

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT TASKFORCE
COMMUNITY PLANNING SUB-GROUP
RECOMMENDATION PAPER**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The potential for Community Planning and the power of Well Being to enhance the role of councils in Northern Ireland post 2009 cannot be overstated nor should it be under estimated.

In the course of the deliberations of the community planning sub group, members have at all times recognised that good relations impact on every aspect of life in Northern Ireland.

Community Planning has the potential to create a framework to ensure that good relations actions are earthed in the needs of local communities and that the promotion and protection of shared space, shared education, shared communities and shared public services will sit at the very centre of the ethos and culture of public service provision at local level.

The planning for, and the process of, Community Planning and the power of Well Being should be brought forward with full regard to "A Shared Future" and all the challenges and opportunities that that presents.

To achieve the potential of community planning to the fullest will not be easy, it will require fundamental changes to take place in all sectors and will require cultural and organisational change.

Strong effective legislation and comprehensive guidance will be necessary but on their own will not secure effective Community Planning. In the final analysis, what will make or break Community Planning will be people, people in organisations across all sectors and people within each of the new Council areas.

As a group we have seen when people work together in the manner described above they can make a real difference to people's lives and to service delivery.

The process will be a long one and we must accept this from the outset. We will need patience, perseverance and determination in large measure if we are to reach the goals and objectives that we have set for Community Planning and the power of Well Being.

The work of the Community Planning sub group must be seen and accepted as "work in progress"; much more has to be done and best use must be made of the period from now up to when the new councils come into existence.

Our report simply raises and highlights the key issues which in our view must now be addressed, with particular reference to legislation and Statutory Guidance.

My role as chair of the group was made easy through the input of the members of the group, each one made a valuable contribution through their active, positive and constructive participation and I thank them for that.

I wish to acknowledge the work undertaken by Marie-Thérèse McGivern, Sharon O'Gorman and Gillian Ardis for chairing the three sub groups we divided into.

Without the input, guidance and support of our two IDeA peers, Councillor Kevin Wilson and Mr Peter Daniels OBE we would never have been able to complete the task assigned to us in the time available, they were invaluable to us as a group.

I thank the DoE for making such resources as Kevin and Peter available to us.

I want to place on record our thanks to Sir William Rae, Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police and former Chair of the Scottish Community Planning Taskforce for his contribution to our work and for the inspiration he has given us.

My thanks is also due to Damian Mc Kevitt and Claire Devlin from DoE.

I would also want to thank Mr Steven Peover, Permanent Secretary of the DoE, Grace McGuinness and other senior staff for offering me the opportunity to chair the group, it was indeed a privilege.

Finally I acknowledge the very many others who assisted and advised us in particular those who gave so freely of their time during our study visit to Glasgow.

I commend our report and its recommendations to you. If we have achieved nothing else, I believe we have at least begun to raise awareness of the potential of Community Planning and the Power of Well Being to positively transform public service delivery in Northern Ireland in the years ahead.

The real work to deliver on that potential starts now.

Thomas McCall

Chair, Local Government Taskforce Community Planning Sub Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having looked at best practice and deliberated the Community Planning Sub-group of the Local Government Taskforce have made the following recommendations in relation to the introduction of Community Planning to Northern Ireland. We have also set out in **Section 9** the legislative requirements and statutory guidance we feel are essential for community planning in Northern Ireland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that a modified Scottish model which includes best practice identified in other situations should be enacted in Northern Ireland, to create a model that is uniquely suited to the Northern Ireland situation. Such a model would include a duty to advance the process of community planning through partnership and to produce a community plan.
2. It is recommended that a working definition of community planning is developed which encapsulates a process which works to join up the planning and the delivery of public services, create meaningful strategies for local areas and does so by engaging with communities for the benefit and well-being of all people in the locality.
3. It is recommended that a power of well-being is advanced in Northern Ireland as part of the community planning process.
4. It is recommended that, as in the Scottish situation NI legislation should provide for specific statutory guidance to set the parameters of the process, and so establish consistency of practice across Northern Ireland while allowing for local variety to emerge.
5. It is recommended that this statutory guidance refers to the creation of a long term vision and shorter three to five year action plans.
6. It is recommended that councils should develop shared information management frameworks and performance management frameworks.
7. It is recommended that community planning partnerships should prepare a communications and consultation strategy.
8. It is recommended that in all processes related to community planning guidance and standards are developed to ensure consistency of practice and impact across Northern Ireland.

<p>9. It is recommended that it becomes a statutory duty for the following agencies to participate in the core community planning partnership: the new Health Authority, the new Education and Skills Authority, Policing Board and Chief Constable, Fire and Rescue, NIHE, INI and Translink and a duty of co-operation and promotion should be placed on all Government Departments and public agencies.</p>
<p>10. It is recommended that representation from the voluntary and community sector and from the private sector are on the community planning partnership. Each sector to decide how these representatives should emerge.</p>
<p>11. It is recommended that the legislation and/or statutory guidance ensures that strong effective elected Member representation is found in all community planning partnerships, and similarly, in any local or neighbourhood partnership arrangements. The subgroup believes that elected Members can and should provide strong community leadership.</p>
<p>12. It is recommended that a series of thematic sub partnerships are developed.</p>
<p>13. It is recommended that each community planning partnership sets up a local area planning structure which meets their own particular needs and ensures the participation of as wide a range of people in the locality as possible.</p>
<p>14. It is recommended cross boundary, cross border and cross channel work is encouraged to the benefit of all as part of the Community Planning process.</p>
<p>15. It is recommended that a statutory duty of cooperation is placed on NI ministers to promote and encourage community planning.</p>
<p>16. It is recommended that mechanisms to enhance regional and local levels working positively together are developed.</p>
<p>17. It is recommended that the issue of co-terminosity is considered in relation to any new structural developments in public services in Northern Ireland to facilitate more effective community planning.</p>
<p>18. It is recommended that a capacity-building programme for community planning is developed in the immediate future in recognition of the major cultural change which will be required.</p>

19. It is recommended that a number of Community Planning pilots are initiated across Northern Ireland to begin as soon as is practicable.

20. It is recommended that specific funds are set up to encourage community planning.

21. Finally, the Community Planning sub-group would wish to have the right to review any draft legislation or guidance on community planning prior to their formal adoption.

1. INTRODUCTION

The sub-group on Community Planning was set up by the Local Government Taskforce in May 2006 to consider the implications and make recommendations on the introduction of Community Planning and the power of well-being to Northern Ireland.

The Sub-group comprised 51 members including the Chair Tom McCall, political representation, local governments, the voluntary and community sector, private sector, Government Departments and other public agencies plus two peer members provided by IDeA (See **Appendix 1** for membership).

The sub-group looked at and considered the development of Community Planning in other jurisdictions including England and Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. In addition the sub-group made a study visit to Scotland in order to hear at first hand the issues related to both the introduction and ongoing nature of Community Planning processes. We also held a briefing seminar on 27 June 2006 to share and test ideas and we are grateful to all those who attended (**Appendix 2**) for their insights and ideas.

The sub-group concluded that Community Planning was a process which potentially could significantly enhance the delivery of public services in Northern Ireland and create new forms of engagement and so ownership with the people in the locality. The sub-group believe that local government should be at the heart of this process operating as the junction box of public services in any locality. Community leadership exercised by elected representatives, acting in partnership with a full range of private, statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies can breathe new life into local democracy, and respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

In bringing Community Planning forward to Northern Ireland the sub-group believes we have a unique opportunity to create a model of practice which exemplifies the best of all practice and so the recommendations include elements of practice in all jurisdictions studied not just the Scottish situation. In doing so the sub-group also took cognisance of the specific circumstances pertaining to Northern Ireland and incorporated these in its proposals.

The sub-group believes that Northern Ireland is facing a huge challenge into the future to create a successful and sustainable

region for the present population and for future generations. Community planning can be a significant element in making this aspiration a reality.

2. CONTEXT – TERMS OF REFERENCE

In November 2005 the Secretary of State announced details in relation to the Review of Public Administration. He made clear the Government's desire to introduce Community Planning and a power of wellbeing to Northern Ireland. In April 2006 the NI Government document, *Better Government for Northern Ireland* described the intention in the following way.

Government is committed to developing a reinvigorated local government sector, with the local council at the heart of the community transforming the social and economic life of the local area.

Under the new system **councils will have responsibility for a wide range of functions** and a strong power to influence a great many more. This will enable them to respond flexibly to local needs and make a real difference to people's lives. A full list of the new or enhanced local government functions is at Annex A, but some of the key functions include planning, local roads, urban and rural regeneration, and some housing services. Funding for these additional functions will also transfer to councils.

In addition to these, councils will have a new **power of wellbeing**. This will allow them to take any action, not already the responsibility of another agency, linked with the community plan that will improve the wellbeing of the local community or the local area. Such a power allows great flexibility and, coupled with the additional functions transferring from other parts of the public service, will enable councils to respond creatively to local needs, ensuring accessible and people-focused services that make a real difference to people's lives.

Councils will be required to lead a **community planning process**. This will require the council to consult all its constituents about issues that affect their lives and allow people to have a say in the way which their area is developed. All other statutory agencies will be required to work with councils in developing and delivering these plans. The community plan will be published allowing the whole community to take ownership of it, as well as assess how well the council and others are **delivering against their commitments**.

Councils will not necessarily directly deliver all the services for which they are responsible. They will be encouraged to develop partnership arrangements with the voluntary and community sectors, and the private sector in developing and commissioning services. These sectors often have the flexibility to respond more quickly and creatively to the quickly changing demands of the community and could be important partners in developing customer-focused services.

The Community Planning Sub-group set up by the Local Government Taskforce is one of nine groups established to consider specific aspects of changes required by the Review of Public Administration.

The task set out is:

In Northern Ireland there is currently no legislative requirement for local government to consult with organisations to prepare a community plan.

One of the most important new functions coming to local government is community planning.

The aim of community planning is to make sure that people and communities are genuinely engaged in decisions made about the public services which affect them. Allied to this is a commitment by all those who deliver services in the council area to work together to provide co-ordinated, high-quality outcomes people rightly expect.

Community planning will be a key strategic responsibility for strong local government, working in close partnership with other key agencies within their area. It will allow local councils to punch above their weight through influencing how the full range of services are planned and delivered in their area.

The community planning process aims to draw together all service providers within the council boundary, thus allowing the council to address community needs in a more strategic, dynamic and flexible way.

It will require councils to engage meaningfully with local communities.

The Community Planning Sub-group of the Local Government Taskforce is charged with bringing forward proposals to effect the devolution of the power of 'community planning' and the power of 'wellbeing' to district councils in Northern Ireland, recognising local diversity and the need to devise approaches suited to local circumstances) by:

- advising the DOE Local Government Taskforce on issues in respect of community planning;
- identifying good practice;
- helping to develop a coherent relationship between the community planning process and other local strategies;
- ensuring effective and broad-based engagement with all key stakeholders;
- developing proposals for the community planning legislation that will operate in Northern Ireland;
- developing proposals for detailed guidance to operationalise the community planning process at district council level;
- developing proposals for effective mechanisms that will champion the community planning process; ensure that ownership of community planning is secured vertically and horizontally within public agencies and with local communities; spread ownership; share good practice and advice on issues which arise as communities take forward their community plans.

The drive for community planning should be seen in the context of the process to create more responsive and effective public services for people in the locality. At its heart are people and improving through a multiplicity of public intervention their lives in every aspect. Community planning has been a cornerstone of the desire to modernise public services, to create more efficient and effective service delivery, establishing value for money and at the same time seeking to engage in a much more direct and effective way with people in the locality.

The Local Government Act 2000 in England and Wales and the Local Government Act Scotland in 2003 underlined the view that at local level the local authority had the pivotal role in facilitating a process

by which a common vision jointly owned could be developed for all areas and in turn new ways would be developed to enable communities to participate in a meaningful way.

The Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland is therefore part of an ongoing process. The RPA is seeking to establish a new public sector structure in Northern Ireland and a new relationship between people in the locality and that sector. This process is an opportunity to create a new compact across Northern Ireland between those who deliver public services and those who are the recipients and in so doing create a successful region for the present and future generations.

All available evidence points to the benefits of the community planning process, these include:

- the stimulation of real local debate about needs, aspiration and priorities;
- enhancing the engagement of ordinary people in the governance of their area;
- providing sustainability;
- producing services which better reflect the needs of communities;
- improving the co-ordination and accessibility of public services to people in the locality;
- creating greater efficiencies in the delivery of services and in the use of limited resources;
- Promoting a shared view and common ownership around "place".

Community planning is now embedded in local government in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland, though there are variations in how it is developed and delivered.

In all four jurisdictions core elements that have emerged are the development of agreed joint strategies, developed by partnerships including all key stakeholders with the engagement and involvement of people in the locality at its heart.

Northern Ireland has the opportunity to look at these various models and glean best practice to produce a Northern Ireland

community planning model which exemplifies the best and is uniquely suited to the Northern Ireland situation.

COMMUNITY PLANNING – LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS IN UK AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Community planning as a concept is now embedded in local government both in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. However, there are variations in all aspects of how this is developed and delivered.

ENGLAND

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now the Department for Communities and Local Government) who is currently responsible for local government, defines the aims of community planning as:

- to allow local communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities, co-ordinate the actions of the Council and of public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally;
- to focus and shape existing and future activity of these organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations; and
- To contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The process was given legislative basis through the 2000 Local Government Act for England and Wales, which placed a duty on local authorities to prepare community strategies. These set out how areas should develop over generally a 15/20-year period. The vision should be based on wide consultation and when adopted guide service provision and investment strategies.

Local strategic partnerships have been established in all English local authorities with the role of producing these strategies. LSPs oversee preparation and implementation of community strategies. A further process in England was the establishment of 88 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas and in these areas a further Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy must also be produced (in order to receive funding), which must be incorporated in the larger community strategy. There are differing models in relation to the structure and management of LSPs.

WALES

While the 2000 Act also relates to Wales the existence of the Welsh Assembly has allowed for a distinctive Welsh community planning process. LSPs are similar and councils are required to produce community strategies, however, a major difference is in evidence.

This relates to the existence of an Assembly plan for Wales – *Better Wales*. This sets a 2010 vision with accompanying objectives and targets. While individual councils are not required to adopt this in its entirety they are asked to address the themes in the national strategy. This has created a strong link between local and regional planning and coincidentally better collaboration between councils. An evaluation of this process is currently being undertaken in Wales.

SCOTLAND

In Scotland the 2003 Local Government in Scotland Act provides the framework for community planning.

In Scotland the legislation places a duty on councils to promote a process of community planning through the establishment of community planning partnerships. It also places a duty on NHS Boards, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands enterprise, Joint Police Boards and Chief Constables, Joint Fire Boards and the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority to participate.

Commitment to working together is emphasised in statute and guidance as published and to genuine engagement with people and communities.

In Scotland Community Planning Partnerships are tasked with preparing community plans and are also required to form sub-partnerships based around relevant themes, led by the most appropriate partner.

The Scottish system is a much more prescriptive one than the English or Welsh models.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

In the Republic of Ireland 34 County/City Development Boards were established in 2000 and given statutory recognition in the 2000 Planning and Development Act and the 2001 Local Government Act. They comprise of representatives from local government, local development, social partners and state agencies. The council acts

as the lead agency in CDBs and can take action around consultation.

The CDBs are required to produce 10-year strategies for local development with three to five year targets for key stakeholders in the public, private and social sectors. Boards are typically chaired by elected members and serviced by the local authority

Community forums have also been established in each area by which community representatives can be identified and nominated. Once strategies are developed the CDB oversee their implementation though they are not implementing bodies themselves.

The Secretary of State and Lord Rooker have already indicated their preference for the Scottish model, however there are elements of other jurisdictions which could be incorporated usefully in a Northern Ireland model, it is therefore recommended that a modified Scottish model which includes best practice identified in other situations should be enacted in Northern Ireland.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a modified Scottish model which includes best practice identified in other situations should be enacted in Northern Ireland, to create a model that is uniquely suited to the Northern Ireland situation. Such a model would include a duty to advance the process of community planning through partnership and to produce a community plan.

3. DEFINITION

The concept of community planning covers a range of models across England, Wales, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland as already illustrated. The Scottish experience has been the strongest in defining what this process is:

“...any process through which a council comes together with other organisations to plan, provide for, or promote the wellbeing of the communities they serve.”

Intrinsic to this definition and to all the models that have emerged is:

- the idea of developing a jointly owned vision for a locality;
- a belief that local authorities as democratically elected bodies, have a community leadership role which is pivotal to facilitating (but not dominating) the community planning process; and
- A belief that ways must be found to enable communities to participate effectively in the process.

At its core community planning is about producing more effective joined up public services and providing opportunities for greater involvement of communities. In the process the local council has a central role for the facilitation and co-ordination of community planning, the council becomes a ‘junction box’ for the locality seeking to integrate and join up public service delivery for the benefit of all people living in the locality and the long term success and sustainability of the locality.

In England and Wales the emphasis has been on the council duty to develop a strategy, in Scotland on the duty to create the process i.e. a partnership by which a strategy or plan is developed, the end result though has been the creation of better public services delivered in a more joined up way and with community involvement and engagement.

In addition to community planning responsibilities, councils in England, Wales and Scotland have been given a “power of wellbeing”. This power allows councils to do anything which they consider is likely to promote or improve the wellbeing of their areas and/or persons in it. The power of course operates within the

framework of public accountability. This is a very important element of community planning in particular as it allows councils to deliver better and more responsive public services but also assist other public agencies in doing so as well. This flexibility and potential to put energy into the process has been seen as crucial to the success of good community planning.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a working definition of community planning is developed which encapsulates a process which works to join up the planning and delivery of public services, create meaningful strategies for local areas and does so by engaging with communities for the benefit and well-being of all people in the locality.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a power of well-being is advanced in Northern Ireland as part of the community planning process.

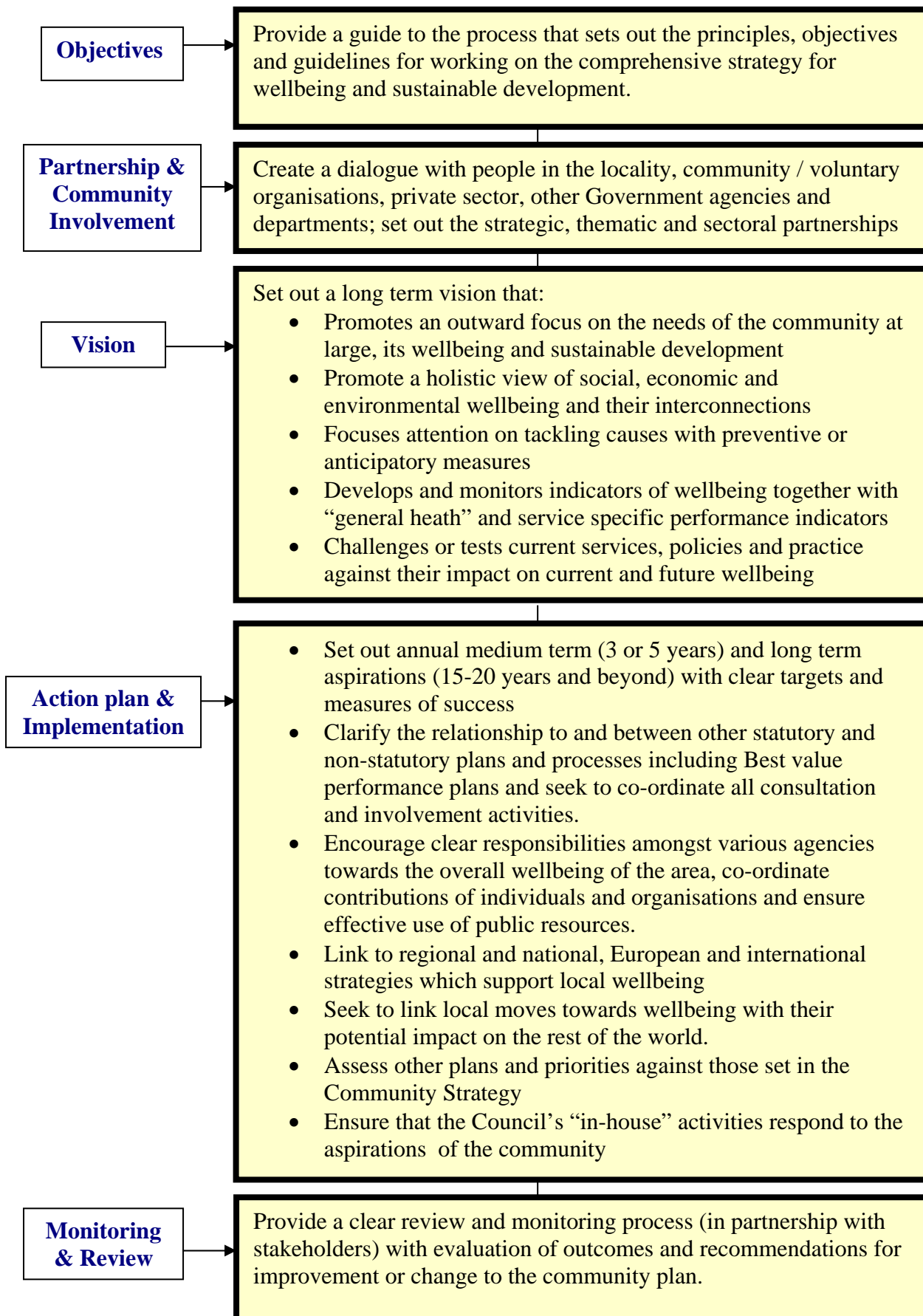
4. VISION

Community planning is not merely the process of sticking together a number of existing plans and practices but rather a new vision for a locality. It is a major undertaking and involves the task of integrating all the various streams of public life, weaving these together and producing a visionary statement of the future direction of the locality. The most successful examples of community planning are based on robust and vigorous analysis based on sound data and information frameworks.

The community plan then seeks to take this information and show how the current situation can be improved for the benefit of all people in the locality. The vision in general will be ambitious and lend itself to the creation of real and challenging targets across a range of indicators. Good community planning will have involved all significant service deliverers in any locality and will have been tested and endorsed by the community in a number of ways.

Visioning like this will require the ability to think outside the box, to be solution rather than problem focused, to be open, flexible and committed. The creation of such a process is based fundamentally on the need to exhibit leadership in all sectors of Northern Ireland society and to place a better life for all at the heart of any deliberations and processes. Each locality will have its own unique set of circumstances and so the complexity of the process is enormous. **Figure 1** indicates the complexity of this process.

Figure 1: The Process of Community Planning



It is recommended that, as in the Scottish situation NI legislation should provide for specific statutory guidance to set the parameters of the process, and so establish consistency of practice across Northern Ireland while allowing for local variety to emerge. Such guidance should establish the objective of the process and set clear parameters in relation to the production of a “vision” for the area. This long term view should, within a timeline of some 10 to 15 years, provide:

- A set of core values for the process;
- a rigorous analysis of existing conditions in the locality;
- an integrated view of the social, economic and environmental needs of the locality in the context of regional, national and European policies and strategies;
- an ideal vision for the future;
- clear focus on tackling current reality in ways to achieve the ideal vision; and
- A set of outcomes which can be monitored and measured.

It is recommended that the long term vision should then be translated into more short term action plans and implementation processes of generally three to five years, otherwise the “vision” is likely to become consigned to the shelf.

An effective action plan should;

- set clear targets and measures for success within a limited timeframe;
- establish clear responsibility lines to the delivery of these targets among the various agencies; and
- Provide a clear review and monitoring process.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that, as in the Scottish situation, NI legislation should provide for specific statutory guidance to set the parameters of the process, and so establish consistency of practice across Northern Ireland while allowing for local variety to emerge.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that this statutory guidance refers to the creation of both a long term vision and shorter 3-5 action plans.

5. PROCESSES

Community planning is about outcomes, about producing results. In order for this to happen a number of systems and procedures need to be brought into being to ensure the smooth working of what is potentially a daunting task.

In starting down this road the differing starting points of all those involved should be recognised and ways developed to address this.

Fundamental to the planning process is the need for robust and sound data and information frameworks which are commonly shared. This commonality is not currently evident in Northern Ireland and to ensure consistency within the locality and comparatively across the region it is essential that common information management frameworks are constructed. Local councils should provide the mechanisms for this.

If data/information frameworks are the foundation of the process then the final product, success, is dominated by the need to construct an agreed performance management framework. This in itself will create many difficulties and issues related to the fact that the multiple agencies involved in community planning may have different accountability lines and differing boundaries. These matters must be addressed. It is crucial that community planning is seen to be improving and working. The only way this can be achieved is by being able to demonstrate change and achievements and this requires not just the setting of targets but their monitoring and measuring. If communities are to become confident in the process then this performance framework must also be transparent. In the context of where single accountability and performance management has been dominant this will require new relationships, new ways of working and crucially commitment and leadership by public authorities.

It is evident that where such nettles have been grasped then the successful outcomes are significant for localities. It is recommended that the councils set up a performance management framework for the partnership and the strategy. Such a framework would need to address the creation of targets, measurement and monitoring processes, evaluation methodologies and accountability /responsibility streams.

The issue of community engagement must also be considered as a shared activity. Besides the specific partnership structures which

will emerge the process is meant to reach as many people in the locality as possible to create ownership and responsiveness. To this end a shared communication strategy for the plan needs to be developed. In addition partnerships will need to consider a wide range of innovative methods for community consultation – surveys, people’s panels, juries and large scale planning days and other means need to be considered and incorporated in the process. Already in Northern Ireland a number of councils and other public agencies have been developing new ways to engage with people in the locality. In addition other best practice is emerging beyond Northern Ireland which should be considered.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that councils should develop shared information management frameworks and performance management frameworks.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that community planning partnerships should prepare a communications and consultation strategy.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that in all processes related to community planning guidance and standards are developed to ensure consistency of practice and impact across Northern Ireland.

6. STRUCTURES

In reviewing community planning processes no one single structure or framework predominates. However, in all cases key or core stakeholders are essential to successful outcomes. In Scotland core CPPs tend to be eight to 13 in size while in England many run to over 30 though in this case a core executive board is likely to develop.

It is essential that those with responsibility for significant public resources are part of the process. In Scotland this has been enshrined in legislation and the core members of community partnerships are named. It is recommended that Northern Ireland follows Scotland's example and makes it a statutory responsibility for the following agencies to participate – Health, Education, PSNI, Fire & Rescue, NIHE, INI and Translink. In addition given the range of other public service deliverers a duty of co-operation and promotion should be placed on all Government Departments and public agencies. As well as public agencies the partnership should have representation from the voluntary and community sectors; this has tended to be chosen from the Community and Voluntary network in other places. Northern Ireland will need to examine its own current structures and find a useful mechanism for such appointments. The addition of the of the private sector must also be addressed and again this sector needs to agree how best to create this representation. Finally elected member representation should be considered in the context of Northern Ireland as in Scotland, England and Wales it is normal for the council leader to participate and often chair the partnership. It is essential that representation is appropriate and those with decision making responsibilities are at the table.

The role of the core or overarching partnership is to agree the vision and the key priorities for the locality. However, this core partnership is not expected to do the detailed work of specific strategic planning especially in relation to thematic areas and to local areas. To deal with this a number of other sub-partnerships have developed.

A structure of key thematic partnerships has been developed to look at specific issues of community planning in greater detail. These have broadly covered the areas of health, education, environmental, safety and economic development, though every partnership would need to decide what are its particular issues of importance.

Typically these sub-partnerships have broad sectoral representation and are often chaired by a key stakeholder within that particular sector. It is recommended that Northern Ireland adopt the thematic sub-partnership structure model.

Increasingly another partnership structure is developing at local level. These local area partnerships are constructed at local level and their purpose is to bring together communities to assess their own needs and find their place within the overarching community plan. In other jurisdictions the existence of parish councils or community council structures has facilitated this though in other places new structures have been developed often chaired by local elected members. It is recommended that each community planning partnership seeks to set up a local area planning structure which meets their own particular needs and ensures the participation of as wide a range of people as possible.

Figure 2 illustrates the process:

Figure 2: Potential Community Planning Structure



One aspect of Northern Ireland which needs to be considered is the existence of a range of partnerships which means that any new community planning process will need to consider carefully how this can be integrated and if possible rationalised. There is a danger that the community planning process will simply create yet more partnership structures. Careful consideration needs to be given to both integration, rationalisation and at times new creation in relation to the existing partnership infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

One further issue related to structures is that of coterminosity. While some agencies will have the same boundaries as the local councils, others will not; arrangements are required to deal with this situation and to allow for cross-boundary issues to be decided. It is also recognised that Northern Ireland has borders with the Republic of Ireland and a number of new councils will share boundaries with councils in the Republic of Ireland and in consequence share issues of mutual concern. As the Republic of Ireland has a community planning process in place it is likely that joint working across borders could emerge and be encouraged, to the benefit of all.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that it becomes a statutory duty for the following agencies to participate in the core community planning partnership: the new Health Authority, the new Education and Skills Authority, Policing Board and Chief Constable, Fire and Rescue, NIHE, INI and Translink, and a duty of co-operation and promotion should be placed on all Government Departments and public agencies.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that representation from the voluntary and community sector and from the private sector are on the community planning partnership. Each sectors to decide how these representatives emerge

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the legislation and/or statutory guidance ensures that strong effective elected Member representation is found in all community planning partnerships, and similarly in any local or neighbourhood partnership arrangements. The subgroup believes that elected Members can and should provide strong community leadership.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a series of thematic sub partnerships are developed.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that each community planning partnership sets up a local area planning structure which meets their own particular needs and ensures the participation of as wide a range of people as possible.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that cross-boundary, cross-border and cross channel work is encouraged to the benefit of all as part of the community planning process.

7. RELATIONSHIPS

The RPA process will bring immense changes to the way Northern Ireland does business especially in relation to public services. The role and function of local councils will change and become more central which has traditionally not been the case in Northern Ireland. The community planning process will require the reconfiguration of relationships across a whole range of divisions.

Community planning will bring about a new relationship and potential tension between local and regional levels. Role clarification is required in this relation if clashes are to be avoided. A balance must be struck between providing a regional policy framework and responding to and finding solutions for local needs and development. In Scotland the Scottish Executive has placed a duty on ministers to promote and encourage community planning while in Wales the existence of a Better Wales strategy has led to a better fit between regional and local development. It is recommended that a duty of cooperation is placed in NI ministers to promote and encourage community planning.

While the central/local relationship is being considered by another sub-group it is essential that these issues are taken into account. Community planning should be a way of fusing regional, local and neighbourhood issues into one process for improvement. It is recommended that mechanisms are developed to enhance cross-fertilisation. In particular the issue of co-terminosity needs to be considered in relation to all aspects of public service restructuring and efforts made to enhance alignment in community planning.

Other new relationships will be those between key stakeholders especially in relation to the management of conflicts which are likely to arise around priorities. New roles for elected members will also bring new relationships as it will for the voluntary, community and private sectors. The role of elected members in particular will change significantly and this will have repercussions for all those working to create a successful region. New relationships will require processes for building trust and co-operation and this needs capacity. There will be a crucial need for capacity building processes across all sectors in Northern Ireland to make community planning successful. It is therefore recommended that a capacity building programme for community planning is developed in the immediate future in recognition of the major cultural change which will be required.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a duty of cooperation is placed on NI ministers to promote and encourage community planning.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that mechanisms to enhance regional and local levels working positively together are developed.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that the issue of co-terminosity is considered in relation to any new structural developments in public services in Northern Ireland to facilitate more effective community planning.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a capacity building programme for community planning is developed in the immediate future in regeneration of the major cultural change which will be required.

8 OTHER ISSUES

The development of community planning is a long term process. In Scotland the process is in its eighth year, in England its tenth. In both areas prior to the full implementation of the process pilots or pathfinders were established to experiment with and evaluate the process for wider development.

These “test beds” proved beneficial and for this reason it is recommended that Northern Ireland initiate a number of community planning pilots across Northern Ireland to begin as soon as is practicable.

The question of costs will also arise. In other jurisdictions special funds have been set up to encourage community planning. It is recommended that such a process is enacted in Northern Ireland.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that a number of community planning pilots are initiated across Northern Ireland to begin as soon as is practicable.

Recommendation:

- It is recommended that specific funds are set up to encourage community planning.

9 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS & STATUTORY GUIDANCE

As mentioned earlier, the Sub-group has recommended that legislation based on a modified Scottish model for community planning should be enacted in Northern Ireland (see page 14 of report) and that the power of well-being should be advanced as part of the community planning process (see page 16 of the report). To assist the legislative process, the Sub-group established a legislation working group to consider what aspects of the Scottish community planning model (as provided for in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003) might be appropriate in Northern Ireland.

The working group met on two occasions to consider Scottish legislation and, in a further meeting with members of the Sub-group, a number of recommendations were agreed.

The Sub-group recommends that the NI legislation should include:

Legislative Requirements

- a definition of community planning
- a definition for well-being
- a requirement for the council to prepare a community plan
- a duty for certain 'public authorities' to participate and assist the council in the community planning process
- a requirement that NGO's/voluntary/ private sectors participate in the community planning process
- a requirement that the council consults with 'public authorities' NGO's/voluntary/ private sector in the community planning process
- a requirement for statutory guidance for community planning and well-being
- a requirement for Ministers to have due regard for co-terminosity
- provision for organisations to 'have regard' to the statutory guidance on community planning and that councils 'have regard' to the statutory guidance on well-being

- a power for Northern Ireland Departments to amend (by means of subordinate legislation) the list of public bodies that are required to participate in the community planning process;
- a requirement for the Department and the NI Office and their associated public bodies, in discharging their functions, to promote and cooperate in community planning;
- a duty for councils to publish periodic reports on how they have implemented their community planning duties;
- a power for the Department to make regulations concerning the form, content, frequency, etc. of council reports;
- a duty for councils, if required, to provide the Department with reports or other information in relation to how they have implemented their community planning duties;
- provisions enabling councils and other bodies to form bodies corporate to co-ordinate and further community planning, etc.;
- provisions to require local government auditors, as part of their annual audit of councils, to satisfy themselves that councils are complying with their community planning duties;
- provisions limiting the use of the well-being power so that councils are not able to do things they are unable to do because other legislation explicitly prevents, prohibits or limits them from doing those things;
- provisions preventing councils from using the well-being power to carry out the functions of another person or body, except with the consent of that person or body;
- provisions preventing councils from using the well-being power to raise money by levying or imposing taxes or charges or by borrowing;
- provisions preventing councils from using the well-being power outside the UK, except with the consent of the Department; and
- **provisions enabling the Department to take sanctions against a council that is not complying with its community planning duties or has exceeded its power of well-being.**

Statutory Guidance

- provisions for guidance or advice in relation to the community planning process structures (including sub partnerships)
- provision for guidance to ensure that a linkage be made to any future NI wide strategies e.g. an Assembly's 'Programme for Government'
- provision for the sharing of data collection or information in accordance with data protection legislation

- provision for guidance for the timescales of the lifetime of the community plan and associated processes

In Scotland, local government auditors have a duty, in auditing the accounts of local authorities, to satisfy themselves that the authorities have made proper arrangements for securing Best Value and are complying with their community planning duties. As a last resort, sanctions may be taken against an authority if it is not securing Best Value or is not complying with its community planning duties. Members of the Sub-group are aware that colleagues in the Performance Management Sub-group are considering the role NI local government auditors might play, as part of their annual audits of the accounts of councils, in ensuring that councils are securing Best Value and, if they are not, what sanctions might be appropriate.

The Community Planning Sub-group suggests that any powers enabling the Department to take sanctions against a council that is not securing Best Value should be applied to a council that is not complying with its community planning duties or has exceeded its power of well-being (see in bold above), and where that failure is attributable to other public bodies then appropriate sanctions should be taken against them.

APPENDIX 1

Sub-group Membership



LOCAL GOVERNMENT TASKFORCE

COMMUNITY PLANNING SUB GROUP MEMBERSHIP

CHAIR **Tom McCall,**
Chief Executive Newry & Mourne District Council

Local Government representatives – Elected Members

Cllr Lynn Frazer, Newtownabbey Borough Council
Alliance Party

Cllr Nelson McCausland MLA (Belfast City Council / Belfast North)
DUP

Cllr Paul Fleming, Derry City Council
Sinn Féin

Cllr Colin McGrath, Down District Council
SDLP

Cllr David McClarty MLA (Coleraine Borough Council / East Londonderry)
UUP

Cllr Eric Ferguson, Carrickfergus Borough Council
National Association of Councillors

IDeA peer support – elected member

Cllr. Kevin Wilson - Milton Keynes Council; Lead Labour Member

Local Government representatives – Officers

Sharon O’Gorman
Armagh City & District Council

Joan McCoy
Castlereagh Borough Council

Kieran Doherty
Coleraine Borough Council

Colin McClintock
Lisburn City Council

Marie-Thérèse McGivern
Belfast City Council

Karen McFarland
Strabane District Council

Alison McCullagh
Omagh District Council

IDeA peer support – officer

Peter Daniels OBE – (Former Chief Executive East Renfrewshire Council,
Scotland)

NICS Department reps
Angus Kerr
DoE Planning Service

Angela Clarke
DSD

David Mc Cune
DETI

Barry Jordan
DRD

Stephanie Tallentire
DHSSPS

Robert Heyburn
DCAL

Drew Haire
OFMDFM, Good Relations and Reconciliation Division

Julie Cumming
OFMDFM, Central Emergency Planning Unit

Linda Wilson
OFMDFM, EPU

Joan Cassells
DE

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Colm Bradley
Community Technical Aid

Seamus McAleavey
NICVA

Dympna McGlade
Community Relations Council

Eamonn Mc Cartan
Sports Council NI

Nick Liviugston
Arts Council for NI

Stewart Cuddy
NIHE

Gareth Harper
Rural Community Network

Nick Mack
Rural Development Council

Shaun Henry
SEUPB

Helen Honeyman
LSP Working Group

Damian Mc Auley
Invest NI

Gillian Ardis
NIO Policing Reforms Division

David Jackson
NI Policing Board

David Lennox
NIO Community Safety Unit

Ivan Farr
PSNI, Core Project Team

Peter Farrar
PSNI, Core Project Team

Tracey Mageean
PSNI, Core Project Team

Andrew McQuiggan
PSNI, Community Safety Unit

Peter Craig
NI Fire & Rescue Service

Ciaran Rogan
Translink

Eleanor Gill
NI Consumer Council

Sam Knox
Chief Environmental Health Officers Group

Shirley Mc Cay
NI Local Economic Development Forum

Des Murray
Association for Public Service Excellence

Damian McKeivitt
DOE Local Government Reform Unit

Jim Stewart
DOE Local Government Division

Claire Devlin
DOE Local Government Reform Unit

APPENDIX 2

ATTENDANCE LIST FOR COMMUNITY PLANNING EVENT – 27TH JUNE 2006, WELLINGTON PARK HOTEL

NAME	ORGANISATION
Chris Bailey	Chief Executive, NI Museums Council
Sonya Burns	Newry & Mourne District Council
Patricia Wallace	Womens Resource & Development Agency
Patricia Hamilton	DDP Manager, Newry & Mourne District Council
Pauline Martin	NEELB
David McCammick	Chief Executive, Antrim Borough Council
Bill Howatt	Advisor For Local Government Task Force
Fiona Douglas	-
Gail Corrigan	DSD
Sharon O’Gorman	Armagh City Council
Nick Livingstone	Arts Council
Gerry Lundy	CCMS
Damian McKeivitt	Local Government Reform Unit
Tina Gamble	Department of Education
Jackie O’Loughlin	Chief Executive Officer, Playboard
Brian Hanna CBE	Chairman, Local Government Staff Commission
Brendan Bonner	Western HSSB
Anne Hayes	EHS

Sir William Rae	Chief Constable, Strathclyde Police
Betty Robinson	-
Liam Quinn	Regional Development Office
Graham Cardwell	Invest NI
George Thompson	Craigavon Banbridge HSST
Wavell Moore	Chief Executive, Coleraine Borough Council
Seamus McAleavey	Chair, Concordia Countryside Services Ltd
Wendy Osbourne OBE	Director, Volunteer Development Agency
Ray Gilbert	NEELB
Helena Doherty	Western HSSB
Eugene Gallagher	Western HSSB
Jane Gribben	Volunteering Development Agency
Janet Nixon	-
Betsy Gray	North Down Borough Council
Angela Clarke	Neighbourhood Renewal
Brendan Devlin	Housing Management, DSD
Jan Harvey	Department Of Employment & Learning
Suzanne Wiley	Belfast City Council
Lisa Copeland	Community Technical Aid
Kieran Drayne	Ulster Community Hospitals Trust
Cllr Lynn Fraser	Newtownabbey Borough Council
Kieran Doherty	Coleraine Borough Council

Robert Beattie	-
Superintendent Ivan Farr	CORE Project Unit
Michael McCrory	Magherafelt District Council
Cllr Kevin Wilson	IDeA peer
Caroline Karayiannis	Regional Training Unit
Edmund McClean	NHSSB
Stephen Murray	NHSSB
Peter Daniels	IDEA
William Majury	NI Fire & Rescue Service
Liam Hannaway	Banbridge District Council
Dr Chris Gibson OBE	CBI
Lorraine Griffin	Community Organisations of South Tyrone & Areas
Brian O'Brien	Strabane & District Community Network
Gabi Mornhinweg	-
Michael Briggs	East Belfast Community Development Agency
Declan O'Hare	Director, North West Development Office
Frank Duffy	Director, Belfast Regeneration Office
Esther Christie	NIHE
Claire Herron	Invest NI
Eileen Kelly	Director, Educational Guidance Service For Adults
Miceal McCoy	Leader Network
Ben Corr	NI Sports Development Network
Finbar McCallion	Governing Body Association

Helen Honeyman	LSP Working Group
Paddy McIntyre	NIHE
Mark Byrne	LSN Education
Anne Dorbie	Rural Development
Kevin Murphy	-
Michael McCann	Magherafelt CSP
Katie Burns	Chief Executive, ICBAN
Sam Knox	Southern Group Environmental Health
Frances McCandless	Director of Policy, NICVA
John McGrillen	Chief Executive, Down District Council
Cynthia Smith	Deputy Secretary Local Government, DOE
Paul McCormick	Lisburn City Council
Kevin Donaghy	Educational Guidance Service For Adults
Cllr Paul Fleming	Derry City Council
Lorraine McAlphine	-
Marie-Therese-McGivern	Director of Development, Belfast City Council
Stephen Turner	Youth Council
Paul Murphy	Dungannon Borough Council
Tom McCready	Community Safety Unit
Joe McConnville	DEL
Patrick Yu	NI Council For Ethnic Minorities
Denis Palmer	Youth Network
Martin Magee	NDCSP
Angela Fitzpatrick	Local Government Reform Unit

Michael O'Neill	Local Government Reform Unit
Noel Sommerville	-
Janis Purdy	Local Government Reform Unit
Claire Devlin	Local Government Reform Unit
Brian Burns	Local Government Reform Unit
Claire Murphy	Local Government Reform Unit
John McAreavey	Local Government Reform Unit
Dymphna McGlade	Community Relations Council
Claire Linney	Dungannon & South Borough Council
Nicholas McCrickard	East Down Network
John Dempsey	Chief Executive, Ballymoney Borough Council
Connor Patterson	Newry & Mourne Enterprise
Patricia Carey	DSD
Aubrey McCrory	NILGA
David Russell	NICIE
Henry Johnston	Director, Urban Regeneration
Aiden Donnelly	Ballymena Borough Council
Pamela Matthews	Banbridge District Council
Campbell Dixon	Regeneration & Development
Greg Shannon	-
Linda McKee	Regeneration & Development

Kevin Pettigrew	Disability Action
Cllr Michael Carr	Newry & Mourne District Council
Laurence Bradley	Confederation of Community Groups (Newry & District)
Philip Faithful	Chief Executive, Strabane District Council
David Jackson	NI Policing Board
Robert Mitchell	-
Shirley McCay	NILED
Tom McCall	Chief Executive, Newry & Mourne
Lee Reynolds	Community Conventions & Development Company
Patrick Kelly	Regeneration of Mournes Area Ltd
Padraig Murphy	Rural Community Network
Maurice Patterson	Invest NI Eastern Local Office
Michele Baird	South Antrim Rural Network
Claire Conroy	LSP Working Goup
Angus Kerr	Planning Service, DOE
Jim Thompson	Planning Service, DOE
Noel Crawford	Limavady Borough Council
Neale Blair	University of Ulster
John News	Sports Council NI
Monsignor Liam McEntegart	Catholic Trustees

Katie Magill	Ulster Farmers Union
Catherine Ryan	-
Susan Mullan	Leader Network
Connor Corr	Cookstown & Western
Mike Fisher	IDeA
John Ritchie	Director, Local Government Division, DOE
Robert Heyburn	Department Culture, Arts & Leisure
Sharon O'Connor	Director, Cultrual & Economic Development
Angela McCann	Regeneration & Development
Michael Briggs	East Belfast Community Development Agency
Lorraine Lindsay	Investing For Health & Hospitals
Peter McNaney	Chief Executive, Belfast City Council
Colin Devine	North West Community Network
James McEldowney	OFMDFM