

Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting held on Friday 11 December 2009.

In Attendance: Fergal O'Brien, SHSCT
Loma Wilson, NIHE
Rosemarie McDonnell, Citizens Advice Bureau
Eoin Devlin, Environmental Health
Brian Quinn, Community Representative, Mourne Area
Jacinta Linden, South Down Family Health Initiative
Sean McKeivitt, Neighbourhood Renewal Officer
Laurence Bradley, Confederation of Community Groups
Bertie Flynn, Community Representative, Newry Area
Thomas McCall, Chief Executive, N&MDC
Joanne Sweeney, Health Improvement Worker
Katerina Skrebska, Ethnic Minority Support Officer
Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer

Apologies: Eileen Murphy, Women's Aid
Una Walsh, Women and Family Health Initiative
Sr Helena Daly, Family Services, Orana
Briege Magill, Administration Officer

Fergal welcomed everyone to the meeting. He particularly welcomed Thomas McCall who had come along to update the partnership regarding Community Planning. Over the past couple of years there had been significant changes due to RPA, in particular within the Trust. The reorganisation of Councils and the introduction of Community Planning would have further impact.

Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meetings

Read: Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting held on Friday 18 September 2009 (copy circulated)

Read: Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership meeting held on Friday 25 September 2009 (copy circulated)

Agreed to adopt the above reports as true and accurate record, same having been circulated.

Community Planning

Thomas McCall explained that he had been asked to chair a NI taskforce on Community Planning as part of the RPA process. To ensure as broad a representation as possible approx 55 groups, from both the public and community sectors, were involved in the taskforce. The taskforce had produced 21 recommendations, many of which covered what it was felt was essential to be included in the legislation. It was clear that the model the taskforce preferred was the Scottish model. However, this could not be

simply transplanted into Northern Ireland but that we would have to develop our own model based on the Scottish one.

He noted that Community Planning was not an event but a process and therefore would not happen overnight. In a 2006 report Audit Scotland noted that in 10 years community planning had been very patchy but they were not disappointed as it was a long-term process.

Thomas stated Community Planning had huge potential but it would need organisational culture change. He cited the example of Glasgow, where at the start the bare minimum was done to meet the legislative requirements. Later a number of key people changed and these individuals began to work together. Northern Ireland intended to have strong legislation around Community Planning but this would not be enough on its own. It was necessary to have legislation and real commitment coming together.

In Scotland not all areas used the same model. Rural areas had a different process than that used for example in Glasgow. He also said community planning would not be limited by council boundaries particularly with the lack of coterminosity in Northern Ireland. It would be essential to cross boundaries and whilst at the centre of Community Planning was locality it had to be bigger. In particular, in this area there would have to be a Cross Border dimension.

The Scottish model involved a core group or strategic tier which was then informed by and delivered through thematic groups. He believed the whole aspect of wellbeing and Investing for Health would underpin all aspects of the plan.

Thomas went on to outline the current position regarding RPA and Councils. He explained strategic decisions were being made by the Strategic Leadership Board, which was chaired by the minister. A number of issue specific panels then fed into this board. Currently eight councillors each from Newry and Mourne and Down District Councils were sitting on a voluntary transition committee, in effect a shadow council. It was expected that in early 2010 this would become the Statutory Transition Committee with specific powers. The Strategic Leadership Board had made recommendations with regard to the progress STCs should be making on community planning.

However, there was no certainty about the whole RPA process at the moment. Therefore the forward plan had already slipped and there was a danger that the STC would have to focus more on the practical issues of amalgamation rather than put the emphasis they would like on Community Planning.

He explained that Councils would hold the statutory function for community planning but not all aspects of the plan would fall within the Council remit. Statutory based Community Planning would require other aspects of the

public sector to participate. The Community and private sector involvement would be more on the basis of voluntary buy-in.

Because of the uncertainty about what would happen Councils were really tinkering around the edges of Community Planning. He felt that in this area we were further along the road than others due to the history and culture of working together.

He saw Community Planning as developing a shared vision to promote the wellbeing of the area. It would involve making the best use of resources as realistically there was not going to be significant additional money. There had been some additional money in Scotland but it had been particularly directed to areas of deprivation to be used to pump prime the process. In reality, the money would lie within the budgets of the statutory organisations. It was about using resources better, smarter, wiser.

Thomas said Councillors and officers would lead the process but it had to be about genuine communication with people and communities. He said a certain amount of responsibility lay with communities not to develop unachievable wish lists. One area in Scotland had devolved decision making to very small areas (200/300 people). At first they had been unrealistic but then began to focus on achievable targets. He noted the community sector in Scotland did have a place at the statutory level but they felt it was more important to them to be involved in the thematic groups. The aspiration in Scotland was that Community Planning would have led to a reduction in the number of community and voluntary partnerships, the reality 10 years on was that there were now more.

He noted one challenge for the community sector would be how they would decide on their representatives at strategic level. The public sector would be easy but how community representatives were selected would be a difficult matter.

In reply to Brian Quinn Thomas stated he could not hold out much hope for increased funding for the community sector. He agreed that more of the SOAR and Peace funding should have been available to support the sector but those decisions were taken by the funders. In addition he felt the clusters should have been based on the 11 Council model.

Responding to Fergal, he agreed the lack of coterminosity was an issue. There would have been more coterminosity with the original 7 council model although some anomalies would have existed. It had been agreed that regional and sub-regional organisations would have been required to organise internally to maximise coterminosity. However the current situation was now even more complicated.

Laurence Bradley said his experience of other structures highlighted difficulties for community sector representatives in reporting back within the

sector. He also asked if the community plan would be an amalgam of local area based plans.

In reply, Thomas said the process would have to work within constraints but at this point it was too early to say what the structure would look like.

Laurence noted the Confederation had hosted one information session on community planning and had a further one planned for 25 January 2010.

Fergal thanked Thomas for what he felt had been a good steer for the partnership. He said it emphasised the need to build good working relationships.

Membership/Cooperation with Down area

Agreed to invite Colm Bradley, Community Places to a future meeting of the partnership to assist with consideration of the future direction.

Report on Investing for Health

Child Poverty

SIHP has agreed through its Poverty and Disadvantage Issue group to make £15,000 available towards child poverty projects in the Newry and Mourne District. Money was awarded to South Down Family Health Initiative, uniform and toy swap shop, CAB and Ethnic Minority Support Centre for debt support, St Vincent de Paul and Orana Family Support Services for family and child support projects.

Small Grants

The SIHP small grants programme has now closed. The programme was open to community/voluntary organisations throughout the Southern Area and provides grants of up to £1000 towards projects addressing physical activity, nutrition or other health improvement issues. In total 160 applications were received with 34 being successful. The following eleven projects from Newry and Mourne received funding:

Newry and Mourne Watch Club
Newry and Mourne Tinnitus Support Group
Friends of Millview
Simon Community
TAG (The Active Group)
Prospects
Greater Cloughreagh Community Association
Creggan Church of Ireland Hall Committee
Cortamlet PTA
Loughbrook Women's Group
Binnian Lodgers

Fuel Poverty Programme

A review has been carried out of the fuel poverty programme funded by SIHP and delivered by the Council in conjunction with St Vincent de Paul, Baptist Church and Sandy's Street Presbyterian. A total of £20,000 was spent, in Newry and Mourne, on providing assistance to people in need. A copy of the report is available through Aisling Rennick

Following the success of the programme last year. Money has been made available from the Public Health Agency for a continuation of the programme. The scheme is being coordinated by the Council and delivered through St Vincent de Paul, Newry Baptist Church and the Salvation Army. The scheme is aimed at those most in need and therefore operates **only** on the basis of referrals from appropriate organisations.

Mentality Project

The Mentality Project is aimed at raising awareness of mental health issues among men, particularly in rural areas. In its first year the project worked in partnership with the Menaware group in South Armagh on the production of a dvd focusing on mental health issues.

Neighbourhood Environmental Projects

The Neighbourhood and Environment Issue group is working with NIHE to support 5 local neighbourhood/community groups to deliver small environmental projects with strong community involvement.

Community Challenge

The Newry and Mourne Community Challenge organised by the Council in partnership with South Down Family Health Initiative and Women and Family Health Initiative is has concluded. The programme finished with a presentation evening in Mullaghbawn on 19 October. The overall winning group were Bridge Women (Mayobridge) with local area winners being the Misfits from South Armagh and Mourne Stimulus.

Provision of Refreshments at Council Meetings and Functions

The Council has now adopted guidelines for the provision of refreshments at Council meetings and functions. The guidelines require that at least one health option is included in provision of food for adult groups and that **all** food/drinks at functions/events involving children and young people should be healthier options and that no high fat, sugar, salt food or drinks should be served at such events.

APSE Awards

The Challenge of Change Project was short-listed for the Association of Public Service Excellence Awards held in Cardiff on 10 September 2008.

Ethnic Minority Support Centre

The Belong project (Atlantic Philanthropies funded BME project for Southern Area) has requested part-time use of facilities at the Ethnic Minority Support Centre to provide services within Newry and Mourne. The two projects would complement each other.

The Belong programme has been developed by the Southern Area Children and Young People's Committee (SACYPC) Working Group on the Rights and Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Children and Young People. The programme aims to improve outcomes for BME children and young people (aged 7-12 years) across the Southern area of Northern Ireland.

The overarching outcome for the Programme is to promote a sense of belonging. The intention is to realise this through achieving the following more specific outcomes:

- To increase cultural confidence and competence;
- To increase participation in clubs and schools;
- To increase educational achievement of Traveller children;
- To reduce bullying and racial-bullying; and
- To increase resilience.

Community Planning

The Council is intending to host a conference in February entitled: People and Participation – the potential for Community Planning. The conference will target the community and public sector and aims to begin a dialogue around the development of community planning in the area.

Home Accident Prevention Group (HAP)

Electric Blanket Testing

Electric Blanket Testing Sessions were held

Hilltown	23 September 2009
Cullyhanna	1 October 2009
Annalong	14 October 2009
Newry	27 October 2009

Progress Report – Ethnic Minority Support Centre

Ethnic Minority Support Centre was officially launched on Thursday 13 September 2007.

1.0 Services offered

FREE front-line advice and support, referrals and sign-posting

2.0 Cases dealt with to-date

Approx. 2000 queries /compare Nov 2009 – app. 1000 /

Main issues:

- social welfare of migrants excluded from assistance and welfare benefits
*NOTICABLE increasing number of individuals and families in risk of homelessness or already homeless and in serious financial difficulties because of no or limited recourse to public funds /not registered with Home Office Workers Registration Scheme or not registered for full 12 months/ . The most vulnerable are women with children.
Work with SVDP, a Trust to provide some financial support, Womens Aid and Simon Community*
- housing - *deposits not refunded – some of the cases referred to Small Claims Court- bad condition of accommodation*
- family benefits - *Tax Credits, Child Benefit, Housing Benefit, Disability Living Allowance*
- employment rights - *Laid off workers -Cut hours /not eligible for Tax Credit/ They put up unacceptable practices to keep jobs /long hours, unsocial hours, unpaid overtime/Incorrect tax codes resulting in underpaid tax - Delays in a pay, unpaid holiday, sick pay, maternity pay*
- health- *registering with GP /50+ group working here for no of years not being registered and with suddenly rising health issues /arrange appointments with face-to-face interpreter - support for families with children with disabilities*

Plan to organize:

- Focus Group

Due to the increase in numbers of clients contacting the centre with health and wellbeing related queries, we intend to organize a focus group in early 2010 to provide an evidence base to raise issues with the relevant organizations.

- 4 information evenings

Debt Management Information Evening- January 2010

Family Health and Wellbeing Information Evening - February 2010

Housing and Environmental Health Information Evening - April 2010

Education Information Evening - May 2010

Projects supporting migrant community in Newry and Mourne

- ESOL CLASSES

Mothers and toddlers ESOL classes - *Every Monday 10.00am – 11.30am, Ballybot House - Project manager – Sr Helena Daly*

ESOL classes with a Polish teacher, beginners - *Every Wednesday 7pm-9pm, St Josephs Boys High School, Newry*

ESOL classes - *Every Tue, Wed, Thurs - SVDP, Mill Street, Newry*

- POLISH SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL - Every Saturday, Abbey Primary, Courtney Hill, Newry

- LITHUANIAN SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL - In preparation

Jacinta Linden said she would like to thank Katerina for her help in introducing Lithuanian families to South Down Family Health Initiative.

She also noted that through WAP, arrangements had been made for CAB to develop an outreach service in Warrenpoint in partnership with SDFHI. She said the local Credit Union were also keen to get involved.

Health Improvement Worker

Joanne Sweeney made a short presentation on health improvement work. She particularly mentioned money which had been made available through Health Action Zone for men's health programmes. She noted that in Newry and Mourne men had 4 years lower life expectancy than women. She had developed a programme in conjunction with Ulster Cancer Foundation.

Aisling Rennick stated Joanne was leaving the Council to take up a new post in Belfast. She thanked Joanne for all her help.

Benefits Form Filling

Rosemarie McDonnell said CAB had developed a programme to train volunteers in completing benefits forms. The programme was being taken up by South Down Family Health and Women and Family Health Initiatives.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 11.30 pm