



## Local Government Taskforce

### Community Planning Sub-Group

**Note of meeting, Thursday 18th May 2006, Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue,  
Belfast**

**Present:**

Tom McCall – Chair  
Damian McKevitt – DoE Local Government Reform Unit  
Claire Devlin – DoE Local Government Reform Unit  
Sharon O’Gorman – Armagh City & District Council  
Karen McFarland – Strabane District Council  
Peter Craig – NI Fire & Rescue Service  
Joan Cassells – DE  
Jane Corderoy – OFMDFM, GRRD  
Angela Clarke – DSD  
Colm Bradley – Community Technical Aid  
Shaun Henry – SEUPB  
Tom Reid – OFMDFM, EPU  
Claire Conroy – LSP Working Group  
Frances McCandless – NICVA  
Cllr Paul Fleming – Sinn Féin  
Jim Stewart – DOE Local Government Division  
Nick Livingston – Arts Council for NI  
David Lennox – NIO, CSU  
Peter Farrar – PSNI  
Dympna McGlade – Community Relations Council  
Angus Kerr – DOE Planning Service  
Catherine McKinney – DoE Planning Service  
Nick Mack – Rural Development Council  
Eamonn McCartan – Sports Council NI  
Robert Heyburn – Dept Culture, Arts and Leisure  
Cllr Nelson McCausland – DUP  
Damian McAuley – Invest NI  
Esther Christie – NI Housing Executive  
Gillian Ardis – NIO Policing Reforms Division  
Eleanor Gill – Consumer Council  
Kieran Doherty – Coleraine Borough Council  
Sam Knox – CEHOG  
David Jackson – NI Policing Board  
Warren Wilson – PSNI  
Keith Tench – PSNI  
Colin McClintock – Lisburn City Council  
Marie-Therese McGivern – Belfast City Council

## Apologies

Alison McCullagh - Omagh District Council  
Ciarán Rogan – Translink  
Barry Jordan – DRD  
Davis McCune – DETI  
David McClarty MLA – UUP  
Gareth Harper – RCN  
Julie Cuming – OFMDFM, CEPU  
Shirley McCay – NI Local Economic Development Forum  
Stewart Cuddy – NI Housing Executive  
Séamus McAleavey – NICVA  
Drew Haire – OFMDFM

2. The Chair of the sub group, Tom McCall, welcomed all those attending and invited them to briefly introduce themselves and indicate the organisation they were representing on the Community Planning sub group. He reminded the group of the key outputs they were required to produce by the end of June, and stressed the importance of identifying legislative requirements within that timeframe.
3. The draft minutes of the previous, inaugural, meeting of the sub group held on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006 were approved. The Chair proposed that, in future, draft minutes would be issued to the Taskforce Steering Group and the Taskforce Political Panel before they are formally approved by the Sub-Group, for information purposes. Approved minutes will be placed on the DOE website. No objections were expressed to either of these proposals.
4. There were no matters arising from the previous minutes that were not on the main agenda.
5. A revised draft Terms of Reference had been circulated to the members, incorporating some minor amendments and a specific reference to “A Shared Future” and the requirement on councils to foster good community relations. The revisions to the Terms of Reference were agreed and approved by the meeting.
6. Marie-Therese McGivern presented a paper to the group prepared by the group agreed at the meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This drew together the key issues in respect of community planning that need to address by the sub group. She thanked all those who had assisted in the preparation of the paper for all their hard work and valued input. She outlined the various legislative and policy frameworks currently in place in England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. She then outlined key principles underlying the concept of community planning, and asked that the group consider an appropriate definition of community planning. To date no formal evaluation of community planning has been completed, although informal anecdotal and qualitative feedback was generally positive about the impact and value of the community planning process. Scotland had made use of pathfinder pilots, and she suggested that implementing these in Northern Ireland prior to 2009 would allow time to set up and deliver initial plans which would build capacity across sectors. Funding is also a key issue: special funds have been made available elsewhere in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. The group should consider if a special fund might be appropriate for Northern Ireland. There would be a need for capacity building to build capacity in all sectors to be involved in the community planning process. In relation to cross-cutting issues with the Taskforce sub groups, there were clearly identified links with the

Governance sub-group, the Performance Management sub-group, and the group looking at the relationship between central and local government. Finally she summarised the key areas for consideration by the sub-group.

The Chair informed the group that the Chairs of all the Sub-groups had met the previous day, and it had become apparent that community planning would be critically important to the new councils. He also stressed the importance of links with the other sub-groups.

The Consumer Council representative stressed that the purpose of community planning was to ensure that there would be better outcomes for the citizen. It is important to know where resources are coming from, as well as where they will be targeted. Clear accountability is vital. The possibility of looking at other models outside the UK should also be explored. The Chair advised that the RPA review team had conducted study visits to a wide range of locations outside the UK and reports on these visits were available on the RPA website.

Several members stressed that a culture change would be required in relation to working in partnership – in the health and education sectors as well as in local government.

Cllr Fleming raised the issue of rural communities. The Chair advised that the study visit would include a presentation by an officer from Dumfries and Galloway Council, a predominantly rural area, and that this would potentially identify issues and experiences that could inform the deliberations of the sub group.

There was general support for involvement of the wider community in the process of community planning. In terms of engagement, there may be a need to consider how people who are not within the local government process are enabled to come to the table.

The DOE legislative representative reminded the group that there was an imperative to focus on the legislative requirements in the period to the end of June. The Chair explained that the sub-group had met for the first time on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2006, and that at this stage in the process was still formulating its thinking on the model of community planning that Northern Ireland should introduce. After the study visit to Glasgow, and further general discussion, it would be possible to tie down legislative requirements. However it was a very important piece of the sub group's remit and suggested that it might be valuable if a small group of people were to get together to identify exactly what was needed from the group's final report to inform the legislative requirements.

Gillian Ardis volunteered to lead on this and it was agreed that she would speak to Damian McKeivitt following the meeting to agree time and venue which would be circulated to all members.

The Chair suggested that it would be very helpful if the Elected Members on the group would agree to be part of the sub group investigating the legislative requirements. All Elected Members present agreed to be part of the sub group. The Chair thanked the Elected Members for their assistance and confirmed arrangements would be made to contact those Elected Members not at today's meeting to invite them to be part of the sub group investigating legislative requirements.

7. Damian McKeivitt outlined the draft programme for the study visit to Glasgow on 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May. The Chair agreed it was a comprehensive programme.
8. Sharon O’Gorman updated the group on preliminary work undertaken in relation to planning an event to engage on a wider basis with key stakeholders. The purpose of the event was twofold: firstly to raise awareness of community planning, and secondly, to seek views and feedback on the sub-groups draft report. The 22 June had been identified as a probable date. An initial list of stakeholders had been drafted, and she asked the group to send delegate nominations from additional stakeholder groups to Damian McKeivitt. She outlined the proposed agenda, and the format she anticipated the day following.

The Chair advised members that from Friday, the DOE website would include reports of meetings, membership lists for each of the Sub-Groups, etc. Members of the group should feel free to cascade the information throughout their own organisations.

It was generally accepted that in the time available it would not be possible to have more detailed and in depth consultation, in particular with community groups. As this was the case it was agreed to consider making recommendations on this and how it might best be undertaken at a later stage in the process.

#### **9. Meetings Schedule**

- 1<sup>st</sup> June – Omagh
- 8<sup>th</sup> June – Strabane – full day
- 22<sup>nd</sup> June – venue to be confirmed / stakeholder consultation event
- 29<sup>th</sup> June – Newry

**CLAIRE DEVLIN**  
**Local Government Reform Unit**