

Newry and Mourne District Council

Report of Meeting of Newry and Mourne Wellbeing Action Partnership held at 9.30am on Friday, 25 September 2009, in the Boardroom, District Council Offices, Monaghan Row, Newry.

In Attendance: Fergal O'Brien, SHSCT
Aisling Rennick, Investing for Health Officer
L Bradley, CCG
Bertie Flynn, Community Representative
Rosemarie McDonnell, Citizens Advice Bureau
Eileen Murphy, Womens Aid
Katerina Skrebska, Ethnic Minority Support Worker
Eoin Devlin, Environmental Health
Orla McCann, Supporting Communities
Marian Cully, SHSCT (Community Development Worker)
Sean McKeivitt, Neighbourhood Renewal
Briege Magill, Administration Officer

Also: Sarah Cherry, Juniper Consulting

Apologies: E Curtis, NMDC
Joanne Sweeney, Health Improvement Worker
Sr Helena Daly, Family Services, Orana
Paul O'Neill, Newry Sports Centre
Loma Wilson, NIHE
Brian Quinn, Mournes Area Community Representative
Jacinta Linden, SDFHI
Lorraine Dobson, PSNI

Fergal welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of Meeting held on 5 June 2009

Read: Report of Wellbeing Action Partnership Meeting held on Friday 5 June 2009. (Copy circulated).

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

Laurence Bradley to circulate Confederation's new organisational structure and telephone numbers.

Briege Magill to follow up again with Deirdre Magill, Drugs and Alcohol Team to have the Southern Area Integrated Alcohol and Drugs Support Service Structure circulated to all WAP members.

MATTERS ARISING

Fergal reported that a response had been received from Caitriona Ruane Minister for Education, in relation to letter dated 30 June from the Wellbeing Action Partnership when concern had been expressed at learning some cases in our area whereby children of parents with “no recourse to public funds” are living in circumstances of extreme poverty and are at risk of malnutrition.

Ms Ruane said that the Department of Education had now updated the eligibility criteria for free school meals to enable schools to provide meals to pupils on humanitarian grounds where the need existed. She said a letter had been issued to all schools outlining the new arrangements.

Introduction of Sean McKeivitt

Sean said he was the Co-ordinator of the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership and sub-groups. He said it was his role to ensure meetings were held, projects kept running and were within the action plan. He said he had recently been involved in youth work programs where he hoped there would be more proactive work happening on the ground.

Sean said there were about fifty programs running, focused on neighbourhood renewal, ranging from health programs, education programs and physical activity programs with an overall budget of £1.1 million.

Laurence Bradley said the agenda for Neighbourhood Renewal was clearly led by Government policy/priorities and may not have been an agenda which the community may initially felt they wanted.

In reply to a query from Bertie Flynn, Sean said the difficulty with Youth Programs were that they were not properly resourced. There were not enough people on the ground to pull all programs together.

It was agreed Sean would forward the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan to Briege for circulation to all members.

Introduction of Sarah Cherry

Sarah said Juniper Consulting had been employed on behalf of the Peace III Southern Cluster Partnership to undertake a scoping exercise for the Challenge of Change priority, which was one of the seven key priorities within the Partnership’s Beyond Tolerance Strategy.

The overall aim of the Challenge of Change priority was to facilitate greater involvement of people from BME (inc Travellers) communities in civic, community and political life and increase community cohesion.

She said that the Partnership recognised that racism is a growing issue across the cluster area and wished to build upon the various initiatives undertaken through Good Relations Strategies, Community Safety Partnership and Peace II funding addressing racism. This priority would explore good practice and fill the current gaps within service provision in addition to the possibility of ongoing cross-border work being adopted across the whole cluster area.

Local level integration projects were a key element of this priority and these could include training, capacity development, the establishment of forums and advice and support structures. Consistent with the Racial Equality Strategy, the priority would also seek to facilitate greater involvement of BME communities in civic life and would raise the capacity of these communities to do so. As with the other priorities there will be significant cross-border potential (with Monaghan and Louth) and sustainability through skills development and integration into mainstream delivery.

Through the Challenge of Change priority the Peace III Southern Cluster Partnership had committed to achieving the following by December 2010:-

- To develop and deliver needs-based and capacity building training for indigenous and BME communities;
- To establish cross-cluster/border networking groups;
- To develop and deliver projects which address integration;
- To organise events addressing racism; and
- To provide resources for providing advice, support and signposting to BME residents.

Four fulltime officers and one part-time officer would deliver the priority and they each had specific areas of responsibility. Justyna McCabe would be responsible for Newry and Mourne.

Sarah said she was anxious to meet groups to ascertain their views on needs and gaps in service delivery etc. She said there was quite a substantial budget to achieve the above objectives.

Fergal thanked Sarah and encouraged members to make contact with her as soon as possible.

Aisling said there were a number of BME focused projects currently running such as REACH, SRC project, BELONG etc., with a variety of lead organisations. She said it was important that best use was made of resources in a co-ordinated manner.

It was agreed Aisling would circulate list of these projects to WAP Members.

Warm and Cosy Homes Scheme

Aisling said WAP had assisted the Southern Area Trust to promote the Warm and Cosy Homes Scheme providing heating and insulation measures to people on low incomes. Applications for the scheme have now closed and are currently processed.

It was agreed Aisling would provide figures for uptake from the Newry and Mourne area, to the next WAP Meeting.

Progress Report from A Rennick

SIFH

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. Four projects were sought through the Wellbeing Action Partnership and bids have been approved from South Down Family Health Initiative, CAB and Ethnic Minority Support Centre, St Vincent de Paul and Orana Family Support Services.

Small Grants

The SIHP small grants programme is currently open and will close to applications on 25 September. The programme is 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.

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 on providing assistance to people in need. A copy of the report is available through Aisling Rennick

VOICE Programme

The second training course for the Voice programme (teaching English conversational skills to non-English speakers) was held on Saturday 6 and Saturday 27 June 2009 in the Canal Court and was particularly successful. A further course will be held in Lurgan on 19 and 26 September 2009.

Newry and Mourne District Council

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 currently running. The programme will conclude with a presentation evening in Mullaghbawn on 19 October.

Provision of Refreshments at Council Meetings and Functions

The Council had now adopted guidelines for the provision of refreshments at Council meetings and functions. The guidelines required that at least one health option was 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.

Pride of Place Awards

The Newry and Mourne Ethnic Minority Project has been short-listed for the Pride of Place Awards.

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 and the proposal is currently being investigated.

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 will be held

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

Fergal thanked Aisling for her report.

Progress Report - Ethnic Minority Support Worker

Katerina said approximately 1700 queries had been dealt with to-date. She said due to the economic downturn, the demographic situation within the migrant community had changed. She said many of those long-term unemployed with no other engagement with a local community than employment had left the country. The current migrant population in Newry and Mourne was mostly composed of families from different EEA countries: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic and Bulgaria. The Ethnic Minority Support Centre assisted queries mostly related to unemployment, accessing health and social security services, housing issues and employment rights issues:

She said she had also assisted in:-

- applying for a Keep Warm Fuel Grant through SVP /until April 2009/
- putting a claim to an Industrial Tribunal /race discrimination, gender discrimination, unfair dismissal/ - 3 cases
- applying for SS Benefits, such as: Disability Living Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Maternity Allowance and Jobseekers Allowance
- applying for Child Benefit and Tax Credits
- dealing with queries re Social Housing, Emergency Housing, Homelessness, Housing Benefit
- dealing with queries re taxation, tax refund and National Insurance Number

Katerina said she was currently operating a BME Housing Advice Service in the NIHE offices in Newry from 16 June 2009. It would run every Tuesday to help those with any queries relating to Housing Benefit, Social Housing and Emergency Housing. Free and confidential interpreting was available.

Katerina said the Lithuanian Midsummer Night held in Kilbroney Park on 20 June had over 100 attendees. It had been organized by the Lithuanian community members, and supported by Newry and Mourne District Council and The Confederation of Community Groups

Katerina said the Lithuanian Focus Group held on 10 June and 27 July in Newry Arts Centre had focused on the issues of Lithuanian community in Newry and Mourne.

Katerina said Mothers and Toddlers English language classes would be held from September 2009, every Monday from 10-12am for 13 weeks, with a Polish teacher, Martha Siedlec, taking the sessions in Ballybot House, Newry. Contact: is Sr Helena Daly.

It was agreed Eoin Devlin would provide WAP Members with a short summary re Housing Advice and the role of Environmental Health Department

Fergal thanked Katerina for all the hard work she was doing in the District.

DATES - 2010 Meetings

The following dates were agreed:-

Friday, 26 February 2010 at 9.30 a.m. – Boardroom, Monaghan Row

Friday 11 June 2010 at 9.30 a.m. – Boardroom, Monaghan Row

Friday 10 September 2010 at 9.30 a.m. – Boardroom, Monaghan Row

Friday 10 December 2010 at 9.30 a.m. – Boardroom, Monaghan Row

Briege to e-mail dates for 2010 WAP Meetings to all WAP Members.

NEXT MEETING

Fergal advised members that Mr Thomas McCall, Chief Executive of Newry and Mourne District Council had agreed to attend the next meeting of the Partnership on 11 December 2009.

It was agreed Members would consider the draft Action Plan prior to the December Meeting. In particular should the Wellbeing Action Partnership remain as a locally based group or should invitations be extended to groups in Down District Council area. Members also to consider how WAP would ensure they are central in the Community Planning process and how there could be a shared understanding of the strategic direction and definition of community planning.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.