



Community Planning

Newsheet 2 (September 2008)

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of our Briefing Newsheet on Community Planning.

The topics in this edition include the role of the newly appointed Local Government Boundaries Commissioner for Northern Ireland, the establishment of the RPA Strategic Leadership Board and the Policy Development Panels and the background to and examples of the Power of Well-being.

If you have any topics that you would like to see included in future Newsheets please get in contact with Annie Clarke on 028 9023 9444 or by email at annie@communityplaces.info

Local Community Plan for Scrabo Estate

Work on preparing the Project's first Local Community Plan is well under way. Working closely with the Ards Community Network we facilitated a very productive workshop on developing a Community Plan for the Scrabo Estate in Newtownards. Participants included the Scrabo Residents' Association and local agencies such as the Housing Executive, Ards Borough Council, Youth Service, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the PSNI. A follow-up event was held in August 2008 and the Community Plan for the Scrabo Estate is progressing well.

Capacity Building in the North West

The North West Workshop attracted a cross spread of participants from the community and voluntary sector and the discussions proved useful in determining the way forward for the sector in terms of Community Planning in the North West.



A number of future events are being organised in the North Down Area and in the Killyleagh/Comber Area.

Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

Mr Dick MacKenzie has been appointed as the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner for Northern Ireland. His main role will be to make recommendations to the Department of the Environment regarding:

- boundaries of the 11 new districts;
- names of the 11 new districts;
- number and boundaries of the wards within the new districts; and
- names of these new wards.

For up-to-date information on the role of the Boundaries Commissioner and his assessors, please visit www.lgbc-ni.org

RPA Strategic Leadership Board and Policy Development Panels

Strategic Leadership Board

The Strategic Leadership Board was established to drive forward the Review of Public Administration's implementation process. The board consists of ten political representatives and is chaired by the Minister of the Environment, Sammy Wilson MLA. The Strategic Leadership Board will provide the lead for the Policy Development Panels.

Policy Development Panels

The three panels will develop policies on a range of issues including Governance, Transfer of Functions, Budgets and Community Planning. The panels will consist of ten members drawn from the political parties. The Panel dealing with Community Planning is chaired by Cllr Joanne Bunting and is advised by Liam Hannaway, Chief Executive of Banbridge District Council.

Power of Well-being

What does the Power of Well-being mean?

In announcing the new powers for councils the Minister said they will also have a Power of Well-being which will allow them to “take any action that is not already the responsibility of another agency, linked with the community plan, to improve the well-being of the local community or local area”.

Through examining the examples of the power in England, Wales and Scotland we can get an idea of how the power is applied, who can use it and what the benefits of a similar power here would be.

In England and Wales, every local authority has the power to do anything that it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of any one or more of the following:

- the economic well-being of the area;
- the social well-being of the area;
- the environmental well-being of the area.

This is similar in Scotland where it is referred to as the Power to Advance Well-being. The following case study highlights how the Power has been applied in England.

Wakefield, England

The Well-being Power was used in Wakefield to purchase houses on an estate in rapid decline. This ensured speedy clearance of the area while giving reasonable recompense to residents and owners, rather than going through the lengthy and costly vesting process.

The estate – which was split equally between owner-occupied, housing association-owned and private landlord-owned residences – was overwhelmed by anti-social behaviour and drug-related problems resulting in many unfit or vacant homes and reduced value of the remaining habitable houses.

The Council was keen to acquire and demolish the houses and rehouse the remaining occupants. The rationale was that use of the Well-being Power would facilitate action relatively quickly and effectively. Without this power it was difficult to see how any action could be taken quickly enough.

Agreements were made with the housing association which agreed to demolish its properties and re-house the tenants. Where a property was privately owned and abandoned the landlord was given £3,000 to give over rights to the property to the council. There were criteria for the people living in the estate. If they kept their home in good order the local authority would give them full market price plus recompense for disturbance and re-location.

(www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/formativeevaluation).

Community Planning and Your Community

If your group would like to know more about Community Planning or receive more information on the project, please contact Annie Clarke on 028 9023 9444 or by email at annie@communityplaces.info Annie will also be happy to talk to you about capacity building for the groups in your area.

Future Events

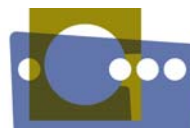
Planning, the Law and the Community Event

This event seeks to assist groups and individuals in successfully engaging with the planning system and gaining access to environmental justice.

The event will be held at **NICVA**, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast on **Thursday, 25 September 2008 from 2.30 pm to 6.00 pm**. If you wish to attend, please contact Community Places for a booking form.



Community
Places



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