

Community Planning

Newsheet 3 (February 2009)

Welcome to our third edition of the Briefing Newsheet on Community Planning. This edition provides updates on Local Government Reform, a background to the new Transition Committees and highlights key activities and events undertaken through the our Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project.

Community Planning Information Pack

As part of the Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project, we have produced a Community Planning Information Pack. The pack provides information on a range of topics including the Review of Public Administration, Local Government Reforms, Community Planning and details of special funding project areas and support networks that local groups can avail of.

The pack will be distributed to participants at the project workshops and will be available to view on our new website, once it is launched.



Challenges of Community Planning at a Local Level – Stormont Event

Over 100 people attended an event at Stormont in October 2008 organised by us in association with the Community Development Networks Forum and NICVA. The event brought together community, statutory and elected representatives from across the region to learn about and discuss the challenges of Community Planning at a local level. The guest speakers on the day were Stephen Peover - Department of Environment Permanent Secretary, Cllr Francie Molloy MLA, Liam Hannaway - Chief Executive of Banbridge District Council and Cathy Rice - Chair of the Community Development Networks Forum.

The main points discussed throughout the conference were that this is a time of great change for all sectors and that it is important

that groups start preparing for Community Planning and the reforms now, rather than waiting for others to do so.

First Local Community Plan

We have completed the first Local Community Plan in the region since the RPA changes were first announced. The Plan is for the Scrabo Estate in Newtownards and provides a model for the introduction of Community Planning across the new Council area covering Ards and North Down.

Working closely with the Ards Community Network we facilitated a series of planning workshops for the Scrabo Residents' Association, Ards Borough Council, NIHE, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Investing for Health, PSNI and DSD Areas at Risk Programme. Through these workshops the partners agreed and prioritised issues for short and medium term action. Many of these are well under way through two working groups set up by all the partners.

The Scrabo Local Community Plan will be launched soon and more information on it is available from our Community Planning Support Worker, Annie Clarke.

Update on Local Government Reform

An overall consultation paper on the proposed Reform of Local Government is expected to be presented to the Executive in March 2009, with expectations that it will go out for public consultation in April 2009. Within this paper will be a section on the proposals for Community Planning.

The Department of Environment is looking at rolling out Community Planning through the Transition Committees in the 11 new Councils on a voluntary basis, with an expected start date of late 2009. Statutory agencies will be expected to participate. This process will be monitored by the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group, which will oversee the work of the Transition Committees (see overleaf).



Primary legislation for Community Planning will be developed in 2010 and will include a duty on Councils, Agencies and Departments to participate in the Community Planning process and will list those organisations.

Transition Committees and Management Teams

There are 11 Transition Committees, one for each of the proposed new Council Clusters. The membership of each committee includes elected representatives from the existing councils within a cluster together with the Chief Executives. The primary role of the Transition Committee is to take the key decisions necessary to ensure that there are 11 effective Councils in place by April 2011. Each Transition Committee will receive £150,000 per annum and is required to liaise with local stakeholders and take account of their views.

The Transition Management Teams will include Chief Executives from the existing councils within a cluster and Senior Officers from transferor Agencies and Departments. They will have responsibility for the ongoing operational management of the transition at the local level and will work under the direction of the Transition Committee.

Upcoming Events

North Down and Ards Communities Preparing for Change

The North Down and Ards Community Networks are holding a joint networking and planning event for community, statutory and elected representatives from across the new council cluster of Ards and North Down.

The event will highlight the role and responsibilities of the new super council and provide an opportunity for groups from Ards and North Down Borough Councils to network and prepare for the introduction of Community Planning.

Community Places Website – Going Live

Community Places is currently working on a new website for the organisation. The website will 'go live' over the coming months, allowing you to view up-to-date information on Community Planning.

Big Thinking – on Community Planning

The Big Lottery Fund is currently running a consultation - Big-thinking - on its strategic framework for 2009–2015. There are five Northern Ireland-specific questions, one of which asks how can BIG funding best support Community Planning? We would encourage you to participate in the consultation and in particular, think about what resources would support you in engaging in the Community Planning process. Suggestions include assisting local communities in developing:

- better models of community engagement;
- networking opportunities and communication links with groups within their council cluster; and
- local ideas for Community Planning.

The consultation is open until 27 February 2009 and is available at www.big-thinking.org.uk or by contacting the Big Lottery Fund on 028 9055 1455 for more information.

Support Available from Us

Our Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project is providing information and capacity building on Community Planning, the new RPA structures and on developing Local Community Plans which focus on community issues and provide models for the future.

If you want to know more about how we can work with your community, please contact Annie Clarke on 028 90239444 or by email at annie@communityplaces.info



Community
Places



Community Places
2 Downshire Place
Great Victoria Street
Belfast BT2 7JQ

Telephone: 028 9023 9444
Fax: 028 9023 1411