

Newry and Mourne District Council

Report of the Action Planning Meeting of Newry and Mourne Wellbeing Action Partnership held at 9.30am on Friday, 26 February 2010 in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry.

In Attendance: Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer
Rosemarie McDonnell, Citizens Advice Bureau
Bertie Flynn, Community Representative
Lorraine Dobson, PSNI
Brian Quinn, Mournes Area Community Representative
Artur Kmiecik, Ethnic Minority Support Worker
Nicola Doran, Health Improvement Worker
Sr Helena Daly, TESOL Project
Donna Sloan, South Armagh Women and Family Health
Briege Magill, Administration Officer

Apologies: Fergal O'Brien, SHSCT
E Curtis, NMDC
Jacinta Linden, SHFHI
Lorraine Murphy, Newry and Mourne Carers
Sean McKeivitt, Neighbourhood Renewal
Kathleen Smith, Newry and Mourne Womens Limited

Matters Arising

Aisling said Fergal apologised for not being able to attend today's meeting.

Aisling said Katerina Skrebska had left her post in the Support Centre on Monday 18 January 2010 to take up the post as Challenge of Change Project Officer for Louth. Recruitment for the post up to March 2011 closed on 12 February 2010. She said Katerina had been helping out by covering the drop in sessions at the centre. Aisling introduced Artur Kmiecik, who was now temporarily filling the Ethnic Minority Support Worker post.

Artur said he had worked as a community interpreter for about three years in different community environments such as hospitals, schools, police stations and job centres. As a result of this he said he had an awareness and overview of different community issues and problems.

Aisling also introduced Nicola Doran who had been appointed as Health Improvement Worker as a result of Joanne Sweeney vacating this post to take up new employment in Belfast.

Nicola said she had only just commenced in post but she had already met some of the members present. She said she hoped to make contact with other members and groups in the near future.

Minutes of Meeting held on 11 December 2009

Read: Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting held on Friday 11 December 2009. (Copy circulated).

On the proposal of Bertie Flynn, seconded by Brian Quinn, the above report was adopted as a true and accurate record, same having been circulated.

Membership of Wellbeing Action Partnership

It was agreed a sub-group would meet on 11 March to discuss the future structure and membership of the Wellbeing Action Partnership.

It was agreed Briege would send out an invitation to all WAP members to attend the meeting on 11 March if they wished.

Brian Quinn and Bertie Flynn both indicated that they would be willing to attend.

Read: Request from Maria McBride, Raising Aspirations Project, Ballybot House, to become a member of the Wellbeing Action Partnership.

It was agreed to invite Maria McBride to all future meetings of the Wellbeing Action Partnership.

Update from Aisling Rennick

People and Participation Conference – Aisling said a major conference was held on Wednesday 3 February 2010 exploring the experience of Community Planning to date and providing a forum for the Community, Public and Private Sectors to explore the potential opportunities opened up by the future introduction of Community Planning into Northern Ireland. The conference had been attended by over one hundred representatives from the community, public and private sectors.

Brian Quinn said there was sometimes a problem getting groups from rural areas to participate or engage.

Lorraine Dobson said the PSNI were using internet sites which were popular with the local community to carry out surveys and gather opinions.

Following discussion, it was agreed that at the sub group meeting on 11 March members would look at new ways to engage with people in the community.

Emergency Fuel Relief Scheme

The emergency fuel relief scheme opened in the second week of December. The scheme was aimed at those most in need and therefore operated only on the basis of referrals from appropriate organisations. The scheme was delivered through St Vincent de Paul, Newry Baptist Church and the Salvation Army. Total funding for the scheme for 2009/10 was £18,600 provided by the Public Health Agency through Southern Investing for Health Partnership. Need has been extremely high this year and the funding is now exhausted.

Following the success of the energy efficiency packs provided in conjunction with the fuel relief scheme, money has been made available through the Public Health Agency to roll the scheme out on a NI wide basis. This is being coordinated through the Agency's Armagh staff and TADA rural network. A substantial number of packs are being made available to the Newry and Mourne Area.

Southern Investing for Health Partnership

Aisling informed members that Lyn Donnelly has left her post as Manager with Southern Investing for Health Partnership to take up post as Assistant Director of Commissioning with the Regional Health Board.

Community Environment Projects

SIHP in conjunction with NIHE is supporting 4 community groups to carry out local environment projects. One of these projects is in the Newry and Mourne District.

Ethnic Minority Support Centre

Aisling said as she had stated earlier in the meeting Katerina Skrebska has left the Support Centre on Monday 18 January 2010 to take up the post as Challenge of Change Project Officer for Louth. Recruitment for the post up to March 2011 closed on 12 February 2010.

In the meantime Katerina has been helping out by covering the drop in sessions at the centre.

The main issues were as follows:

- NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS of many migrant workers and whole families
- HOMELESSNESS - Work with SVDP, Baptist Church, a Trust to provide some financial support, Women's Aid and Simon Community, Fuel Grant Scheme
- RACISM – (a) In the community – harassment /property damage/, attacks – (b) At the workplace – exploitation /breach of statutory employment rights – unpaid minimum wage, holiday pay, sick pay, unfair dismissals

- HOUSING - deposits not refunded, non-functional equipment in private houses
- TAX CREDITS, CHILD BENEFIT, SS BENEFITS - Lack of information about entitlement and application process, delays in decision making process, lost applications, proof of identity and additional documentations etc

Aisling said monthly Employment Rights Clinics will be held in the Centre from March 2010. Clinics are being funded through the Challenge of Change Peace 3 project and would be delivered by Citizens Advice Bureau in conjunction with the Ethnic Minority Centre and also by CAB in the Craigavon area.

Rosemary said the clinics would be starting in April and would be advertised in different languages. She said interpreters would be available at the clinics to help with employment rights issues. Rosemary said she would provide feedback to the next meeting.

It was agreed Rosemary would make contact with the Fishermen's Mission in Killeel in relation to these clinics.

Rosemary also advised that CAB were developing their website and would provide on-line guidance and advice.

Resignation

Lorraine Dobson informed members that she would not be attending future meetings of the Partnership due to reorganisation/restructuring within the PSNI. She thanked members for their help and assistance over the last number of years and said another PSNI representative would attend future meetings.

Aisling thanked Lorraine for her support especially in relation to the establishment of the Ethnic Minority Support Centre and wished her well in her new role.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 11.05 a.m.