

**EMERGING POLICY PROPOSALS FROM POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL
(GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY PLANNING & CENTRAL / LOCAL RELATIONS)**

Community Planning – Programme of support activities

Agenda Item: 3(b)

Summary: Outlining the Policy Development Panel's proposals in relation to a programme of activities to inform and support the statutory introduction of Community Planning in 2011.

Action: For consideration and endorsement.

Introduction

1. The Policy Development Panel on governance and relationships was tasked with bringing forward policy and implementation proposals in relation to, amongst other issues, the introduction of Community Planning. Policy proposals to inform the legislative framework for the council-led process were agreed by the Strategic Leadership Board at its meeting on 7 November 2008. Following completion of the development of proposals on governance arrangements for statutory transition committees the Panel is now focussing on issues related to the implementation of Community Planning.
2. To underpin its deliberations the Panel defines Community Planning as a process by which people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them and where there is a commitment from organisations to work together in providing better public services. Community Planning entails setting a shared vision for an area and developing strategies and plans that will achieve this vision and that will lead to outcome focused solutions that are unconstrained by traditional organisational and departmental structures. It will allow councils to secure the best outcome for their local communities by making best use of all available resources irrespective

of whether services are provided directly by councils or through partnership arrangements.

3. When the Panel was established in July 2008 the initial thinking was that a programme of pilots would be taken forward to inform the development of guidance, and to identify the statutory bodies that would be required to participate in and support Community Planning. The establishment of statutory transition committees to implement the reorganisation programme provides a changed context in which this work can be taken forward.
4. At a local level the establishment of statutory transition Committees presents a unique opportunity in the period between now and 2011 to review and develop existing partnership working to begin to put in place a strong foundation for future partnership working and community engagement, within the context of a Community Planning framework. At a regional level a number of Departments and statutory agencies are developing initiatives that will in the future sit within the Community Planning framework e.g. Public Health Initiatives, Community Safety/ DPP proposals for integration, area planning within education etc.
5. It will be necessary to coordinate the design and development of these initiatives to ensure that they are compatible with and integrate into Community Planning. It is also important through evaluation to identify inhibitors to the implementation of community planning and seek to address these issues over the next 2 years.

Preparing for Community Planning

6. Taking account of this changed context the Panel considers that a broader programme of activities that could be rolled out across the eleven new council areas would be more appropriate. Such a programme will assist in establishing the foundations for an effective and efficient community planning process in advance of the statutory duty being placed on councils in 2011. The programme will also provide information to support the development of guidance and frameworks to underpin Community Planning.

7. Underpinning these key aims are the following programme objectives:
 - support councils to prepare for the introduction of the Community Planning duty;
 - identify those statutory agencies to whom a duty to participate in community planning should apply;
 - identify the key issues that should be addressed in the guidance which will be developed to support the operation of the community planning process;
 - identify appropriate frameworks for an efficient and effective community planning process: this could include governance arrangements and neighbourhood models of engagement;
 - identify how initiatives across government can be integrated into the community planning process; and,
 - assess the resource requirements to support the operation of the community planning process.

8. The community planning programme of activities at the local level will achieve these objectives by undertaking the following:
 - a. building on existing good practice and identifying best practice;
 - b. identifying key partners and proposing partnership structures;
 - c. identifying and addressing capacity issues/needs;
 - d. beginning to build relationships and engage with all sectors at a regional and local level;
 - e. identifying appropriate mechanisms to facilitate community engagement;
 - f. supporting Transition Committees in voluntary and statutory form to begin to converge and rationalise current partnership working activity across the new council areas;
 - g. where opportunities arise, develop new community planning partnership arrangements;
 - h. evaluating the resources required to deliver effective community planning;
 - i. identifying the data and analysis necessary to support community planning and how this support may be delivered; and,
 - j. defining what community planning means in a Northern Ireland context.

9. It is considered that at a regional level the following action is required:

- engagement, at a strategic level between local government and central government and statutory agencies;
- engagement with the regional organisations representing the interests of the community and voluntary sector;
- developing processes for baseline analysis of key indicators of needs, at a regional/local level;
- capacity building across all the sectors that will be involved in the process;
- and,
- the identification of the resources required to support the programme, and the bidding for those resources.

10. Community Planning is a long term process which is about building relationships and winning the hearts and minds of participants so that they see that the process is to their benefit and therefore engage fully to make it work. The programme of activities begins a process that will be evaluated at the end of 2010 for the purpose of finalising guidance to support Community Planning and the delivery of improved outcomes for the community in the longer term.

Next Steps

11. The Strategic Leadership Board is asked to endorse the programme activities outlined above and that detailed guidance is developed to support the roll-out of the programme. This guidance will take account of, and address the following issues:
- the existing and increasing work programme of Statutory Transition Committees;
 - the need to build capacity within the various sectors;
 - one model will not be appropriate for all council areas;
 - the timeframe for the programme is short;
 - funding will need to be quantified and sourced if the programme is to be successful;
 - the need to engage other public sector bodies is critical; and,
 - there must be consistency of approach to the programme overall