevention and early intervention. Each of the six priorities in the SOA includes a list of initiatives and actions to move away from managing the consequences of problems and towards preventative and early intervention approaches. This is encouraging but for some priorities these are high-level aspirations. They are not supported by specific actions or details about how CPP partners will use their respective resources to focus on early intervention or prevention. It is therefore difficult to gauge how the CPP will achieve a strategic shift towards prevention and early intervention.

19. However, within the thematic groups there is evidence of existing early intervention responses that include clear links to the SOA. For example, the Falkirk Early Years Collaborative has developed a range of pilot initiatives for young children to improve outcomes in later life ([Case study 1](#)). The CPP Leadership Board must provide clear leadership to promote a strategic shift towards prevention and early intervention and ensure learning from these and other initiatives is available across the CPP. To help promote this shift, the CPP must develop a clear plan for prevention that is jointly owned and supported by partners, and use this plan to determine priorities and monitor progress.

Recommendation

- The CPP must develop a clear plan to promote a strategic shift towards prevention and early intervention, and use this plan to determine priorities and monitor progress.
-

Case study 1

The Falkirk Early Years Collaborative – initiatives aimed at improving outcomes for children

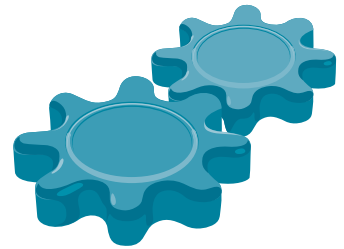
The Scotland-wide Early Years Collaborative (EYC) initiative aims to ensure that every child and parent has access to appropriate support in areas such as health, education and social work. Community planning partners deliver the initiative in their respective CPP areas. The Falkirk EYC includes representatives from local social work, health, education and police services, along with professionals from the third sector. It has run over 60 small-scale local projects to create an evidence base of effective initiatives. These include:

- improving arrangements for parents collecting children's vitamins
- introducing a telephone reminder service to increase the percentage of parents bringing their children to the 27-30 month developmental check
- creating an online video advising parents on how to help children learn at home.

After evaluating the impact of these projects, Falkirk EYC plans to implement effective early intervention initiatives more widely to improve long-term outcomes for children in Falkirk.

Part 2

How is the CPP run?



Key messages

- 1** The CPP must strengthen its accountability arrangements by holding individual partners and thematic groups to account for their contribution to agreed outcomes.
- 2** The CPP's Improvement Group has a crucial role in implementing the operational improvements that the CPP knows it needs to make, but its work is at an early stage. It is essential that the CPP Leadership Board holds this group to account and ensures it makes significant early progress.
- 3** The CPP must influence the council's and health board's progress in achieving the integration of adult health and social care services, and ensure close links between the partnership's priorities and the new arrangements. It also needs to increase its scrutiny of police and fire services to fulfil its role in improving community safety.
- 4** The CPP should evaluate partners' existing activities in developing its own approach to engaging with local communities.

The CPP Leadership Board has not taken an active role in monitoring progress and holding partners to account for delivering outcomes

20. The CPP's work is overseen by a Leadership Board. Its remit is to set the context for partnership working in Falkirk and provide strategic direction for community planning. The board is chaired by the Leader of Falkirk Council and comprises councillors and senior staff from partner organisations, including representatives from the voluntary sector.

21. The leader of the council's opposition group recently joined the Leadership Board to help ensure continuity if the administration changes after the next council elections. The board is supported by an Improvement Group, which was established in October 2013. Six thematic groups are responsible for taking forward the CPP's work ([Exhibit 4, page 15](#)).

22. Community planning partners acknowledge the council's statutory role in community planning, but some see scope to increase their participation to further develop the sense of partnership. They would like to have more opportunity to contribute to the CPP's decision-making on relevant areas, such as economic

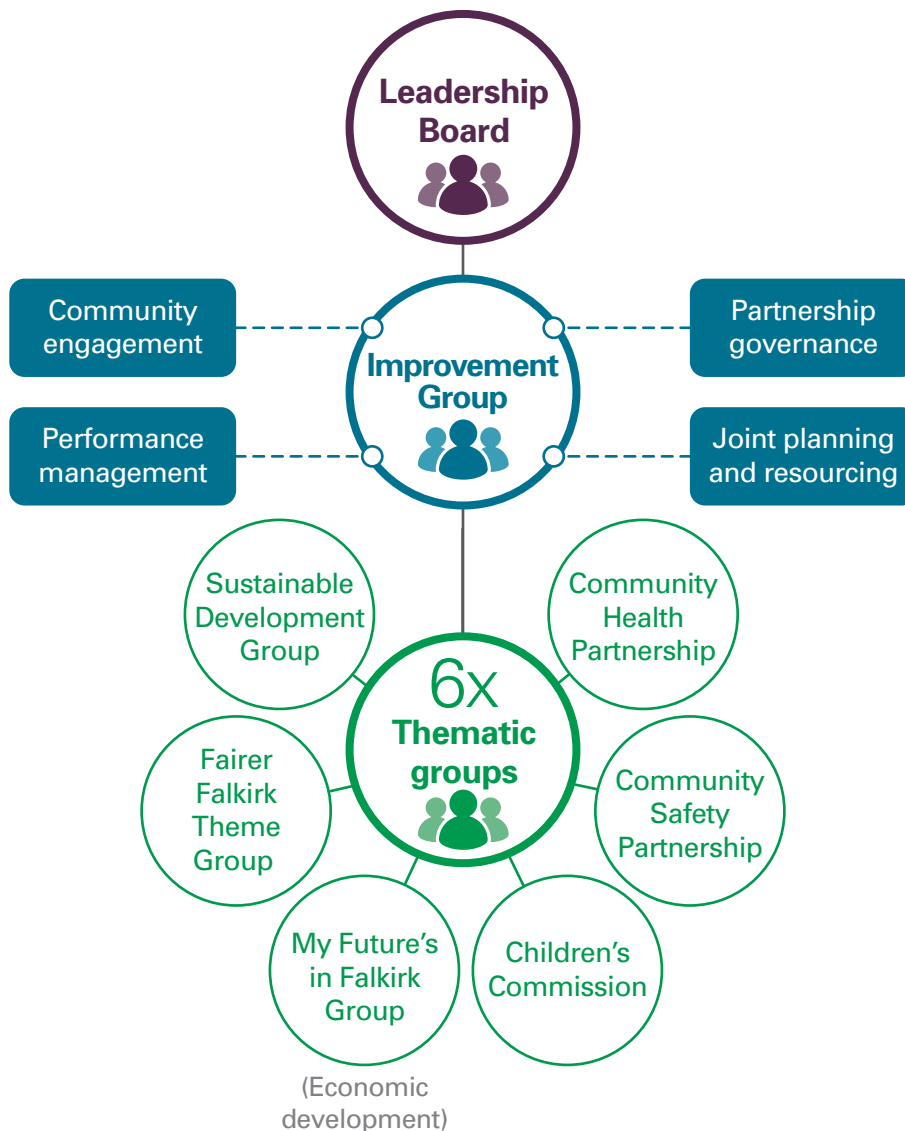
the CPP must hold partners and thematic groups to account for their contribution to agreed outcomes

development. This is a positive development but to fulfil this role effectively, partners must ensure their representatives have the authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisations.

Exhibit 4

Falkirk CPP governance structure

The Leadership Board is supported by an Improvement Group and six thematic groups.



Note: Local activity on health, wellbeing and physical activity is coordinated by the Health and Social Care Joint Management Group

Source: Falkirk Community Planning Partnership

23. The Leadership Board meets three times a year. Meetings are generally well attended, which demonstrates partners' commitment, though there is scope for partners to be more involved in setting agendas. We observed several Leadership Board meetings and reviewed the minutes of previous meetings. These indicated

that reports tend to be noted or approved with limited discussion or challenge about progress against outcomes or priority areas, or key issues affecting the area.

24. The Scottish Government and COSLA's *Statement of Ambition* for community planning includes an expectation that CPPs operate as boards that hold all partners to account for their contribution to local planning and delivering on plans. In Falkirk, there is limited evidence that the CPP Leadership Board scrutinises the contribution of individual partners or thematic groups, or holds them to account for improving specific outcomes. The CPP's thematic groups, such as the Children's Commission, report on progress internally (for example, to the council) rather than regularly and systematically reporting to the Leadership Board.

25. This is a significant weakness in the CPP's governance arrangements. The Leadership Board must take a more strategic and central role in monitoring progress against the CPP's priorities, and use its meetings to promote more robust discussion and challenge about partners' contributions. The CPP has agreed to introduce six-monthly performance reporting to the Leadership Board on a basket of key indicators. This will provide the opportunity for the CPP to monitor progress against its main priorities. It will also help it identify concerns and priorities and, in turn, improve outcomes for local communities.

26. To support effective scrutiny, the CPP should provide appropriate training for its members. This training should clarify how members' responsibilities as CPP board members differ from their other activities within partner organisations. It should also help the CPP discharge its responsibilities for holding partners to account for achieving the aims of the SOA.

Recommendation

- The CPP Leadership Board must take a more strategic and central role in monitoring progress against the partnership's priorities, and hold individual partners and thematic groups to account for delivering specific outcomes. It should also ensure that board members receive training necessary to perform their role.
-

It is essential that the Leadership Board ensures that the new Improvement Group makes early progress in improving how the CPP operates

27. The CPP revised its structures following a self-assessment in March 2011. The former Management Group, which sat below the Leadership Board, was replaced by a Coordination Group. This was intended to support the Leadership Board and provide operational management for the CPP. However, this group was never established. Instead, the Improvement Group was set up in October 2013 to support the board. The delay in implementing the Improvement Group has resulted in a delay in improving the way the CPP operates.

28. The Leadership Board continues to be responsible for: providing strategic direction; setting the CPP's priorities for Falkirk; and holding partners to account for achieving improved outcomes. The Improvement Group's role is to organise

and achieve the operational improvements that the CPP knows it needs to make to its partnership governance; resource planning and management; engagement with local communities; and performance management and reporting.

29. The Improvement Group includes representatives from partners, including Falkirk Council, local police and fire services, Forth Valley College, the voluntary sector and NHS Forth Valley. It has established four workstreams to implement a range of improvements in the way the CPP is run:

- **Partnership governance:** Falkirk Council's Policy and Community Planning Manager is leading this workstream with the council's governance officers. The CPP is developing a Partnership Agreement to clarify the CPP's purpose, and the roles and responsibilities of the thematic groups, Leadership Board members (including councillors) and council officers who support the CPP's work. The agreement will aim to strengthen both the CPP's overall governance arrangements and partners' individual and collective responsibility for achieving outcomes. It will also help to meet the proposals in the Community Empowerment and Renewal (Scotland) Bill.¹¹ The CPP is referring to examples from other CPPs in developing its Partnership Agreement, and plans to have an agreement ready for approval by partner organisations by July 2014.
- **Resource planning and management:** Falkirk Council Finance Department is leading this workstream, which has an important role in delivering the CPP's commitment to joint resourcing. In November 2013, the council wrote to the Scottish Government on the CPP's behalf to outline the partnership's proposed response to the joint Scottish Government – COSLA statement on community planning and resourcing.¹² The CPP plans to involve all partners in this workstream and has proposed an approach to progress this area of work ([paragraphs 57 – 67](#)).
- **Community empowerment and participation:** This workstream is jointly led by Falkirk Council's Community Learning and Development Department and the Chief Executive of the Council of Voluntary Services (CVS) for Falkirk and District. It aims to improve the partnership's approach to community engagement, including how to use all available assets (such as property, skills and knowledge) to help achieve improved outcomes.
- **Performance management:** This workstream is led by the Police Scotland Local Authority Liaison Officer for Falkirk. It aims to provide the Leadership Board with regular, clear and accessible performance information. This is to improve the Leadership Board's ability to scrutinise performance and progress in delivering the SOA, and to hold partners to account for their contributions. The CPP plans to have new arrangements in place by August 2014 for managing and reporting on performance.

30. The Improvement Group and its four workstreams provide a good opportunity for non-council partners to contribute more to the CPP's work. It should also promote a greater sense of partnership and wider ownership of the CPP's improvement activities. The development of a formal Partnership Agreement also allows the CPP to clarify the roles and responsibilities of individual partners for implementing the SOA and improving outcomes. The CPP should use the agreement to acknowledge the distinctive democratic community leadership role of local councillors.

31. The Improvement Group has a crucial role in delivering the operational improvements the CPP knows it needs to make. Its work is at an early stage, but given the delay in establishing the group, and the expectations of community planning nationally and within the Falkirk CPP itself, it is essential that the group makes significant early progress. To fulfil the CPP's stated commitment to improve how it operates, the Leadership Board should require regular, good-quality information to allow it to scrutinise the Improvement Group's progress.

Recommendation

- The CPP Leadership Board needs to hold the Improvement Group to account to ensure the group makes significant early progress in improving how the CPP operates.
-

The Leadership Board needs to ensure that the thematic groups contribute effectively to the CPP's work

32. Following its self-assessment in 2011, the CPP identified existing partnerships to take the lead in progressing the CPP's work. These groups reflect the six themes in the CPP's 2010-15 Strategic Community Plan and largely reflect the policy priorities in the latest SOA. There is no thematic group for older people's outcomes. This is because the Falkirk Partnership Board (which includes senior officials from Falkirk Council, NHS Forth Valley and the voluntary sector) reports to the CPP Leadership Board on older people's services.¹³

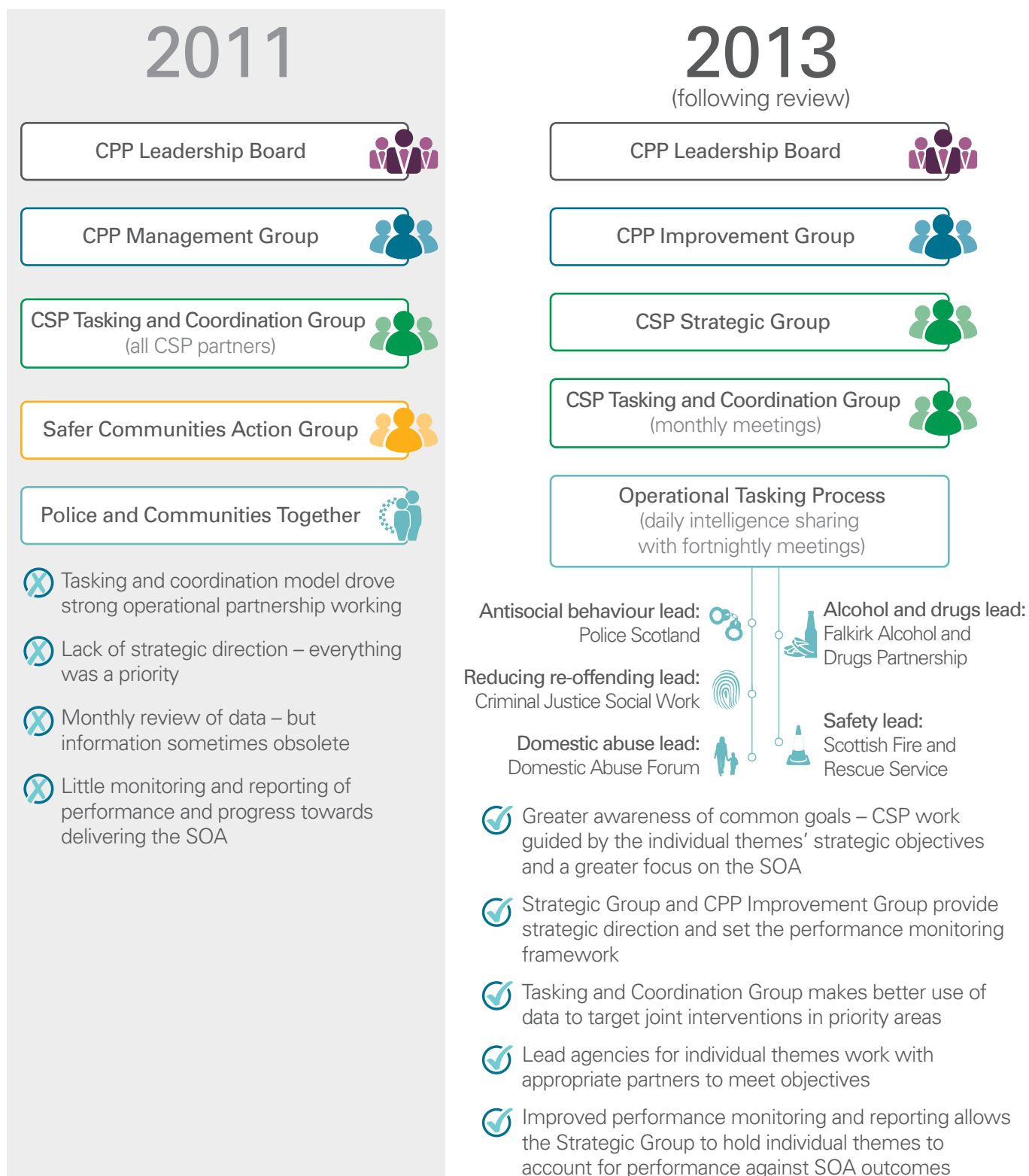
33. Membership of the CPP's thematic groups is drawn from across the community planning partners but their structures and reporting arrangements are not all clear. Two thematic groups – the Children's Commission and the Community Safety Partnership – reviewed their structures and processes in 2013. Following these reviews, they have made significant changes to improve their effectiveness, promote a greater sense of partnership, and strengthen the links between the work of the groups and the SOA ([Exhibit 5, page 19](#)). These groups now have well-defined structures, clearer roles and responsibilities, and a clearer sense of their accountability for specific outcomes.

34. For other themes, such as economic development and health improvement, the partnership arrangements are complex and appear less well structured. Consequently, it is not clear which partner or partners are responsible for delivering specific SOA priorities. For example, the 'My Future's in Falkirk' group¹⁴ is responsible for the economic recovery, growth and employment theme in the SOA. However, this is one of several local economic initiatives, and managers involved in economic development told us that the link between their activities and the CPP was not always clear.

35. The Leadership Board needs to align the activities of its thematic groups, the CPP and the SOA. It should require the 'My Future's in Falkirk' group and the other thematic groups – Sustainable Development Group, Fairer Falkirk Group and the Community Health Partnership – to carry out similar reviews to those undertaken by the Children's Commission and the Community Safety Partnership.

Exhibit 5

Changes in the Falkirk Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) structures and processes



36. There is a wide range of local partnerships and community groups in Falkirk. As part of its self-assessment initiative, the Children’s Commission mapped all relevant partnership activity in the Falkirk area. The Leadership Board should encourage the other thematic groups to learn from the Children’s Commission’s experience and carry out similar exercises to establish relevant local groups’ activities. This will help ensure these activities identify the main issues facing communities in Falkirk, minimise duplication, and maximise the effectiveness of the CPP’s work.

Recommendation

- The Leadership Board needs to ensure that the thematic groups’ activities fully reflect the CPP’s key priorities and are contributing effectively to improving local outcomes.
-

The CPP must ensure there are close links between its priorities and the main elements of public service reform

37. The Scottish Government and COSLA’s *Statement of Ambition* makes it clear that community planning and SOAs will provide the foundation for effective partnership working within which wider public service reforms will happen. These reforms represent major changes to the way public services are arranged and delivered, and include establishing single police and fire services; integrating adult health and social care; and welfare reform, including changes to housing benefit and the introduction of Universal Credit.

The CPP needs to increase its scrutiny of police and fire services to fulfil its role in improving community safety

38. There are clear links between the priorities in local fire and police plans for Falkirk and the CPP’s SOA. Falkirk Council has a statutory responsibility to assess how local police and fire services are performing, including the impact of reforms that led to the creation of these national services. However, opposition members of the council’s Scrutiny Committee are not currently taking part in the process due to their concerns about the council’s decision-making structures. This presents a potential risk to effective scrutiny of local police and fire services.

39. The CPP Leadership Board periodically receives update papers on local police and fire reform, most recently in March 2013, shortly before the reforms were implemented. The Leadership Board noted these papers. Given the potential risk to effective scrutiny presented by the situation within Falkirk Council, the board should ensure that it holds local police and fire services to account for their contributions to community planning across the Falkirk area and for delivering the SOA. It should do this through regular performance reports from the Community Safety Partnership. This will allow the CPP to fulfil its role to improve community safety by highlighting any concerns about the impact of the reforms and assuring itself that the new arrangements are working effectively.

The CPP must ensure that plans for health and social care integration contribute to the delivery of the SOA

40. Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley have yet to agree on which model they will adopt to integrate local adult health and social care services. There are regular discussions between the chief officers of both the health board and the council through the Joint Executive Group. There is also clear evidence of both the health board and the council working at an operational level to integrate services. However, many health and social care integration initiatives are still at the development or early planning stage. Furthermore, Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley have yet to agree which services fall within the scope of health and social care integration. Decisions on delegation and governance arrangements will only be made once the integration model is in place. This makes it difficult to assess whether the requirements of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act will be achieved in the run-up to health and social care integration on 1 April 2015.

41. The CPP Leadership Board receives update papers on plans for local health and social care integration, most recently in March 2013. To date, the Leadership Board has simply noted these papers. However, given that the new health and social care partnership will be responsible for an estimated annual budget of over £360 million, it is essential that the CPP:

- influences how the new partnership develops
- considers the links between the partnership and the model adopted for health and social care
- ensures the new arrangements contribute appropriately to delivering the SOA.¹⁵

Recommendation

- The CPP must ensure that it influences the development of the new health and social care partnership and that the new arrangements will help achieve its SOA priorities.
-

The Fairer Falkirk Theme Group could play a wider role in planning for welfare reform

42. Falkirk Council introduced its anti-poverty strategy *Towards a Fairer Falkirk* in March 2011. The council has been proactive in its planning for welfare reform and its likely impact on local communities. It has implemented various initiatives to minimise the impact of these reforms on communities. These include prevention (awareness and education), recovery actions, and intervention (for example, funding housing payments and employability projects).

43. The CPP Leadership Board also monitors the effects of welfare reform and receives regular update papers. It is not clear what additional action, if any, the CPP is taking to manage the impact of welfare reform, for example through the actions of the Fairer Falkirk Theme Group. The Improvement Group should consider a greater role for the Fairer Falkirk Theme Group to promote a greater sense of partnership working in planning for welfare reform. It should do this when reviewing arrangements for the CPP's partnership governance and for managing its performance.

The CPP should evaluate partners' existing activities in developing its own approach to working with and involving local communities

44. The CPP took some account of local communities' views when developing specific aspects of the new SOA. For example, it consulted local people about priorities and services for older people. However, the CPP stated in the SOA that, due to the timescale, it had limited opportunity to consult and involve local people and communities when developing the SOA. Our focus groups of residents from two neighbourhoods within the Falkirk area displayed limited awareness of the SOA and said the CPP's priorities were non-specific and could apply to any CPP area.

45. The new SOA includes a commitment from the CPP to involve local communities to improve local outcomes. It also outlines a range of activities to help make this happen. Since finalising its SOA in September 2013, the CPP has taken steps to improve its community engagement. It held a community planning conference in November 2013 that involved partners, service providers, community groups and local residents. The CPP recognised that reductions in public sector funding required increased community involvement to achieve local outcomes. It agreed to work with local groups and to use all available assets to help improve local communities. There is recent evidence that CPP partners are involving local people in the development of local services ([Case study 2](#) illustrates an asset-based co-production approach).

Case study 2

Falkirk Reshaping Care for Older People Co-production Model

Older people's views on their experiences and expectations of services are helping to co-produce new ways of providing services.

This one-year pilot project aims to involve older people in designing how to deliver local services that will help them maintain their independence for as long as possible. The project is being run in the Bo'ness and Blackness areas of Falkirk, and is being funded by the Older People's Change Fund. It harnesses the skills and knowledge of older people, and their relationships with the wider community and services. Falkirk Partnership Board initiated the project, and it involves a range of partners including Falkirk Community Trust, Falkirk Council, NHS Forth Valley and local voluntary organisations.

The project team is developing outcomes to evaluate the impact of the pilot. It plans to extend this co-production model to other areas of Falkirk and embed it into service providers' planning processes.

Source: Scottish Health Council Case Study

the CPP should work with us, and tap into our local knowledge

Local community council member

46. In our focus groups, local residents expressed a strong desire for clearer communication from the CPP about local priorities, and more opportunities for communities to contribute to CPP discussions. They reported mixed experiences of working with Falkirk Council and other local organisations. They also highlighted a range of community-led local initiatives, and expressed a willingness to work more effectively with the CPP to help improve local outcomes.

47. The Improvement Group is working to give communities a greater say over, and role in, local services, but this is at an early stage. The CPP must build on the commitments in the SOA and at the community planning conference to take a more systematic approach to involving local communities. It should also take account of the national community engagement standards (VOiCE – Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) when developing its strategy. The Leadership Board should require the Improvement Group to report on:

- progress on delivering the CPP’s commitment to improving community involvement
- the extent to which it is meeting the provisions in the Community Empowerment and Renewal (Scotland) Bill.

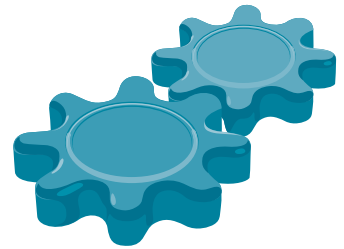
48. Individual partners and thematic groups provided examples of involving and consulting stakeholders and service users. There is also evidence of local partners and partnerships adopting or learning from existing approaches to involving communities. For example, the Falkirk Partnership Board adopted the council’s ‘We asked – You said – We will’ approach when consulting on local priorities for older people. Police Scotland liaised with Falkirk Council to use the council’s Citizens Panel for views on the draft Falkirk Community Safety strategy.¹⁶ The CPP should evaluate existing approaches and activities when developing plans to improve how it works with and involves local communities. This will help achieve effective community engagement and explain to local communities what the CPP has done to address the main priorities facing the area.

Recommendation

- The CPP should evaluate existing approaches when considering how to improve how it works with and involves local communities.
-

Part 3

How does the CPP use resources?



Key messages

- 1** The CPP promotes a strong culture of collaboration in Falkirk and there are many examples of innovative and effective operational partnership working across the area. Well-established partnership working has helped Falkirk to respond quickly to local problems and secure funding for major local initiatives.
- 2** More effective joint working in some areas of activity depends on resolving long-standing issues concerning information sharing.
- 3** Public sector bodies in Falkirk collectively spend about £1 billion annually on services for local people and communities. The CPP must provide strong leadership to ensure that partners' resources are aligned to outcomes and to help partners, in particular Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley, overcome barriers to joint resourcing.

The CPP promotes a strong culture of partnership working that has helped Falkirk to respond to problems and secure funding for major local initiatives

49. While the links between local partnership working and the CPP may not always be clear, the CPP has promoted a culture of collaboration in the Falkirk area which has helped to facilitate a range of multi-agency working in recent years. Local managers highlighted various factors that promoted effective joint working in Falkirk. These included clear strategies, a willingness to work together and the ability to identify and involve appropriate individuals.

50. For example, when we asked local managers involved in supporting young people leaving school, they reported a strong link to the CPP and its objectives. They told us that the CPP had identified improving positive destinations for young people as a high priority in the SOA.¹⁷ This had increased partners' commitment to this issue, including greater involvement of the voluntary sector. One example of local partners working together to help young people leaving school is the Schools College Opportunities to Succeed (SCOTS) programme. This aims to improve the employment prospects of Falkirk pupils by offering them vocational opportunities at Forth Valley College ([Case study 3, page 25](#)).

community
planning
partners
work
together
effectively
but must
ensure that
resources are
aligned to
priorities and
outcomes

we are
extremely
good at getting
the right
partners round
the table. We
don't consider
taking forward
work without
partners

Focus group
participants

Case study 3

The Schools College Opportunities to Succeed (SCOTS) programme

This two-year programme was developed after a review of school and college partnership arrangements by Falkirk Council, Forth Valley College and Skills Development Scotland. It aims to improve vocational employment opportunities for Falkirk secondary school pupils who would not otherwise have considered attending college after leaving school.

During the first year of the programme, pupils attend a range of introductory vocational college courses on one afternoon a week. They also take accredited employability skills courses in their own schools.

When they have successfully completed their first year, pupils decide what they want to do in the second year. Examples include the following:

- Applying for a vocational college course in their preferred subject for the following school year. This involves attending college for two afternoons a week.
- Applying for a full-time college course. If they successfully complete the first year of the SCOTS programme, they are guaranteed an entrance interview.
- Pupils who choose to leave school get help and advice from careers advisers in the council's Employment and Training Unit and Skills Development Scotland to identify employment or work-based training opportunities.

During the programme, all pupils' core skills are assessed at the beginning and end of the college sessions. This means they can get more targeted help and advice, whatever option they choose after completing the programme.

In August 2013, 120 pupils from across Falkirk's eight secondary schools started the programme. In January 2014, over 100 pupils remained on the programme. Over 90 per cent of these pupils have since chosen to continue with their college courses.

Feedback from pupils and staff to date has been positive. Pupils welcomed the opportunity to pursue subjects and careers that they had not previously considered, and the increased confidence, relationship building and teamworking skills they developed. Both school and college staff highlighted the benefits of engaging with pupils at an early stage and introducing them to a different learning environment from school. They highlighted the improvements in young people's confidence, behaviour and ability to deal with new challenges.

Source: Falkirk Council

the fact that everyone in the room knows each other and their role is a strength in Falkirk

Focus group participants

Effective partnership working has helped Falkirk secure significant external funding and respond quickly to local problems

51. In recent years, Falkirk has secured funding for major initiatives such as The Helix project and the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) initiative ([Case studies 4 and 5, page 27](#)). Local managers told us that well-established local partnership working helped secure this funding ([Exhibit 6, page 28](#)).

Case study 4

The Helix project

The Helix project aims to transform an underused area of land between Falkirk and Grangemouth into 350 hectares of public park, including:

- new and improved woodland
- a new canal link that will provide access to the Forth Estuary
- a public art programme including the world's largest equine sculptures (*The Kelpies*)
- 27 kilometres of new and improved paths and cycleways to encourage physical activity.

In 2005, Falkirk Council and Scottish Canals built on their successful partnership working on the Falkirk Wheel project to apply for funding to The Big Lottery's Living Landmarks Programme to regenerate the area around Falkirk Stadium. In November 2007, The Helix was awarded a £25 million grant, and work began on the project in 2008. The Helix has been opened in phases, with construction work due to be completed in August 2014. The total cost to date is £43 million, comprising the Big Lottery Fund's grant and £18 million from local public and private organisations.

The Helix is a key project in the 'My Future's in Falkirk' economic development programme. Falkirk Community Trust is responsible for operating The Helix and a partnership oversees the project. This partnership includes Falkirk Council, Scottish Canals and the Central Scotland Forest Trust. The project has a range of objectives, outputs and outcomes that are reported to the The Big Lottery. These include:

- 300,000 visitors each year
- 3,000 people to take part in Helix-based fitness activities each year
- opportunities for trainees to undertake apprenticeships and work with social enterprises
- being recognised as a wildlife sanctuary.

Source: Falkirk Council

Case study 5

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) initiative

Falkirk Council approved a £67 million Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) initiative in September 2012 to develop the local infrastructure, for example by improving motorway access and flood prevention, and building new business park facilities. The TIF funding model allows the council to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board. The council then repays the loan from the increased non-domestic rates income that it receives as a result of the investment.

The TIF is a council initiative, as it has the necessary borrowing powers, but a range of local partners were involved in developing it. These include Scottish Enterprise and representatives from the petrochemical industry who are helping to ensure the investment is targeted most effectively. Local businesses are also involved in the initiative through the Falkirk Business Forum.

The TIF initiative covers a period of 25 years, with developments to be completed over the first 11 years. Work carried out through the TIF will also link into the The Helix project and improvements to town centres. The first stage of the initiative started in November 2013, focusing on improving access routes to the M9 motorway.

The business case anticipates that every £1 of council investment through the TIF will attract a further £8.66 of private investment. Falkirk Council predicts that the TIF initiative will create more than 5,000 local jobs. A delivery team, including representatives from Scottish Enterprise, has been set up to monitor and report on the initiative's impact.

Source: Falkirk Council

52. The strong working relationships flowing from the collaborative approach in Falkirk allow partners to respond quickly and innovatively to local problems, for example when the Ineos petrochemical plant at Grangemouth was threatened with closure in 2013. Representatives from Falkirk Council (including elected members), Scottish Enterprise and the business sector (including companies based at the Grangemouth complex) held meetings at short notice to clarify the issues and identify potential solutions. Together, the partners agreed a range of actions. These included developing a joint economic impact assessment that helped resolve the dispute and ensure the Grangemouth complex remained open.

Issues with information sharing present a risk to effective partnership working in some areas of activity

53. Some partners told us that long-standing problems with sharing information are a barrier to effective partnership working. Although they expressed a willingness to share data, they were hindered by different information systems and protocols in partner organisations. Examples include:

- Managers involved in supporting young people leaving school reported difficulties in sharing information because of data protection issues.
- Managers involved in early years services reported problems in getting access to health information.

this has been an issue for 20 years and we need a way round this

Focus group participant

Exhibit 6**Local managers' views of partnership working in Falkirk**

Joint working was instrumental in securing funding for major local initiatives.

Partnership working is absolutely critical to the TIF. The TIF has led to six projects in Scotland in total but ours was the first to start on site. There was liaison with the chemicals sector and the business sector.

Local private organisation

TIF is helpful in that there are in-depth relationships to make new developments.

Falkirk Council

The Helix was only possible through engagement and pooling resources.

Local private organisation

Source: Audit Scotland

54. Recent progress has been made in improving information sharing within the CPP's thematic groups.¹⁸ The Falkirk Community Safety Partnership recently developed an Information Sharing Protocol for local partners. This aims to improve joint working among partners by making it easier to share information to help tackle anti-social behaviour and other community safety issues. This local protocol is in addition to the Scottish Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information, which sets out how organisations should share personal information safely and legally. NHS Forth Valley has also developed partnership protocols for sharing information. These aim to improve how organisations monitor vulnerable people and improve the way they deliver specific services, such as drug and alcohol services.

55. The Improvement Group has identified problems with sharing information as a risk to effective joint working. The CPP Leadership Board needs to provide strong direction to help overcome barriers to sharing information. It should consider whether the protocols that local partners and thematic groups have recently developed could be adapted to improve how information is shared across the wider partnership.

Recommendation

- The CPP Leadership Board should provide strong direction to help partners overcome barriers to sharing information.
-

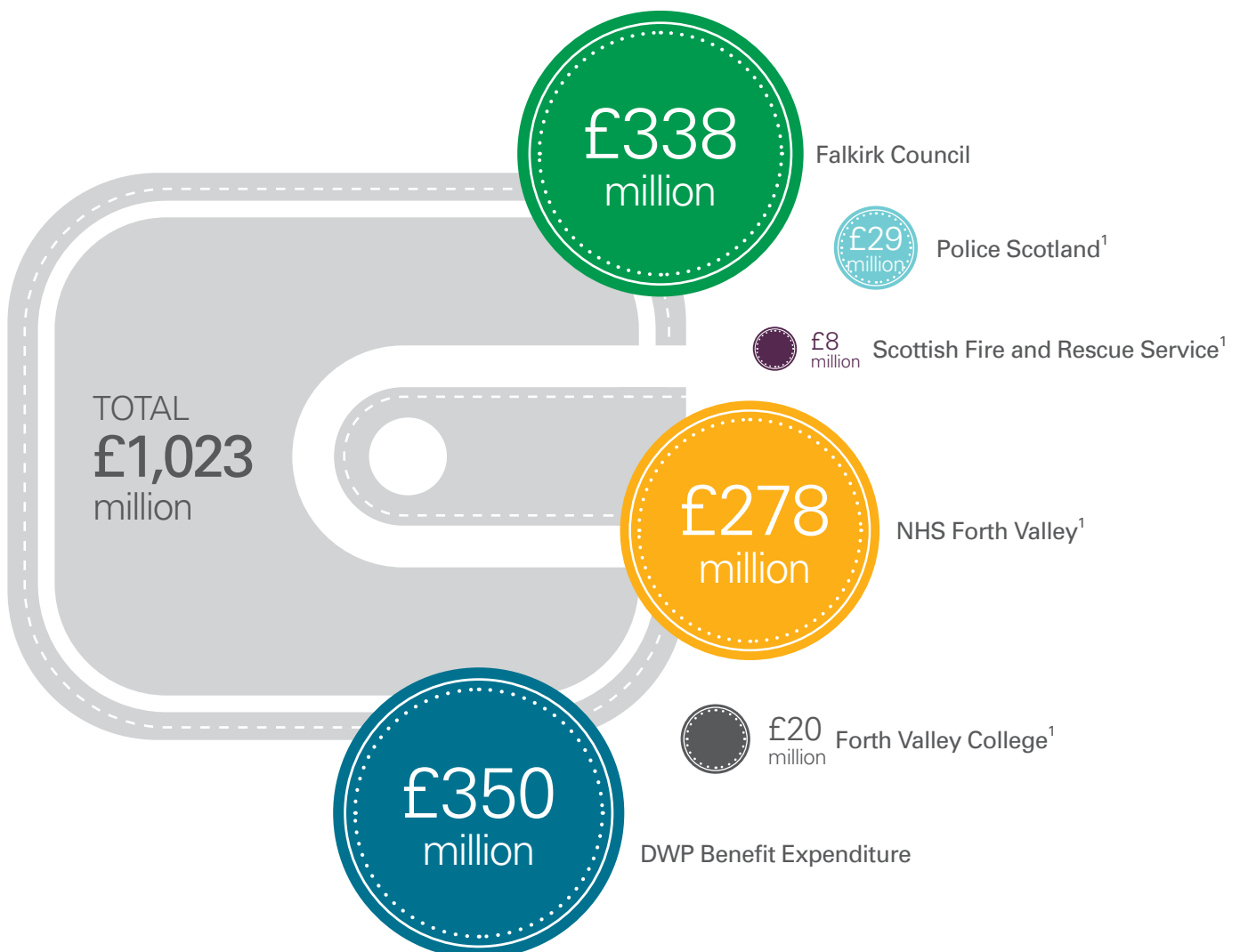
The CPP must provide strong leadership to ensure that partners' resources are aligned to agreed outcomes and to help overcome barriers to joint resourcing

56. Our analysis of key partners' resources indicates that about 11,200 full-time equivalent (FTE) public sector staff are employed in the Falkirk area, and partners have property and equipment with a value of about £1 billion. We estimate that public sector partners spend about £1 billion each year (**Exhibit 7**).¹⁹ The local voluntary sector, which is made up of over 700 organisations, employs over 1,300 people and involves about 28,000 volunteers.²⁰ The Falkirk voluntary sector's estimated spending is more than £25 million a year.

Exhibit 7

Falkirk partners' net spending, 2012/13

Public bodies in Falkirk spent just over £1 billion in 2012/13.



Note: 1. Pro-rata based on population share.

Source: Audit Scotland analysis of Falkirk partners' audited 2012/13 accounts

Joint resource planning and management presents a significant challenge due to Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley adopting different approaches

57. The Scottish Government and COSLA's *Agreement on Joint Working on Community Planning and Resourcing*, published in September 2013, places clear expectations on community planning partners to:

- share resource planning information and budget assumptions with each other at an early stage
- work together through CPPs to deploy resources to achieve the jointly agreed priorities set out in the SOA.

58. Some Falkirk partners already align their resources to help deliver the SOA. For example, local police officers are deployed each day in line with the Falkirk Local Police Plan. This, in turn, is linked to the CPP's SOA. Partners involved in economic development told us that they pooled resources such as funding, ideas and expertise to some extent. However, they recognised that they could do more. Partners indicated that strong relationships and trust were crucial to sharing their resources effectively.

59. Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley together account for over 60 per cent of public sector spending in Falkirk. These bodies are taking different approaches to aligning their resources with the CPP's priorities:

- Falkirk Council plans to ensure that its budget clearly sets out how its spending will help to deliver SOA priorities. In preparing its 2014/15 budget, the council took the SOA priorities into account when it considered savings options. In doing so, the council hoped to identify the degree to which its decisions on spending could impact on outcomes.
- NHS Forth Valley plans to introduce localities-based budgeting to target its spending at areas with the greatest identified need.

60. The CPP therefore faces a significant challenge to align partners' resources to outcomes. The council and the NHS board will prepare a joint shadow budget for 2014/15 for integrated health and social care services. The CPP Leadership Board should ensure that the Improvement Group uses this development to help its progress in aligning resources to agreed outcomes.

61. Falkirk partners acknowledge that realigning resources to agreed priorities brings a number of opportunities, including:

- a more coordinated and efficient approach to delivering services
- better sharing of information
- less cost to the national economy, although this may take time.

However, partners also identified a range of barriers to jointly planning and managing their resources, including:

- budget reductions and financial challenges (for example, NHS Forth Valley continues to receive funding below its National Resource Allocation Committee (NRAC) target allocation)

- difficulties in aligning partners' budget-setting processes (for example, due to partners working to different budget timetables)
- the need to balance national and local priorities
- difficulties in developing long-term plans because they are required to submit annual funding applications.²¹

62. As with all CPPs, some partners have difficulties in clearly identifying the resources they assign specifically to Falkirk. For example, Forth Valley College covers several CPP areas, and Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Enterprise cover Scotland as a whole. NHS Forth Valley, which also includes Clackmannanshire and the Stirling area, has a similar challenge of breaking down the budget by geographical area and activity.

The CPP will build on its previous experience when implementing its approach to joint resourcing

63. In 2010/11, the CPP carried out a review to understand better the impact of how community planning partners were spending money in the Falkirk area. Although it only made limited progress, the CPP will use the lessons from this review to inform its work in aligning resources to agreed priorities. The CPP's approach includes estimating how much each partner spends on particular activities, and using this information to agree with partners how they should target their budgets and other resources to achieve local outcomes. The Leadership Board will have an important role in ensuring that partners' resources are appropriately aligned to outcomes.

64. The CPP will also use the Forth Valley-wide Making the Most of Property and Assets initiative when it is reviewing joint resource planning and management. This initiative provides a forum for local organisations to identify and discuss opportunities to share or jointly develop property and assets. Partners have identified various potential opportunities and some local organisations plan to use the initiative when considering options for developing their facilities.

65. The Improvement Group's work in this area will be crucial in assessing and agreeing the practicalities of the partnership's approach to overcome the barriers to joint resourcing. As a first step, it is preparing a report on what activities partners are spending money on. The CPP recognises that it is not a straightforward task to bring all partners' resources together to achieve its agreed outcomes. It is taking an evolutionary approach to meet the expectations of the Scottish Government and COSLA's Agreement on Joint Working.

Recommendation

- The CPP must provide strong leadership to ensure that partners' resources are aligned to agreed outcomes and to help partners, in particular Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley, overcome barriers to joint resourcing.
-

The CPP is committed to ensuring that sufficient resources are allocated to prevention and early intervention

66. Diverting resources from demand-led services towards prevention and early intervention when budgets are reducing is challenging. As part of its approach to joint resourcing, the CPP has committed itself to ensuring that sufficient priority is given to resources which are allocated to prevention and early intervention. Once the CPP has established what overall resources are available, the Leadership Board can use this information to decide how to allocate resources to these activities.

67. Some evidence shows that CPP partners have shifted their resources towards more preventative activities that are in line with the SOA ([Case study 6](#)). Evidence of improved outcomes through preventative activities will only become clear over time, but some local initiatives – such as the SCOTS programme ([paragraph 50, page 24](#)) – have already had an impact.

Case study 6

Safe Drive Stay Alive Campaign

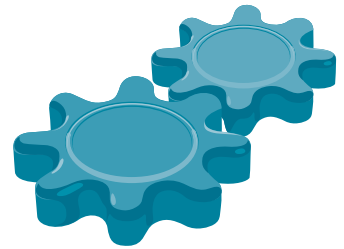
This Forth Valley-wide campaign aims to improve road safety among 17–25 year olds. All secondary schools in Falkirk took part in the 2014 event, which cost about £19,000 to run. Funding was provided by Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and private sponsorship. Other local partners, including the NHS, Police Scotland and the voluntary sector are involved in the running of the event.

The campaign's aims are closely linked to the Falkirk CPP's safer, stronger communities and reducing re-offending outcomes. Since 2008, the Falkirk area has seen an overall reduction of 17 per cent in road traffic fatalities in the 17–25 age group.

Source: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Part 4

How is Falkirk performing?



Key messages

- 1** Falkirk's performance against most indicators in the previous SOA improved, but it is difficult to attribute changes specifically to the CPP's activities.
- 2** Falkirk's recent performance against its current priorities is mixed, and the CPP faces a challenge to improve some key outcomes and narrow inequalities gaps.
- 3** The CPP has yet to establish effective performance management arrangements to allow it to monitor progress against key priorities.
- 4** The CPP must improve its performance reporting, including the way it communicates its priorities, activities and performance to local people and communities.

Most indicators in the CPP's previous SOA improved in recent years but it is difficult to attribute changes specifically to the CPP

68. Falkirk CPP's annual monitoring statements summarise the progress the partnership has made and how it has performed against the SOA's outcomes. The indicators in the CPP's monitoring statements are grouped around the 16 National Outcomes that the Scottish Government introduced in 2007.²² In its most recent monitoring statement, published in May 2014, the CPP reported that between 2006 and 2013:

- 60 per cent of local indicators in its previous SOA (2009-11) met their targets.
- 17 per cent of local indicators did not meet their targets.
- For the remaining 23 per cent of indicators, targets were not considered appropriate or data was not available.

69. The CPP's performance varied widely against individual indicators within the National Outcomes. For example, for those indicators where data was available:

- the CPP met its targets for all indicators for four National Outcomes²³
- the CPP met its targets for less than half the indicators for two National Outcomes.²⁴

performance against most indicators has improved but the CPP needs better performance management and reporting arrangements

70. The CPP Leadership Board discussed the latest monitoring statement at its meeting in January 2014. Members welcomed the reported improvement in most indicators since 2006. They also discussed possible explanations, including the economic downturn and the impact of welfare reform, for the lack of improvement in other indicators. Members welcomed the level of aspiration displayed by the indicators. This included a number of what they refer to as 'stretch aims', which set ambitious and challenging long-term targets.

The CPP's performance monitoring statements do not allow for effective scrutiny of the partnership's performance in improving outcomes

71. While Falkirk CPP's annual monitoring statements to date summarise whether indicators are improving in the long term, the measures do not help to promote effective scrutiny of the partnership's performance. For example, in the most recent monitoring statement:

- Some targets were to 'monitor' or 'reduce' and provided no indication of the level of progress the CPP expected to see.
- There were a large number of indicators (210 in the most recent monitoring statement) but there was little commentary to describe or explain trends in performance.
- Some performance information for the most recent year was missing because data was unavailable.
- Other than some comparisons with the Scottish average, the CPP did not use any benchmarking data to assess its progress in comparison to other areas.

72. The CPP's monitoring statements do not indicate what difference the partnership itself is making to improve the lives of local people. They do not attribute the CPP's actions to outcomes and, where performance has improved, it is difficult to establish what CPP initiatives have contributed to the improvement.

The CPP has yet to establish effective performance management arrangements to allow it to monitor progress against key priorities

73. The Scottish Government and COSLA's *Statement of Ambition* for community planning states that the SOA must be clear about:

- the long-term outcomes to be achieved over the next decade
- the contributory outcomes, indicators and targets by which progress towards these will be demonstrated over the short and medium terms.²⁵

Each of the six priority areas in Falkirk's new SOA includes a list of proposed high-level indicators to measure progress and performance. An accompanying performance monitoring document includes baseline information, benchmarking information for some indicators (comparisons with Scotland figures) and targets.

74. There are fewer performance indicators than in previous SOAs, and they are more clearly linked to the local context and priorities. Some outcomes display considerable aspiration, for example, all Falkirk children will achieve their potential through education and skills development. However, the targets mostly indicate the desired direction of improvement ('increase' or 'reduce') or are blank, and

there are no timescales. In their present form, these indicators do not allow for effective performance monitoring as they provide no indication to the CPP of whether outcomes are improving at an appropriate rate, or whether inequalities are reducing. As such, they do not help the CPP meet its stated commitment to be transparent and accountable for how it performs.

75. The CPP's Improvement Group has established a working group to improve performance management, but its work is at an early stage. The CPP has agreed to review progress against key indicators more regularly (every six months) but has yet to agree what will be included in the performance reports. It is important that the CPP uses its revised performance reporting arrangements to help make decisions, for example:

- To identify quickly where outcomes are not improving so partners can redirect resources accordingly.
- To help identify specific priorities in each of the thematic areas.
- To share good practice from successful initiatives.

The Leadership Board must use the new performance management arrangements to assess how well the CPP is tackling inequalities in outcomes

76. Reducing inequalities is a central theme in the Scottish Government and COSLA's *Statement of Ambition*. This states that public services must improve outcomes and reduce the outcomes gaps within populations and between areas. In its 2012/13 monitoring statement, the Falkirk CPP reported that it met about two-thirds of its targets for the 22 indicators under the National Outcome: 'We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society'. However, these indicators (and other indicators in the monitoring statement) provide little information about the extent to which inequalities between different groups or areas in Falkirk have reduced in recent years.

77. In its new SOA, the CPP committed itself to tackling the most significant inequalities in the Falkirk area. The CPP's new performance framework includes several indicators to monitor its progress in reducing gaps in outcomes. To fulfil its commitment to tackle inequalities, the Leadership Board should require relevant performance information, including data collected at local ward or datazone levels.²⁶ This will help it assess the partnership's progress against these indicators and hold partners to account for narrowing inequalities in outcomes.

Recommendation

- The CPP should use its revised performance management arrangements to provide the Leadership Board with regular, good-quality information to help inform its decision-making, and to allow it to monitor progress in improving outcomes and tackling inequalities.
-

There has been mixed progress in recent years in Falkirk’s performance against the priority areas in its new SOA

78. As we noted in [Part 1](#), Falkirk CPP’s new SOA for 2013-15 focuses on six priority areas. The performance monitoring document that accompanies the new SOA contains a range of indicators for each priority. We examined a range of indicators that the CPP plans to use to monitor progress against its new SOA to assess:

- the CPP’s recent performance in delivering improved outcomes in each of these priorities
- the extent of the challenge facing the CPP.

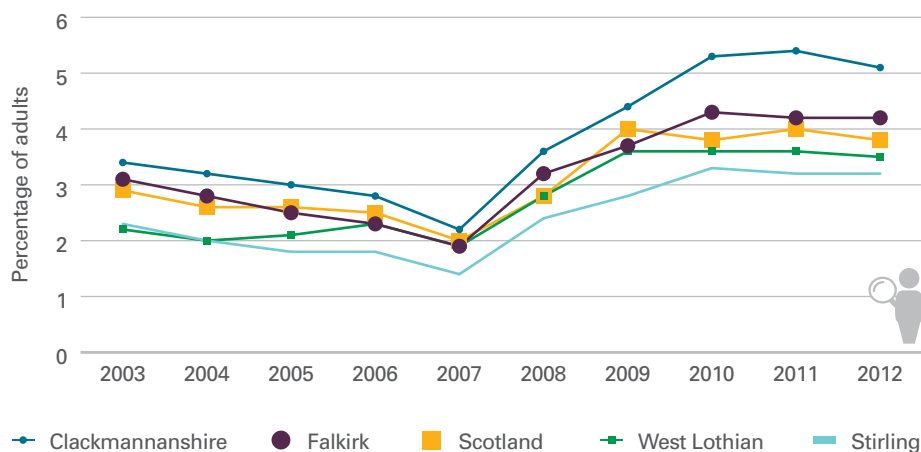
To assess Falkirk’s progress compared to other areas, we also examined corresponding Scotland-wide data and data from three of Falkirk’s neighbouring CPP areas (Stirling, Clackmannanshire and West Lothian).

Falkirk’s economic indicators show signs of improvement

79. The economic downturn saw the unemployment rate in Falkirk more than double from about two per cent to over four per cent between 2007 and 2010 ([Exhibit 8](#)). In recent years, the overall unemployment rate has remained largely steady. These changes are broadly similar to Scotland-wide figures and to neighbouring CPP areas.

Exhibit 8

Percentage of working age population registered as unemployed, 2003 to 2012
The unemployment rate in Falkirk more than doubled between 2007 and 2010 but has since remained steady.



Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

80. A recent eight per cent increase in the percentage of Falkirk school leavers in sustained positive destinations is broadly in line with neighbouring CPP areas and the national trend.²⁷ In 2012, the Falkirk figure was just over 90 per cent. The CPP has set a target of 91.5 per cent, although it has not set out a timescale.

81. Although not reported by the CPP, there has been good progress in reducing the gap between the most deprived areas and other areas in Falkirk in the

percentage of school leavers in sustained positive destinations. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the gap between the 15 per cent most deprived areas of Falkirk and the overall Falkirk figure reduced from 13 per cent to four per cent.²⁸ During this period, the gap between school leavers living in the most and least deprived areas in sustained positive destinations decreased from 20 per cent to ten per cent.

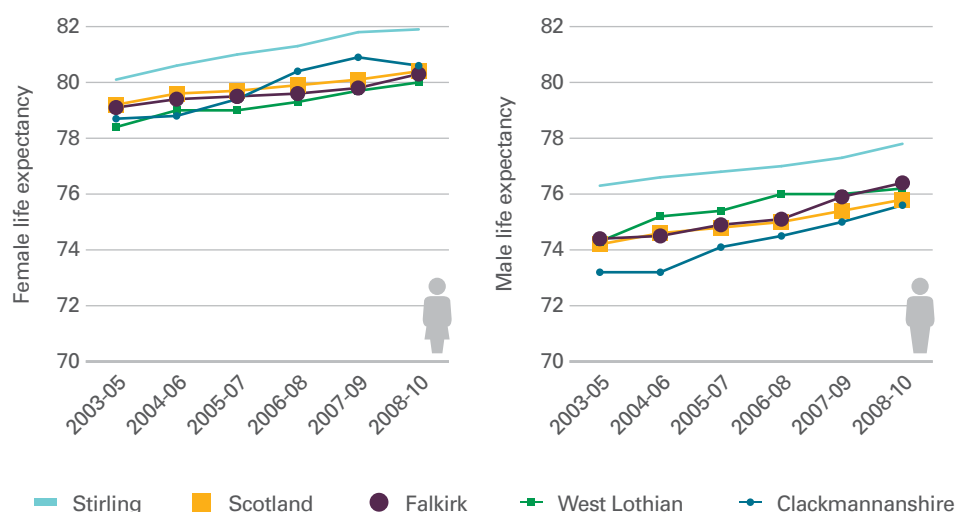
People in Falkirk are living longer but the area faces some significant challenges to improve health and tackle health inequalities

82. Between 2003-05 and 2008-10, the average female life expectancy in Falkirk increased by about a year and male life expectancy increased by two years ([Exhibit 9](#)). For women in Falkirk, the recent increase in life expectancy was in line with the Scotland-wide figure but for men, the increase in Falkirk was higher than the national figure. Overall life expectancies in Falkirk are about six months lower than Stirling but in line with the other neighbouring areas and the Scottish averages.

Exhibit 9

Average life expectancy, 2003-05 to 2008-10

Average life expectancy in Falkirk has increased in recent years.



Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics



83. While overall average life expectancy has increased in Falkirk, people living in the most deprived areas of Falkirk have lower average life expectancy than those living in the least deprived areas. In 2005-09, this gap in average life expectancy was over 15 years for men and almost nine years for women.

84. Falkirk has lower rates of drug-related and alcohol-related hospital admissions than neighbouring CPP areas and Scotland as a whole. However, the percentage of adults who smoke in Falkirk (28 per cent) is about four per cent higher than the national figure, and higher than in neighbouring CPP areas.

Falkirk has improved its performance as a safer place to live

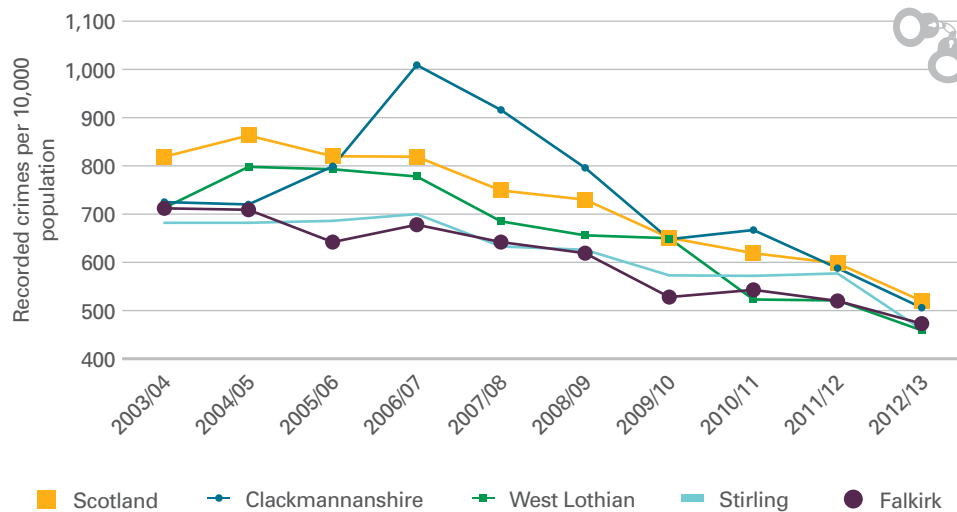
85. Rates of recorded crimes in Falkirk have decreased steadily over the last ten years, broadly in line with neighbouring CPP areas and the national trend ([Exhibit 10, page 38](#)). Following several years of declining performance, the percentage of adults who feel safe when alone in their neighbourhood at night has

increased in recent years in Falkirk. The Falkirk figure is higher than in Scotland as a whole, and compares well with neighbouring CPP areas.

Exhibit 10

Recorded crimes per 10,000 population, 2003/04 to 2012/13

Rates of recorded crimes in Falkirk have improved and compare well to the national average.



Source: Scottish Government Statistical Bulletins on Recorded Crime



Falkirk faces challenges in improving key early years indicators

86. Breastfeeding has many major health benefits for both mothers and babies, both in the short and longer term. The percentage of babies being exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks is lower in Falkirk than in neighbouring CPP areas and has been consistently about six per cent below the Scottish average since 2002-04 ([Exhibit 11, page 39](#)). The CPP has a target to increase the breastfeeding rate but faces a challenge to reach the Scottish average. There are also large gaps in early years indicators between different areas of Falkirk, for example:

- A 22 per cent gap between the highest and lowest rates of exclusive breastfeeding at the 6-8 week review.
- A 39 per cent gap between the highest and lowest rates of smoking during pregnancy.

87. The national Early Years Collaborative aims to ensure that women in Scotland experience positive pregnancies that result in the birth of more healthy babies. Reducing the percentage of low weight births is an indicator of progress towards this aim. There has been a slight recent increase in the percentage of low weight babies born in Falkirk but figures are similar to neighbouring CPP areas and the Scotland average.

Falkirk has made good progress in improving outcomes for older people

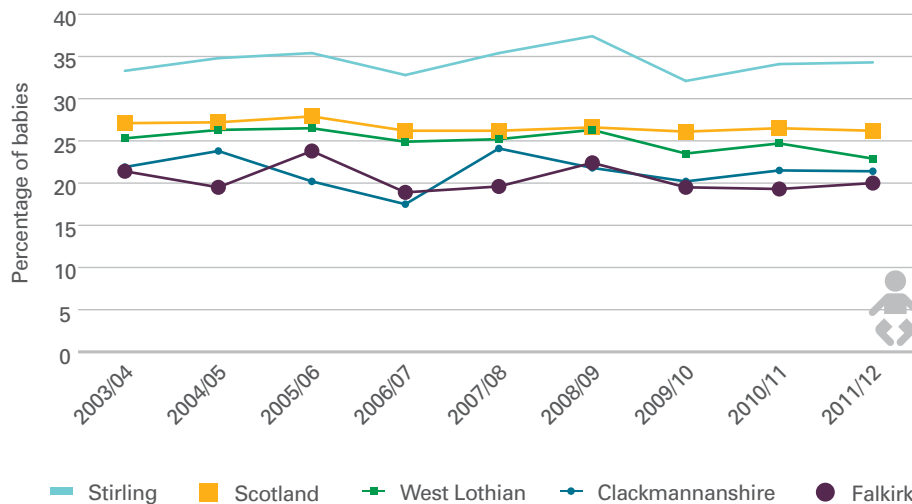
88. For some older people, a hospital admission can be followed by complications that prolong their stay. This affects their independence and ability to return home quickly. Falkirk achieved a 14 per cent reduction in the rate of people aged 75

and over who were admitted to hospital in an emergency between 2004/05 and 2011/12. During this period, the rate in Falkirk was about 15 per cent below the Scottish average ([Exhibit 12](#)).

Exhibit 11

Percentage of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks, 2003/04 to 2011/12

In Falkirk, since 2003/04, the percentage of babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks has been consistently about six per cent below the Scottish average.



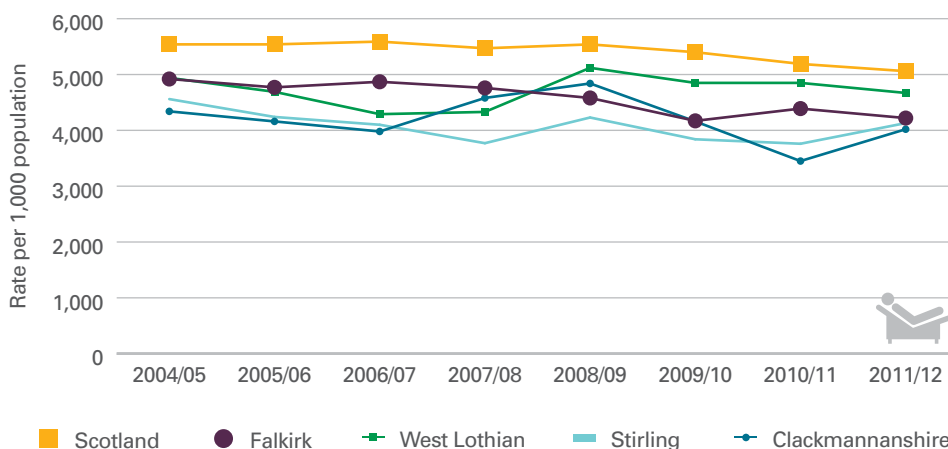
Source: Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics



Exhibit 12

Rate per 1,000 of emergency inpatient bed days for people aged 75 and over, 2004/05 to 2011/12

Falkirk's rate decreased by over 14 per cent between 2004/05 and 2011/12 and remains lower than the national rate.



Source: Scottish Government



89. The proportion of time spent at home or in a community setting such as a care home towards the end of a person's life provides an indication of progress in palliative care. Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, Falkirk achieved about 92 per cent for this indicator. This was higher than neighbouring CPP areas and consistently about one per cent above the national average.

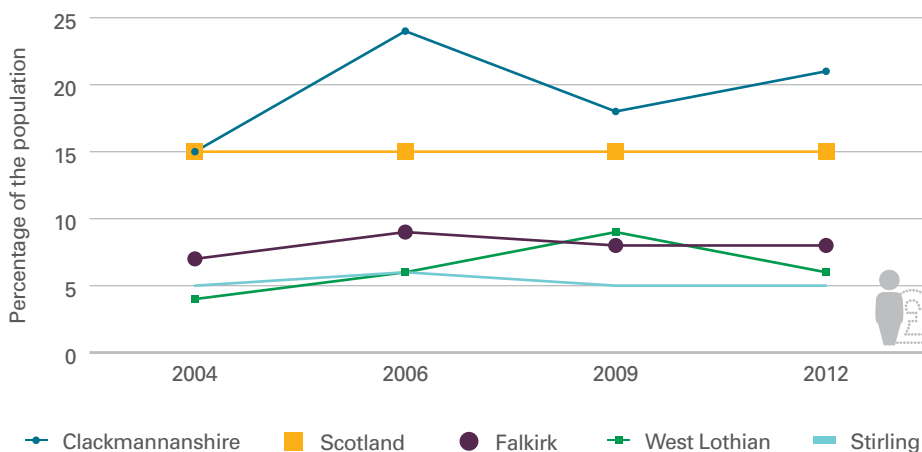
Poverty in Falkirk is lower than in Scotland as a whole but there are significant inequalities between local areas

90. The percentage of Falkirk's population living in the most deprived 15 per cent of areas in Scotland has remained largely unchanged since 2004 ([Exhibit 13](#)). It is similar to the corresponding percentages in Stirling and West Lothian, and lower than Clackmannanshire and Scotland as a whole.

Exhibit 13

Percentage of the population living in the most deprived 15 per cent of areas in Scotland, 2004 to 2012

The Falkirk figure is largely unchanged since 2004 and remains lower than the Scotland level.



Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004 to 2012



91. Although the overall level of poverty in Falkirk is lower than Scotland as a whole, there are considerable differences in poverty-related indicators between local Falkirk areas. In 2012, the percentage of the working-age population receiving unemployment benefits was 43 per cent higher in the worst-performing area than in the best-performing area. This gap decreased from about 54 per cent in 2002.

The CPP must improve its performance reporting to help demonstrate its impact in improving local outcomes

92. The Scottish Government and COSLA's *Statement of Ambition* for community planning states that transparent and accessible public reporting is key to:

- providing assurance about the effectiveness of the CPP
- helping CPPs improve how they perform.

93. The indicators in the CPP's new performance monitoring document are based on the six priorities in the new SOA and are intended to provide a better measure of progress towards local outcomes. There are 76 indicators, which is about a third of the total in the CPP's 2012/13 monitoring statement. They will provide a more concise summary of progress towards delivering the SOA but, as with previous monitoring statements, the targets mostly indicate the desired direction of improvement, or are blank. There are no timescales for achieving the targets, and it is not clear how the CPP will demonstrate how progress over the short and medium terms will contribute to achieving its long-term outcomes.

94. Our focus groups of local residents and service delivery managers told us that the CPP needs to improve how it reports its progress externally against outcomes to demonstrate what it has achieved locally. This would help to raise awareness of the CPP by publicising areas of local improvement and to highlight where it needs to make progress. Local organisations also highlighted a need to report examples of successful initiatives with local communities, and with other partners, to share good practice.

95. At the Falkirk community planning conference in November 2013, partners discussed ways of involving local people more in the CPP's work, including raising awareness of the CPP and improving the way it reports publicly on how it is performing. The new Improvement Group has been tasked with improving the CPP's performance management. It has set up a working group, but its work is at an early stage. It is essential that this group develops effective ways of reporting the CPP's performance to the Leadership Board, to partner organisations and to local people and communities to show how it is improving local outcomes.

The CPP needs to adopt more innovative ways of communicating its priorities, activities and performance to local communities

96. Falkirk CPP does not have its own website. Instead there is a 'strategic community planning' section on Falkirk Council's website that contains links to partners' websites as well as general information about the CPP. This section includes a link to the Strategic Community Plan 2010–15 but the latest SOA and monitoring statements are published elsewhere on the council's website. The community planning web pages include the papers from the most recent CPP Leadership Board meetings and background information about the Leadership Board and the thematic groups. However, there is no information about the membership, activities or performance of the thematic groups. To help fulfil its commitment to transparency, the CPP needs to improve its web pages to provide accessible and up-to-date information about its priorities, activities and impact.

97. The CPP plans to increase its external communication by publishing more regular information in a local newspaper to raise awareness of its activities and impact. To deliver its commitment to be transparent and accountable, it should also consider more innovative ways of communicating with local people and communities, including producing newsletters and using social media.

the CPP needs a centralised way to communicate. People need to know more about what's going on

Local residents

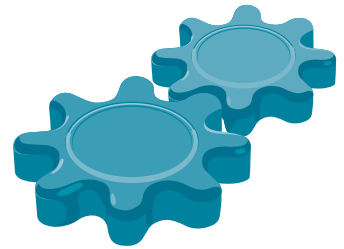
a lot has been achieved, in both the business and residential community, but we don't communicate this well enough

Local partner organisation

Recommendation

- The CPP should improve how it communicates with local communities to provide clear and accessible information about its priorities, activities and performance.
-

Improvement agenda



Vision and strategic direction

- The CPP must establish the main priorities for Falkirk that target specific areas of concern.
- The CPP should develop a clear plan for implementing its SOA. This should specify priorities and set out each partner's roles and responsibilities and the actions they are required to take to improve outcomes.
- The CPP must develop a clear plan to promote a strategic shift towards prevention and early intervention, and use this plan to determine priorities and monitor progress.

Governance and accountability

- The CPP Leadership Board must take a more strategic and central role in monitoring progress against the partnership's priorities, and hold individual partners and thematic groups to account for delivering specific outcomes. It should also ensure that board members receive training necessary to perform their role.
- The CPP Leadership Board needs to hold the Improvement Group to account to ensure the group makes significant early progress in improving how the CPP operates.
- The Leadership Board needs to ensure that the thematic groups' activities fully reflect the CPP's key priorities and are contributing effectively to improving local outcomes.
- The CPP must ensure that it influences the development of the new health and social care partnership and that the new arrangements will help achieve its SOA priorities.
- The CPP should evaluate existing approaches when considering how to improve how it works with and involves local communities.

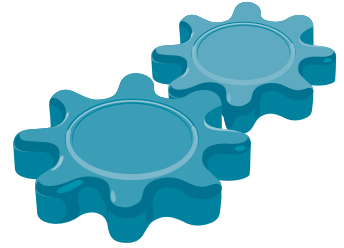
Collaboration and use of resources







- The CPP Leadership Board should provide strong direction to help partners overcome barriers to sharing information.
- The CPP must provide strong leadership to ensure that partners' resources are aligned to agreed outcomes and to help partners, in particular Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley, overcome barriers to joint resourcing.


Performance and outcomes

- The CPP should use its revised performance management arrangements to provide the Leadership Board with regular, good-quality information to help inform its decision-making, and to allow it to monitor progress in improving outcomes and tackling inequalities.
- The CPP should improve how it communicates with local communities to provide clear and accessible information about its priorities, activities and performance.

Endnotes

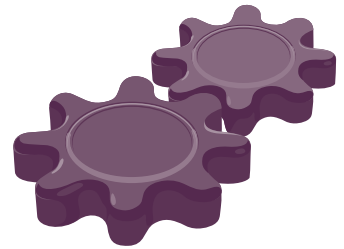


- ◀ 1 Falkirk refers to the Falkirk Council area rather than Falkirk town.
- ◀ 2 'Indicators' refer to the performance measures which the CPP has chosen to monitor progress, and 'outcomes' refer to the level of performance of these measures.
- ◀ 3 *Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services*, Dr Campbell Christie (Chair), June 2011.
- ◀ 4 *Community Planning Review – Statement of Ambition*, Scottish Government and COSLA, March 2012.
- ◀ 5 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act covers a wide range of children's services policy, including: children's rights; Getting It Right For Every Child programme; early learning and childcare; and looked-after children. The bill for this Act received Royal Assent in March 2014.
- ◀ 6 [Community planning in Aberdeen \(PDF\)](#)  March 2013
[Community planning in North Ayrshire \(PDF\)](#)  March 2013
[Community planning in Scottish Borders \(PDF\)](#)  March 2013
- ◀ 7 The five Community Planning Partnership audits are Falkirk, Glasgow, Moray, Orkney Islands and West Lothian. Audit Scotland has previously published three national reports on community planning:
[Improving community planning in Scotland \(PDF\)](#)  March 2013
[The role of community planning partnerships in economic development \(PDF\)](#)  November 2011
[Community planning: an initial review \(PDF\)](#)  June 2006
- ◀ 8 A Single Outcome Agreement is a document setting out local priorities for a council area as agreed by the community planning partners and the Scottish Government.
- ◀ 9 *National Performance Framework*, Scottish Government, 2007.
- ◀ 10 *Single Outcome Agreements: Guidance to Community Planning Partnerships*, Scottish Government and COSLA, December 2012.
- ◀ 11 The proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal (Scotland) Bill aims to support local communities to achieve their goals and aspirations through taking independent action and by contributing to decisions that affect their areas. The Scottish Government's consultation on proposals for the the Bill closed in January 2014.
- ◀ 12 *Agreement on Joint working on community planning and resourcing*, Scottish Government and COSLA, September 2013.
- ◀ 13 The Falkirk Partnership Board is the overarching governance group for the Falkirk Community Health Partnership. It is responsible for agreeing and implementing priorities for health and social care services in the Falkirk area.
- ◀ 14 My Future's in Falkirk is a local economic development initiative launched in 2002. It brings together partners including Falkirk Council, Forth Valley College, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Canals, Jobcentre Plus and business and industry representatives, particularly those based at the Grangemouth petrochemical and refinery complex. As part of the initiative, partners agreed a vision for economic development of the Falkirk area which they revised in 2010. The initiative acts as an umbrella for a number of economic development projects and brings partners together when needed to focus on specific aspects of economic development.
- ◀ 15 The estimated annual health and social care budget is based on Falkirk Council's total social work spending in 2012/13, and NHS Forth Valley's total spending in 2012/13. The estimated NHS Forth Valley figure was based on Falkirk's population share. The final budget will depend on which services fall within the scope of health and social care integration.

- ◀ 16 Falkirk Council Citizens Panel comprises more than 1,000 local people who have volunteered to respond to three or four surveys each year, providing feedback on services, and information about the needs of their local community and other issues.
- ◀ 17 Positive destinations include employment, further or higher education, taking part in a national training programme or volunteering.
- ◀ 18 Thematic groups are developing information-sharing protocols within the context of an overarching Forth Valley information-sharing protocol. This protocol was agreed in 2008 by Falkirk Council, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council, NHS Forth Valley and Central Scotland Police (now part of Police Scotland).
- ◀ 19 Staff numbers and financial information as at 31 March 2013. The financial information does not include spending by Scottish Enterprise or the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran).
- ◀ 20 Source: CVS Falkirk.
- ◀ 21 [NHS financial performance 2012/13 \(PDF\)](#)  Audit Scotland, October 2013. The Scottish Government uses the NRAC formula to decide how much money each health board needs to deliver services.
- ◀ 22 The National Outcome relating to older people was added to the National Performance Framework in December 2011.
- ◀ 23 The CPP met its targets for all indicators for: (1) Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. (2) We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk. (3) We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger. (4) Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it.
- ◀ 24 The CPP met its targets for less than half the indicators for: (1) We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation. (2) We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
- ◀ 25 *Statement of Ambition*, Scottish Government and COSLA, March 2012.
- ◀ 26 The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation provides a relative measure of deprivation across 6,505 geographical areas (or datazones) across Scotland, each covering an average of just under 1,000 people. There are 197 datazones in Falkirk. The index is made up of 38 indicators in seven areas: income, employment, health, education, access to services, crime and housing. Each indicator is weighted according to its importance.
- ◀ 27 Sustained destinations were assessed using a follow-up survey nine months after leaving school.
- ◀ 28 Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics, 2011.

Appendix

Audit methodology



The focus of our work was to assess the effectiveness of community planning in Falkirk in making a difference to local communities.

We did this by gathering and evaluating evidence to allow us to address the four issues outlined in [paragraph 8 \(page 9\)](#).

Thematic and area reviews

- We conducted specific audit work, including holding focus groups for service managers, under the economic development and early years themes. We also arranged focus groups of residents from two areas of Falkirk (Maddiston and Dawson) to explore their views of local community planning.
- Representatives from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate took part in interviews with officials from Falkirk Council to help us with our thematic reviews.

Desk research

Our audit team reviewed a range of documentary evidence provided by the partnership, including:

- previous and current versions of the SOA
- individual community planning partner organisations' strategies
- community planning meeting agendas, minutes and reports.

Data analysis

We analysed performance data for a range of indicators in the Falkirk SOA 2013-15, including the following sources:

- Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Office for National Statistics
- National Records of Scotland
- Nomis labour market statistics

- The Scottish Public Health Observatory
- NHS Scotland Information Services Division
- Accounts Commission Statutory Performance Indicators.

On-site fieldwork

We attended a range of community planning meetings, the Falkirk community planning conference in November 2013 and various community planning events.

We carried out interviews and focus groups with a range of community planning partners between October 2013 and February 2014. These included members of the Leadership Board and thematic groups representing the following organisations:

- Aberlour Trust
- Barnardo's
- CVS Falkirk and District
- Falkirk Community Trust
- Falkirk Council
- Forth Valley College
- NHS Forth Valley
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Enterprise
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Skills Development Scotland
- South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran).

Falkirk Community Planning Partnership

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