

Newry and Mourne District Council

Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Facilitation Session held in Newry Arts Centre on Friday, 26th January 2007 at 9.30 a.m.

In Attendance: Fergal O'Brien, Community Development Unit
Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer
Brian Quinn, Community Representative
Bertie Flynn, Community Representative
Caroline Speers, N.I. Tenants' Action Project
Eoin Devlin, Environmental Health Dept
Geraldine Donaghy, Confederation of Community Groups
Eileen Murphy, Womens Aid
Sheila McCullough, NIHE
Paul O'Neill, Newry Sports Centre
Una Walsh, Women's Health Development Worker
Kieran Devlin
Briega Magill, Administration Officer, NMDC

Others: Ann Godfrey, Children's Services Planner, Southern Area
Children and Young People's Committee
Lyn Donnelly, Southern Investing for Health Partnership
Barbary Cook, Facilitator, CDHN

Apologies Eddy Curtis, NMDC
Liam Donnelly
Inspector Lorraine Dobson, PSNI
Denise Smith, Community Safety
Miceal McCoy, Rural Partnership

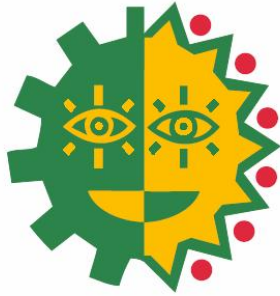
Fergal O'Brien, Chairman, introduced Barbary Cook, Facilitator, to everyone present.

Barbary said she had had a pre-meeting with Fergal, Aisling and Briega where it was agreed that the purpose of the meeting was to bring together the Wellbeing Action Partnership to:

- Explore the changing health and wellbeing context under the Review of Public Administration;
- Re-visit the purpose of the Wellbeing Action Partnership, (with particular attention to possible revision of process aims and objectives towards outcome based aims and objectives);
- Explore what partnership structure is suitable to achieve these revised aims and objectives;
- Explore what project areas the partnership wishes to work on in the future.

Barbary said it was envisaged that today would only be sufficient to deal with the first two of these points and that a second session may be necessary.

(See report attached for progress during session)
It was agreed to hold a further session on 6th March 2007.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
AND HEALTH **NETWORK**

Report on Strategic Planning Sessions

Newry & Mourne Wellbeing Action Partnership

Facilitated by Barbary Cook. CDHN

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Agenda for 1st Strategic Planning Session, 26/1/07

(As distributed to participants)

Draft purpose of session and draft agenda

The purpose of the meeting is to bring together the Wellbeing Action Partnership to:

- Explore the changing health and wellbeing context under the Review of Public Administration;
- Re-visit the purpose of the Wellbeing Action Partnership, (with particular attention to possible revision of process aims and objectives towards outcome based aims and objectives);
- Explore what partnership structure is suitable to achieve these revised aims and objectives;
- Explore what project areas the partnership wishes to work on in the future.

It is envisioned that the morning session of 26th January will only be sufficient to deal with the first two of these points and that a second session may be necessary. If this is the case, the Partnership will confirm a second date on the 26th January. Would Partners please bring diaries with them?

Draft Schedule

Time	Item	Who & How	Desired Outcome
9.30am – 9.40am	Welcome & Introductions	Barbary Cook Whole group	
9.40am – 10.00am	Brief presentations on changes under RPA	Lyn Donnelly, SIHP Community Safety Partnership Neighbourhood Renewal, LSP	Participants will have an increased understanding of impact of RPA changes on health and well-being work in Newry and Mourne
10.00am – 10.20am	Discuss how the new RPA structures and commitment to community development will impact on health and well-being work in Newry and Mourne	Discuss impact in small groups	Participants will understand peers' interpretation of impact of change.
10.20am – 10.40am		Whole group SWOT analysis	Participants will have clearer picture of impact of change in terms of opportunities and threats.
10.40am – 10.50am	Coffee break		
10.50am – 11.15am	Discussion of current purpose and aims and objectives and need to	Whole group	Participants will have decided whether or not there is a need to

	revise aims and objectives		change purpose and aims and objectives
<i>If need to change purpose and aims and objectives....</i>			
11.15am – 11.45am	Develop revised purpose and aims and objectives	Discuss in small groups	Participants will propose revised purpose and aims and objectives.
11.45am – 12.30pm	Confirm revised purpose and aims and objectives	Whole group	Participants will agree revised purpose and aims and objectives.
12.30pm – 12.45pm	Agree process for 2 nd session – confirm Partnership structure and agrees areas of work	Whole group	Participants will agree process for 2 nd session
12.30pm – 1.00pm	Feedback/close	Whole group	Participants will agree what worked well and what could be improved.

Prep work for those attending:

- Describe your current community development and health work and highlight some areas of concerns and issues that exist for your group/organization in terms of RPA changes.
- Come with understanding of the new RPA structures and some initial thoughts about what kind of impact these might have on your group/organization.
- Think about what has worked well in the Wellbeing Action Partnership and what should be continued.
- Think about what hasn't worked so well and what could be improved. These can be both about how the partnership works (process) and what the Partnership works on (content).

Current Aims and Objectives of Well-being Action Partnership

Newry & Mourne Wellbeing Action Partnership (WAP)

Mission

Working together for health, wealth, education and happiness for all in
Newry & Mourne

Purpose:

The purpose of WAP is to help all organisations and communities to work together to improve health and wellbeing in the Newry & Mourne area.

The focus is on making a difference through practical actions at local level. WAP seeks to harness the energies, commitment and resources of people, communities and organisations whose work contributes to the health and wellbeing of the area, to make a bigger impact, identify needs and gaps and attract new resources to the area.

Key Aims and Objectives

- To help the partners to share information, support each others work and work together on practical actions to improve health and reduce inequalities in health particularly with those who experience or are most vulnerable to the worst health in Newry & Mourne.
- To explain and help people to understand the 'Investing in Health' agenda at local level.
- To promote and support community development and show how people, their communities and their organisations can improve health in Newry & Mourne.
- To provide a structure (WAP) to help people and organisations to influence decision making, service planning and provision affecting the health of Newry & Mourne.
- To provide, where possible, links with the wide range of strategies, policies and projects which aim to improve health and wellbeing in Newry and Mourne.

Report of 1st Strategic Planning Session including preparation questions for participants

The Partnership discussed the impact of the current changes in the external environment, including but not limited to the Review of Public Administration, on the aims and objectives of the WAP.

Impact of change

Small groups noted the impact of current changes in the external environment, including but not limited to the impact of the Review of Public Administration

- CAWT
- Republic of Ireland, Development Plan
- RPA
- Perceived loss of local partnerships
- Loss of community funding – Lottery money going to the Olympics and European funding drying up
- Changes to structures and personnel
- Interim arrangements
- GP management structure
- Arrangement with community and voluntary sector, for example SLAs and Budgets
- Contacts are less local and accessible, could lead to diluted local voice
- Councils – less local, changed role and responsibility. Less time to advocate. Impact of rates and water rates.
- Community planning – positive opportunity
- Merging of existing processes
- European dimension – inward migration
- Local sense of ownership is very strong
- Changing economic and social culture
- Rationalisation of schools
- Political context – Assembly and policing
- Introduction of smoking ban – power of lobbying
 - Deterioration of relationships
 - Decrease in local accountability
 - Effect on service users (direct contact)
 - De-personalisation
 - Problems for community representation
- Geographical location of central HQ
 - Isolation
 - Negative effects
 - Decrease in transport
 - Decrease in communication
 - Decrease in time
 - Increase in costs

Opportunities in the changes

- Community planning: cross-sectoral; locality –based, local ownership

- Developmental Plan – all-Ireland, link to cross-border opportunities, CAWT and partnership working
- Assembly, if devolution there will be renewed connection to local representatives
- Power of lobbying
- Statutory responsibility for inter-agency planning
- Community and voluntary sector groups have been coming together to deal with RPA changes, shows degree of commitment
- Changes in relationships
- Migration and changing demographics
- Recurrent, stable funding for community sector and full-cost recovery
- DSD's support for community and voluntary sector (Positive Steps etc.)

Threats in the changes

- Relationships
 - Loss of
 - Distance
 - Issues of accountability
 - De-personalisation
- Community reps? How will they be involved, distance and access
- The new arrangements will bring us back to 'done to', not 'done for and with'
- Public transport not there to support de-centralisation
- Ripple costs on community of distance
- There could be less engagement with communities
- There is less funding in the C&V sector, which means that many organisations are closing, which means the engagement infrastructure could disappear
- People have a perception that there will be less engagement, and what there might be will not be meaningful and so they are leaving the process
- What will engagement mean under the new structures – will it be the lowest common denominator
- If people are consulted, then that consultation needs to be acted on
- Resources need to be there to support the engagement process
- Those who most need the services could be the ones that lose out under the more centralised structures
- Loss of voice for the most vulnerable
- Dilution of local voice
- There are different timetables for changes under the RPA (health – currently, education, 2007/8 and local government 2009), which is confusing and difficult to manage
- The different timetables may threaten existing partnerships
- What impact will the changes in the education structures have? There is hardly information about this. There is a threat to local schools.
- There could be a loss of the progress that has been made on the social model.
- Under the new structures, what kind of 'health' work will get prioritised? What will the targets be for?

- There is a lack of information about and understanding of the new structures.
- Because of this lack of information there is also a lack of accountability.
- The change is being done in silos – one for health, one for education and one for local government.
- Will there be budgets/resources to pay for the change?
- Changing migration patterns because of EU enlargement will have an impact, more migrant workers coming into the Newry & Mourne area
- Water rate will have an impact on people's lives.

The Partnership discussed the strengths of WAP both in terms of the work it has done and its structure.

Strengths of the Well-being Action Partnership

- Resources have facilitated the onset of joined-up working
- Flexibility
- People come on board because they have particular interests and they want to see WAP take some action on those.
- There is a range of people on the partnership
- There is a connection to Southern Investing for Health Partnership and so a connection to a wider agenda.
- Information sharing
- Funding from the Partnership
- Administrative support in the Partnership has been very important
- It emerged out of the agreed need for a one-stop-shop, where all the agencies would come together, for example to work on BME issues
- It's reactive – tries to be responsive to issues that emerge and get others to respond
- Facilitates inter-agency working
- It's community-based
- It's experimental
- It's a forerunner for community planning
- There is learning between the partners
- People are comfortable with each other
- It can compile information for communities

Weaknesses of the Well-being Action Partnership

- It has a low profile on communities and with potential new RPA audiences
- The name is terrible
- It needs to hold questions and answers sessions in South Armagh and Mourne to find out what people really want WAP to work on
- Needs to actively engage with the community
- It needs more resources
- WAP has a low profile in environmental agencies
- It needs more projects – which relates back to raising the profile
- What has WAP done that has failed? We need to learn from that and share that learning so we can develop best practice models
- WAP needs a workplan, which we didn't have at the beginning

The group began to realise that there was a central question for the Partnership to address – is the Well-being Action Partnership a strategic partnership or an operation/implementation partnership? By this, the group meant, does WAP come together to have a strategic impact on agencies in the area that are working on health and well-being by sharing information and lobbying. Or it is a Partnership that carries out particular pieces of work, perhaps when it sees a gap in service provision in the area. Or is it both?

The aim of WAP is to improve people's health and well-being. The Partnership has to decide what the best way to go about doing this is. It became clear, during the morning session, that different people in the room had quite different ideas about what would be the most effective way WAP could fulfil its aim to improve health and well-being. The Options below describe three different ways of working that came up in the discussion. There may be other ways, but these are the ones that emerged during the discussion.

As a result, the Partnership decided that it needed a second session to discuss these options further and to decide what would be the best way to move forward.

In order to make sure that the 2nd session would be productive and also to ensure that people who hadn't been able to come along to the 1st session would be up-to-date, the Partnership asked the facilitator to draw up brief descriptions of the Options and to list questions about each that had emerged in the 1st discussion. The point of doing this is for people to use the time between session to think hard about what are the effects of choosing one Option rather than another.

Options to move forward on

Option A: be a strategic partnership

- Work on lobbying on health and well-being issues in the Newry & Mourne area
- Be a united voice for Partnership agencies in terms of getting others (agencies, politicians etc) to commit to work that will improve the health and well-being of people in Newry & Mourne
- Lobby and work on RPA developments (distribute information, keep people engaged, consult and engage on issues)
- Raise the profile of the Partnership and raise the profile of the agencies and organisations working on health and well-being in the Newry and Mourne area.

Questions:

- What added value to health and well-being work in Newry & Mourne would a strategic, lobbying partnership add?
- People have gotten frustrated with a 'talking-shop' partnership before in WAP. Why would it be different now?
- The RPA changes could accentuate WAP's relatively low public profile – what are the implications for everyone if this isn't raised?

- If WAP doesn't provide this strategic role who else in Newry & Mourne can? (District Council, Newry City partnership, C&V sector, individual agencies?)
- Given the points made in the conversations above, does Option A take advantage both of WAP's strengths and the opportunities emerging in the external environment?
- How will Option A address the weaknesses and the threats?
- What does your agency/organisation need from WAP? What gap do you think it can fill? Would it be addressed by Option A?
- Is WAP's strategic role being filled by another organisation?

Option B: Operational/Implementation Partnership

- Provide services, i.e. take on new projects that are responses to need and filling gaps where no one else is working
- Move towards the Health Action Zone/Healthy Living Centre model for Newry & Mourne with a structure, a physical space, staff and particular operational areas of work.

Questions:

- Does Newry & Mourne need another service provider organisation? If you think it does, write down why you think this and what areas you think WAP should be active in? If not, write down which other organisations are already fulfilling this service provider function.
- What are the benefits of having an organisation with a physical space and well-resourced staff? What do you imagine them doing that is not already being done elsewhere? What would its added value be?
- Previously, people in WAP got frustrated because the Partnership was not doing any project work. Why do you think that happened? Would deciding to make the Partnership an operational Partnership address those frustrations?
- Given the points made in the conversations above, does Option B take advantage both of WAP's strengths and the opportunities emerging in the external environment?
- How will Option B address the weaknesses and the threats?
- What does your agency/organisation need from WAP? What gap do you think it can fill? Would it be addressed by Option B?
- Is WAP's operational role being filled by another organisation?

Option C: Some combination of A & B

- The Well-being Action partnership would be a combination of strategic and operational. In effect this is what the Partnership is currently doing, as it began more as a strategic, information sharing partnership, but developed an operational role because Partners felt some degree of frustration with not 'doing' anything. It was noted that in the discussion that a combination would be possible, as long as it was formally agreed and that a work plan was developed to describe the work of the Partnership, rather than letting it emerge over time.

Questions:

- What would the balance between strategic and operational work be? How would the Partnership decide that? Would it be decided at the beginning or over time?
- How would a combination Partnership add value to the health and well-being work already being done in Newry and Mourne?
- Is the combination option the best possible solution or a compromise?
- If WAP tries to do both, what are the risks and benefits in that?
- Given the points made in the conversations above, does Option C take advantage both of WAP's strengths and the opportunities emerging in the external environment?
- How will Option C address the weaknesses and the threats?
- What does your agency/organisation need from WAP? What gap do you think it can fill? Would it be addressed by Option C?
- Is WAP's dual role being filled by another organisation?

Draft agenda for 2nd session, 6th March 2007

The purpose of the 2nd meeting is to bring together the Wellbeing Action Partnership to:

- Explore the options above;
- Decide which option to move forward on;
- Decide whether or not the current aims and objectives need to re-written in the light of the above
- Decide what partnership structure is suitable for that option;
- Action-plan according to the decisions above, with specific areas of work for the WAP over the next 3 years (this may necessitate a further session).

Draft Schedule

Time	Item	Who & How	Desired Outcome
2.00pm – 2.10pm	Welcome & Introductions	Barbary Cook Whole group	
2.10pm – 2.20pm	Icebreaker	Whole group	Participants feel more relaxed with each other.
2.20pm – 3.00pm	Discussion of Options A, B, C	Advocacy & Enquiry Whole group	Participants will gain greater understanding of partners' opinions on Options.
3.00pm – 3.10pm	Coffee break		
3.10pm – 3.30pm	Decision on Option	Whole group	Participants decide on way forward for WAP.
3.30pm – 4.00pm	Discussion of current purpose and aims and objectives and need to revise aims and objectives	Whole group	Participants will have decided whether or not there is a need to change purpose and aims and objectives
<i>If need to change purpose and aims and objectives...</i>			
4.00pm – 4.20pm	Develop revised purpose and aims and objectives	Whole group	Participants will agree revised purpose and aims and objectives.
Remaining items which may be covered if there's enough time	Confirm Partnership structure and agree areas of work	Whole group	Participants will confirm Partnership structure and areas of work.
4.20pm – 4.30pm	Feedback/close	Whole group	Participants will agree what worked well and what could be improved.

Prep work for those attending:

- Read the report of the 1st session, look at Options A, B & C and answer the questions