
Social Wellbeing Pillar: Communities Thematic Working Group (TWG):

Workshop 1, 6 July 2016

Attendees: Joanne Wallace, Wallace Consulting; Alan Herron, Play Board; Barbara Dickson, Rathfriland Regeneration; Bernie Marshall, ABC; Bryan McLaughlin, SOAR; Caroline Maguire, Dept of Communities; Cathy Devlin, ABC; Charles Neville, Ulster Scots Community Network; David Alexander, Markethill District Orange; Diane Clarke, ABC; Denise Girvan, ABC; Denise McNally, NIHE; Edita Hamilton, Personal Interest; Eileen Campbell, ABC; Elaine Devlin, ABC; Elaine Gillespie, ABC; Geraldine Lawless, TADA Rural Support Networks; Gerard Houlahan, ABC; Gerry Jones, NICIE; Gerry McIlroy, Brownlow Neighbourhood Renewal; Gordon Blevins, BOATA; Gillian Topping, ABC; Heather Kavanagh, SRC; Ian Wilson, DART Partnership; Inga Postuge, Personal Interest; Irene Turkington, Brownlow Neighbourhood Renewal; Jennifer Doak, NISRA; Jennifer Fearon, Citizens Advice Bureau; Jim Cunningham, SRC; John McGuinness, ABC Community Networks; Keara Downey, Upper Bann Sinn Fein; Lesley McCombe, Dept of Justice; Lisa Smith, Splash Sure Start; Lisa Soye, ABC; Louis O'Neill, ABC; Louis Sayers, Westacres Residents Association; Lynsey Mead, Gilford Community Forum; Margaret Ellis, Banbridge CAB; Margarita O'Donnell, ABC; Marion Jemison, REACT; Martina McConville, ABC (Planning); Mervin Johnson, Emmanuel Church; Mike Reardon, ABC; Nicola Mahood, ABC; Norman Graham, Armagh Cricket Club; Norman Livingston, Mid Ulster Football Association; Patricia Gibson, ABC; Seamus McCrory, ABC; Sheila McCreesh, Lislea Community Association; Stephanie Thompson, CYPSP; Stephen Fields, West Armagh Consortium; Sylvia McRoberts, PCSP Armagh; Theresa McIlroy, Brownlow Neighbourhood Renewal; Wanda Rea, ABC; Willie Monaghan, Darkley & District Community Association; Wilson Freeburn, Mountzion House; Evelyn Hanna, Libraries NI; Angharad Bunt, Sport NI; Billy Stewart, PSNI; Alison Patterson, Health Board; Sylvia Irwin, Health Board; Gerard Rocks, Health Trust; Donna Haughian, Health Trust; David Nichol, NIFRS; Jim Speers, Councillor.

Apologies: Diane Walker, Marie Curie; David Taylor, Portadown Cares; Phillipa McKeown, Consumer Council; Gearóid Ó Machail, Aonach Mhacha; Audrey McClune, ABC, Emma Drury, ABC; Nicola McIlwaine, Emmanuel Church.

1. Welcome & Introduction

Elaine Gillespie, Head of Community Planning provided an overview of the Community Planning process. Billy Stewart, PSNI was introduced as Chair of the Communities TWG. Mike Reardon, People Directorate, ABC Council will provide strategic direction to TWG during the process.

2. Baseline Statistics

Jennifer Doak, NISRA presented key statistics relevant to the TWG. A number of areas for exploration were suggested:

- Truancy and for young people who have dropped out of education;
- Inclusion of literacy & numeracy/educational attainment statistics;
- Concerns around population breakdowns (Craigavon, Lurgan & Portadown) & settlements as per NISRA classification (longer-term issue);
- DART has conducted research around transport access (follow-up with TWG member);
- Localised statistics on volunteering (e.g. sport);
- Killed or Seriously Injured Road Traffic Collisions from PSNI;
- NICEM may have more detailed statistics/research on BME communities – require information on experiences of BME community as well as statistics;
- Statistics from family support hubs/electric hub (health);
- Comment that 2011 census is already out of date.

Outcome: Jennifer will look at the relevance/availability of additional statistics.

3. Identified Issues

Joanne Wallace, Wallace Consulting led a series of group discussion and feedback sessions. A number of issues that were considered to impact on the vitality of communities were identified during these group discussions. These have been thematically grouped as follows:

Concentrated Issues:

- There are generic issues (e.g. crime, poverty) across the Borough. However specific issues are concentrated in some locations;
- Poverty – growing number of foodbanks, concerns over welfare reform & housing benefit changes, low incomes – impact on families, children & young people;
- Children & Young People - Lower literacy & numeracy levels - youth unemployment, ASB;
- Farming community – poverty, mental health, isolation;
- Older people – loneliness & isolation.

Crime & Safety

- Fear of crime particularly high amongst older people;
- Negative perceptions of young people;
- Tensions over bonfires, parades – sectarianism, feelings of community powerlessness;
- Reduction in visible community policing (e.g. loss of Neighbourhood Policing Teams now Local Policing Teams) – feeling that there is a shift away from building police-community relationships;
- Lack of confidence in police/poor relationships;
- Under-reporting of racist hate crime (barriers - English not first language, form filling)
- Increase in racism, concerns post-Brexit;
- High levels of domestic abuse;
- High road traffic collisions/poor road safety/fires.

Disengagement

- Lack of meaningful engagement with the community;

- Lack of engagement mechanisms throughout life;
- Communities feel they don't influence decisions;
- Politicians don't necessarily reflect local needs;
- Breakdown of "community" & community spirit – disengagement, loss of "localness";
- Isolation amongst people with disabilities & older people, particularly in rural areas (linked to transport);
- Isolation amongst carers;
- Young people are unaware of what's available/aren't well connected to services;
- Barriers to engagement & accessing services (e.g. language, transport, cost);
- Heavy reliance on volunteers (e.g. volunteer fatigue in sports sector)

Lack of Partnership Working

- Differences in service provision/access across Borough (e.g. health/mental health services);
- Lack of partnership or dysfunctional partnerships within & across communities;
- Residents don't know what's happening in their area;
- Service duplication and service gaps;
- Lack of signposting & referrals;
- Barriers to accessing & sharing facilities & resources (e.g. competition, perceived ownership, affordability, awareness, declining facilities);
- Centralisation of services creates access issues.

4. Shared Priorities

There was general consensus regarding priority areas for community planning. The following agreed priorities are inter-linked:

Strengthen Community Infrastructure & Improve Connectivity

- Effective (actions not just a talking shop), & efficient (pools resources);
- Energetic & innovative - new way of working that is truly collaborative and makes best use of the wealth of voluntary support;
- Partnership approach that cuts through the red tape & allows for swift early interventions across a range of agreed priorities;
- Communities need a greater say in their areas;
- Better multi-agency partnerships, communication & engagement;
- Greater recognition of community sector (e.g. volunteers, churches, sporting groups)
- Need a community development approach & use the assets within communities
- Better use public sector owned facilities
- Transfer of assets for community use/social enterprise;
- Need to plan services for increasing & older population;
- Training Needs Analysis across local groups;
- The right partnerships – not just convenience;

- Audits – who is doing what & improve access/sharing facilities & resources;
- Better referral processes;
- Politicians should be thinking of all the Borough not just localised benefits.

Improve Community Engagement, Participation & Cohesion

- Need to increase community participation, ownership & contribution;
- Target the most isolated/excluded;
- Need to increase sense of belonging & build cohesion;
- Increase volunteering;

Create safe, stable & secure communities

- Need to celebrate, preserve & support cultural distinctions;
- Good relations outcomes from sharing in education & across neighbourhoods;
- Need to understand/accept difference

*Community Support/Early Intervention [**Potential priority**]*

- Better targeting - Neighbourhood Renewal boundaries don't reflect the extent of need;
- Need to create new opportunities for those in need – map across to employment, health, social etc.;
- Increase service take-up;
- Focus on improving quality of life for all;
- Adopt a preventative approach – stop poverty figures increasing.

Outcome: TWG members agreed Community Infrastructure, Community Cohesion and Community Safety as shared priorities. TWG members to discuss:

- The need for an additional priority around targeted early intervention/prevention that would link to overall cohesion & safety outcomes (in line with other consultation feedback)?
 - If community infrastructure priority should amalgamate with cohesion priority or stay separate?
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5. Long-term Outcomes

Based upon the agreed priorities, TWG members discussed potential long-term goals (10-15 years) for the community plan. These have been developed as follows for discussion at Workshop 2 (see Table overleaf).

Outcome: TWG members to discuss & agree LT outcomes at Workshop 2. Joanne Wallace to draft Short- & Medium-Term outcomes based on existing information for discussion at Workshop 2.

Need	Priority	Long-term Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in service provision/access across Borough (e.g. health/mental health services); • Lack of partnership or dysfunctional partnerships within & across communities; • Residents don't know what's happening in their area; • Service duplication and service gaps; • Lack of signposting & referrals; • Barriers to accessing & sharing facilities & resources (e.g. competition, perceived ownership, affordability, awareness, declining facilities); • Centralisation of services creates access issues. 	<p><i>Strengthen Community Infrastructure & Improve Connectivity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective (actions not just a talking shop), & efficient (pools resources); • Energetic & innovative - new way of working that is truly collaborative and makes best use of the wealth of voluntary support; • Partnership approach that cuts through the red tape & allows for swift early interventions across a range of agreed priorities; • Communities need a greater say in their areas; • Better multi-agency partnerships, communication & engagement; • Greater recognition of community sector (e.g. volunteers, churches, sporting groups) • Need a community development approach & use the assets within communities • Better use public sector owned facilities • Transfer of assets for community use/social enterprise; • Need to plan services for increasing & older population; • Training Needs Analysis across local groups; • The right partnerships – not just convenience; • Audits – who is doing what & improve access/sharing facilities & resources; • Better referral processes; • Politicians should be thinking of all the Borough not just localised benefits. 	<p>Everyone has equal access to information, services, facilities, & activities according to their interests & needs</p> <p><i>Shorter-term (development ideas)</i></p> <p>Improved awareness, greater knowledge-sharing, better distribution & use of services, facilities & activities</p> <p>Local people & groups are skilled and empowered to identify & help address local needs & are active partners in delivering positive change.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of meaningful engagement with the community; • Lack of engagement mechanisms throughout life; • Communities feel they don't influence decisions; • Politicians don't necessarily reflect local needs; • Breakdown of "community" & community spirit – disengagement, loss of "localness"; • Isolation amongst people with disabilities & older people, particularly in rural areas (linked to transport); • Isolation amongst carers; • Young people are unaware of what's available/aren't well connected to services; • Barriers to engagement & accessing services (e.g. language, transport, cost); • Heavy reliance on volunteers (e.g. volunteer fatigue in sports sector) 	<p><i>Improve Community Engagement, Participation & Cohesion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase community participation, ownership & contribution; • Target the most isolated/excluded; • Need to increase sense of belonging & build cohesion; • Increase volunteering. 	<p>People of all ages are fully engaged in community life & shaping decisions – they have a strong sense of belonging and take pride in their area</p> <p>Shorter-term <i>(development ideas)</i> people know what's on, how to get involved, service pathways, feel part of community, contribute to it</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of crime particularly high amongst older people; • Negative perceptions of young people; • Tensions over bonfires, parades – sectarianism, feelings of community powerlessness; • Reduction in visible community policing (e.g. loss of Neighbourhood Policing Teams now Local Policing Teams) – feeling that there is a shift away from building police-community relationships; • Lack of confidence in police/poor relationships; • Under-reporting of racist hate crime (barriers - English not first language, form filling) • Increase in racism, concerns post-Brexit; • High levels of domestic abuse; • High road traffic collisions/poor road safety/fires. 	<p><i>Create safe, stable & secure communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to celebrate, preserve & support cultural distinctions; • Good relations outcomes from sharing in education & across neighbourhoods; • Need to understand/accept difference 	<p>We live in a safe and peaceful environment, free from the fear of crime</p> <p>Shorter-term <i>(development ideas)</i> understand need for everyone to everyone contribute to making area safe</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are generic issues (e.g. crime, poverty) across the Borough. However specific issues are concentrated in some locations; • Poverty – growing number of foodbanks, concerns over welfare reform & housing benefit changes, low incomes – impact on families, children & young people; • Children & Young People - Lower literacy & numeracy levels - youth unemployment, ASB; • Farming community – poverty, mental health, isolation; • Older people – loneliness & isolation. 	<p><i>Community Support/Early Intervention</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better targeting - Neighbourhood Renewal boundaries don't reflect the extent of need; • Need to create new opportunities for those in need – map across to employment, health, social etc.; • Increase service take-up; • Additional community support is needed for some areas/groups/individuals • Focus on improving quality of life for all; • Adopt a preventative approach – stop poverty figures increasing – link to welfare reform/finances/debt. 	<p>Individuals, families and communities are equipped & supported to reach their full potential throughout their lives</p> <p><i>Shorter-term (development ideas)</i></p> <p>services shaped around individual needs and circumstances, more flexible, responsive services</p> <p>locally-driven preventive social initiatives to enhance well-being</p>
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6. Thematic Vision

Members developed a long-term vision, to be achieved under the Communities TWG. These suggestions have been integrated into the following statement, for discussion at Workshop 2:

“We live in caring, safe, welcoming & connected communities that people feel proud to live in, to shape and contribute to.”

Outcome: TWG members to discuss & agree Thematic Vision at Workshop 2.

7. Parked Issues

The following issues were also identified by the TWG members and will be explored at subsequent Communities TWG sessions and/or under related Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing TWGs.

- Poorer health outcomes in some areas/groups;
- Rural - 50% of ABC is rural & yet there are poor transport links & service access;
- Dereliction/poor quality environment;
- High social housing need in some areas;
- Decline of small rural settlements - dereliction, migration, poor access to services, schools closures

8. Next Steps

The remaining Workshops are scheduled as follows:

- **Workshop 2: 27 July (10:30-4:30pm), Edenmore Hotel & Country Club, Magheralin**
- **Workshop 3: 30 August (1pm - 4:30pm), Armagh City Hotel**

Workshop 2 will focus on:

- Revisions to draft Outcomes & Vision;
- Developing Short- and Medium-term outcomes;
- Identifying strengths/weaknesses;
- Actions & targeting.