



Local Government Taskforce

Community Planning Sub-Group

Note of meeting, Thursday 8th June 2006, Warrenpoint Town Hall, Warrenpoint Co. Down

Present:	Thomas McCall (Chair)	Newry & Mourne District Council
	Marie-Therese McGivern	Belfast City Council
	Peter Daniels OBE	IDeA
	Cllr Kevin Wilson	IDeA member peer
	Damian McKeivitt	DOE Local Government Reform Unit
	Roger O'Sullivan	Rural Community Network
	Cathy Kelly	SEUPB
	Colm Bradley	Community Technical Aid
	Janis Purdy	Local Government Reform Unit
	Paul McCormick	NI Local Economic Development Forum
	Colin McClintock	Lisburn City Council
	Damian McAuley	Invest NI
	Nick Mack	Rural Development Council
	James McEldowney	OFMDFM (Economic Policy Unit)
	Robert Heyburn	Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure
	Nick Livingston	Arts Council
	Joan Cassells	Department of Education
	Dympna McGlade	Community Relations Council
	Angus Kerr	DOE Planning Service
	Peter Craig	NI Fire & Rescue Service
	Alison McCullagh	Omagh District Council
	Helen Honeyman	LSP Working Group
	Jim Stewart	DOE Local Government Division
	Cllr Nelson McCausland	DUP
	Stewart Cuddy	NI Housing Executive
	Cllr Paul Fleming	Sinn Féin
	Angela Clarke	Department for Social Development
	David Lennox	Community Safety Unit, NIO
	David Jackson	Policing Board
	Cllr Lynn Frazer	Alliance Party
	Cllr David McClarty	Ulster Unionist Party
	Claire Devlin	DOE Local Government Reform Unit
1. Apologies:	Joan McCoy	Castlereagh Borough Council
	Sam Knox	CEHOG
	Kieran Doherty	Coleraine Borough Council
	Shirley McCay	LED Forum
	Catherine McKinney	DOE Planning Unit
	Drew Haire	OFMDFM, GRRD

Gillian Ardis
Frances McCandless
Ciaran Rogan
Sharon O’Gorman

NIO Policing Reform Unit
NICVA
Translink
Armagh City & District Council

2. Welcome and introductions

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 outlined the programme for the day, stressing that the objective for the day was to finalise the first draft of the report to the Local Government Task Force.

3. Minutes of previous meeting (1st June 2006)

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record of that meeting.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising that were not covered in the agenda.

5. Update re legislative requirements

It was agreed that the group considering legislative requirements would meet again on 22nd June to consider the recommendations made in the final report - and agreed today - to determine for each whether primary legislation, subordinate legislation, statutory guidance or none of these was necessary.

Members agreed that the sub-group had to focus on key issues, and it was accepted that further work would be needed to convert these high level recommendations into policy proposals that will inform the drafting of the legislation required.

6. Progress report on arrangements for briefing seminar

Damian McKevitt informed the group that the date for the briefing seminar was now confirmed as 27th June. This was to accommodate the attendance of the key speaker, Sir William Rae. The Wellington Park Hotel in Belfast was provisionally booked for that date. An initial draft delegate list would be circulated the following day; all members of the Community Planning sub-group were invited to attend, and were asked to consider the draft delegate list and advise DOE Local Government Reform Unit of any additional nominations they might suggest from their respective organisations / sectors.

7. Draft final report

The Chair expressed thanks to Marie-Therese McGivern for her work on the report. He stated that it was important to have the paper finalised ahead of the briefing seminar.

Marie-Therese McGivern stated at the outset that the paper required further

work in terms of formatting, layout and design; she felt that the final paper might include some diagrams etc. Sub group members then considered in detail the draft paper.

- 7.1 There was an initial brief discussion around the inclusion of NIO Ministers' statements at the beginning of the document as to whether this might distract from the focus of concentrating the reader on the opinions of the sub group. It was agreed to set this clearly in the context of the Local Government Task Force and ministerial decisions on the Review of Public Administration. The Introduction could then focus on the Community Planning Sub-group, its role and remit, and outline the work undertaken by the group.
- 7.2 The group discussed the power of well-being, referred to in 1.2. Kevin Wilson advised the group of recent consideration in England of extending the 'power' of well-being to a 'duty' of well-being, and suggested the group might wish to consider this, although recognising that it may not be necessary at this point in time.
- 7.3 It was agreed that the final sentence of 2.4 in the draft report should be put forward as one of the Community Planning Sub-Group's recommendations. [It is therefore recommended that a modified Scottish model which includes best practice identified in other situations should be enacted in Northern Ireland.]
- 7.4 The group discussed whether they wished to develop a definition of community planning (4.6), but it was agreed that in the timescale allowed it would not be possible. It was agreed that one of the recommendations should be that a working definition of community planning should be developed, incorporating a reference to consultation and engagement with communities.
- 7.5 It was agreed that the group wished to recommend that a power of well-being is advanced in Northern Ireland.
- 7.6 The group discussed the vision outlined in section 5, and agreed to recommend that specific guidance should be produced to set the parameters of the process. It was also agreed to include an additional bullet point referring to establishing the core values for the community planning process.
- 7.7 The group discussed the term 'locality' (5.1), and the Chair advised that while the community plan relates to locality in terms of central bodies, some plans may go down to a local level, and others may cross council boundaries, or in some circumstances cross borders.
- 7.8 There was discussion of the links between community planning and land use planning; Cllr Wilson advocated that community strategies should drive land use planning.
- 7.9 The group discussed the draft recommendations at 5.5 and 5.6 and agreed that they should be included in the final report. The Chair mentioned tensions experienced in Scotland resulting from differing reporting requirements and differing financial controls between central and local government. Peter Daniels advised that in Scotland there is no enforcement regime around community planning; those that take part are accountable to their own organisations.
- 7.10 There was discussion of the need for a common management information framework (6.3) and performance management framework (6.5), with the Chair

highlighting the difficulties caused in Scotland by the absence of commonality; it was agreed to include these as recommendations in the final report.

7.11 The issue of community engagement (6.6) was discussed by the group, and it was agreed the related recommendation at 6.8 should be extended to include a reference to a consultation strategy.

7.12 The group discussed whether there should be a duty on a council to produce a plan, and some members expressed concern that if there was no obligation on partners to produce a plan, they would eventually walk away from the community planning process. Cllr Wilson advised that there is not currently a duty of co-operation on partners in England but that this is under consideration. He advised the sub-group to recommend the dual duty to produce and implement a plan, learning from the experiences of England, Scotland and Wales. Cllr Fleming argued that with no history of community planning, Northern Ireland had a need for strong legislation.

Recommendation 6.9 was agreed by the group.

7.13 The group discussed the proposed list of public bodies / agencies that would be statutorily required to take part in the community planning process (7.2).

The voluntary and community sector should be given a place within the community planning process, however there were issues for the sector relating to representation. David Jackson asked that account should be taken of the role of the Policing Board in Northern Ireland in respect of District Policing Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships. Angela Clarke stressed that Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships were currently key community engagement and regeneration delivery bodies and should continue to have a role within the community planning process.

It was re-emphasised that within Community Planning Partnerships, sub-partnerships would have a much wider representation than the core strategic overarching partnership.

Cllr McCausland expressed general concerns about the seven council model and about local area sub-partnerships, particularly in border areas.

Cllr Wilson suggested that transformational leadership was key to success of the overarching partnerships, and stressed the importance of involvement of elected representatives.

The group agreed to include 7.2 as one of the recommendations, and also to build in a reference to involving the private sector.

7.14 The group agreed each of the recommendations at 7.5 and 7.6 for inclusion in the final report.

7.15 There was a wide-ranging discussion of co-terminosity (7.8) and cross-boundary / cross-border issues. Cllr McCausland felt that a distinction should be made between cross-border and cross-boundary. Cllr Fleming was of the opinion that the recommendation at 7.9 adequately covered the issue, and referred to tourism initiatives in the northwest as good examples of such co-operation. The aim of the recommendation at 7.9 was to encourage community planning partners to look at neighbouring community plans to ensure they fit together,

particularly in relation to issues such as railways, roads, tourism, etc, and in this context it was agreed to include it as one of the sub-group's recommendations.

7.16 The group discussed the duty on Scottish ministers to promote and encourage community planning (8.2), and agreed to include a recommendation to the effect that a similar duty should be placed on NIO / Northern Ireland Executive Ministers.

7.17 There was discussion of the section on capacity building (8.4), and it was agreed that this section should reflect the fact that the role of central government departments and the auditor will change, and that capacity building will be required in these areas as well as in local government.

7.18 The group discussed the recommendation for community planning pathfinder / pilot schemes to be established, and agreed that this recommendation should be included in the final report.

7.19 In relation to resources to support community planning Cllr Wilson stressed that the sub group must reinforce the fact that the community planning process is not cheap. The group agreed to recommend that specific funds are set up to encourage community planning, as in other jurisdictions.

8. Cllr Wilson pointed out that Scotland has the legislative power of incorporation, and after discussion it was agreed to include this as an additional recommendation.

9. Schedule of dates and venues for next meetings of the Sub-Group

- The legislative group would meet on 22nd June.
- The briefing seminar would be on 27th June.
- The final meeting of the full sub-group would be held on 29th June.

10. Any Other Notified Business

There was no other notified business.

CLAIRE DEVLIN
Local Government Reform Unit