Environmental Well-being Pillar: Regeneration Thematic Working Group

Regeneration Thematic Working Group (TWG): Workshop 3 12ᵗʰ August 2016

Attendees: Joanne Wallace- Wallace Consulting, Adrian Farrell- Portadown Chamber of Commerce, Ailbhe Hickey- NIHE, Alan Gilmore- DART Partnership, Brendan McCann- TADA, Bryan McLaughlin- TADA, David McMullen- Co Armagh Community Development, Eoin McKinney- NIHE, Esther Baird- Portadown 2000, John Waddell- Armagh Rural Forum, Lynne McDonald- DfC, Mark Mullan- Translink, Sean Woods- RSPB, Stephen Reynolds- NIHE.

ABC: Barry Patience, Catriona Regan, Colm Gallagher, Elaine Gillespie, Gemma Richardson, Gerard Houlahan, Gillian Topping, Jennifer Doak, Mary Hanna, Michelle Markey, Richard Griffin, Rosemary Hughes, Sharon O'Gorman, Thérèse Rafferty and Tony Morgan.

Apologies: Anita Waite- DSD, Anthony Soares- Centre for Cross Border Studies, Cara Dallat- CIDO, Carol Forster- Environment link, Gordon Clarke- Sustrans, Ian Wilson- DART Partnership, Kate Clifford- RCN, Orla McCann- Disability Action, Paul Slevin-Business Partnership Alliance, Sinead Collins- NIHE.

ABC

Claire Toner, Helen Stoops, Jonathan Hayes, Liz Drew, Lynsey Daly, Mechelle Brown, Noreen O'Callaghan, Seamus McCrory, Shane Kelland.

1.   Welcome & Introduction

Ailbhe Hickey, NIHE welcomed members as Chair of the Regeneration TWG.

2.   Workshop 2 Report

The Vision, based upon member proposals is:

" Each urban and rural area values and protects its distinct identity and assets to realise its full potential as a vibrant place for living, working, visiting and investing."

Joanne Wallace, Wallace Consulting provided a recap of the draft outcomes & actions discussed at the previous session, as per the three inter-linked priorities of:

- Protection, promotion and enhancement of natural and built environment;
- Revitalisation of Town Centres, villages and rural areas;
- Improve urban and rural planning, design and connectivity.

3.   Short- Medium- & Long-Term Outcomes & Actions

Joanne presented draft short- and medium-term outcomes & actions for discussion by members. The following Tables were updated on the basis of the discussions (see Table 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3).

Outcome: Information updated to reflect TWG members comments.

Table 3.1: Natural and Built Environment Proposed Actions		
Proposed Actions	**Detail**	**Outcomes**
1 Collective Assets Register & Plan	• Cross check for existing assets registers & develop/enhance a combined register of public sector owned natural and built assets across the Borough; • Identify key assets/land in private ownership; • Review asset/land quality, management and use; • Identify asset transfer potential; • Develop action plan to strengthen the offering & increase use (e.g. improve cross-marketing & shared use, incentivise private owners and community ownership) – explore best practice; • Partnership regarding enhancement (e.g. HLF, NIEA, Environmental NGO's) **[Link to Revitalisation Priority & Economic, Tourism TWGs]**	• There is greater understanding of and respect for the contribution of the built and natural environment to improve the health and vitality of urban and rural communities, their sense of place, character and identity; • Our physical and environmental assets are more accessible and everyone appreciates & takes responsibility for their protection, preservation and enhancement, particularly those at risk; • Our rich built heritage & exceptional natural assets, habitats & wildlife are conserved, protected, enhanced, connected and expanded for future generations to enjoy.
2 Borough-wide Education & Community Action Programme	• Raise awareness of local assets, their contribution to sense of place & individual & community wellbeing, the need to maintain & safeguard these for the future; • Collaborative working with other councils; • Community Action Programme aimed at increasing knowledge, responsibility, ownership & pride - linked to Age Friendly, education facilities, intergenerational, communities, workplaces. **[Link to Health, Communities, Tourism TWGs]**	
Targeting:	**Potential Partners**	**Potential Indicators**
• Residents - Disadvantaged/marginalised groups (incl. rural/S75); • Land & property owners, Farming communities; • Private car users, Visitors, Developers.	• Business sector/employers, private sector; • Community & voluntary groups (e.g. churches, conservation, heritage, sporting, health) • DRD, DOE, ABC Council, Schools, Education Authority, NIEA, Waterways Ireland, Health Promotion Agency/HSCT/Health Board, Tourism NI, Environmental NGOs, Enforcement agencies; NIHE, DFC, Other Councils	• Greater community knowledge & appreciation of natural & built heritage • Increased quality green space • Increased visitors to sites • Decreased sites at risk • Target species protected

Table 3.2: Revitalisation Proposed Actions		
Proposed Actions	**Detail**	**Outcomes**
1 Holistic Revitalisation Framework	• Develop framework to enable change, stimulate investment & ensure collaborative working with partners • Situate within the context of Local Development Plan, Master plans, Village plans - review to identify short-, medium- & long-term actions that require collaboration; • Explore extent of Council powers & necessary stakeholders (e.g. parking, dereliction, transport, planning, licensing/change of use, business rates, PSNI/PCSP, green infrastructure planning); • Conduct town/village centre health checks; • Work with Business Alliance Partnership to establish priorities & actions (including private sector) • Explore potential creation of Regeneration Companies [Link Economic, Infrastructure TWGs]	• Collaborative initiatives are delivering the quality and accessibility of urban centres and rural areas, to address decline and provide innovative responses to community needs; • Urban centres and rural areas are more accessible, multifunctional and balanced, enabling business growth within a mutually supportive environment; • Our distinctive urban & rural areas are at the heart of community & economic life, sustainably meeting the needs of residents, visitors, businesses & investors.
2 Pilot initiatives to redefine the use of space in town & village centres	• Establish an information hub – showcasing projects & best practice in regeneration across the Borough • Incentivise brown field site development • Develop & extend range of physical regeneration initiatives (e.g. Gateway development, settlement living, evening economy, creating shared spaces, pop up shops, shop-fronts, signage, leisure, social enterprise, extended opening hours); • Link with PSNI/PCSP/C&V sector regarding crime & ASB (design out crime). [Link Economic, Infrastructure, Communities TWG]	
3 Improve ABC Branding, Marketing & Information flow	• Draw on existing built settlement plans to define & develop an overall ABC product/identity based upon the unique selling points of towns, villages & rural settlements – complimentary not competing; • Make use of natural/built assets to deliver economic objectives; • Work with businesses to deliver customer service & define niche product/services; • Themed Borough wide events/animation programme (as well as localised); [Link Tourism, Arts & Culture, Communities, Economic TWGs]	

Potential Targets	Potential Partners	Potential Indicators
• Residents/Visitors; • Small businesses/ retailers/hospitality sector; • Transport operators • Local communities • Landlords/Investor Property owners;	• Tourism NI, Housing Associations/NIHE, DfC, Planners, Council, Business Alliance Partnership - Business sector, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Community sector; Transport NI, Enforcement Agencies, NIFHE, Neighbouring Councils, Rural Support Networks including TADA and DART	• Improved town centre health • Increased business starts & Decreased vacancy rates • Decreased crime and antisocial behaviour • Increased town centre living • Increased active evening hours & evening economy • Sustainability of rural populations

Table 6.3: Planning, design and connectivity

Proposed Actions		Detail	Outcomes
1	Borough-wide Design and Connectivity Agenda (linked to Infrastructure actions)	• Review connectivity between Schools, housing, health care, employment zones & transport networks • Improve connectivity & planning between statutory agencies – use to identify potential land-use • Explore pre-planning impact assessment to ensure adequate infrastructure, drainage, green space, flooding risk, natural environment • Planning gain – infrastructure benefits from large developments • Plan & shape balanced commercial growth & responsiveness to need [Link Infrastructure TWG]	• We have strengthened our approach to ongoing physical, economic and social renewal through more integrated investment, regeneration & planning policy and practice; • The regeneration of place supports quality living environments, to include appropriate land use and housing strategies, compatible infrastructure development; • We live in well-designed, sustainable & connected communities – benefiting from quality & affordable housing, accessible services and amenities.
2	Inform, coordinate & promote initiatives for digital connectivity	• Improve access to broadband, speed & affordability – explore rural development programme opportunities [Link Economic & Infrastructure TWGs]	
3	Take forward initiatives to improve the transport infrastructure	• Work to improve local access & connectivity • Improve connectivity from urban centres to rural areas & within & between rural areas through better planning & innovative travel solutions (e.g. green travel, social economy, community transport) • Connectivity to Belfast and Dublin [Link Infrastructure, Communities TWGs]	
Target Beneficiaries		**Potential Partners**	**Potential Indicators**
• Urban & rural communities, Landowners, Developers, Visitors/Tourists, Businesses		• Transport NI, Translink, Utility providers, Sustrans, Housing Associations/NIHE, Leisure and recreation providers, Department for Communities, Planners, Council, Central Government, Neighbouring councils, Environmental partnerships, Broadband providers, DAERA, Rural Support Networks	• Increased access to high speed broadband • Decreased unmet housing need; • Decreased distance to green space; • Decreased net migration; • Fear of crime decreased; • Design awards

4. Cross-Cutting Themes

Presentations were given on the following Community Planning cross-cutting themes:

- Sustainability;
- Equality, Good Relations & Social Inclusion;
- Rural Development; and
- Communication.

Members discussed issues relating to their Theme in groups.

Sustainability		
Social	Economic	Environmental
• Improved connectivity reduces social isolation; • Community involvement in protecting & enhancing the natural & built environment • Use of brown field sites for housing, employment, green space etc. • Use of green space linked to health & wellbeing	• Collaborative design & planning supports local business services and enhances the boroughs facilities • Physical regeneration delivers attractive places to invest – gives confidence to investors	• Improved transportation links help with more effective land use; • Protection of natural environment links to biodiversity; • Improved transport connectivity leads to reduced use of car & reduced pollution
Equality, Good Relations & Social Inclusion		
Equality	Good Relations	Social Inclusion
• Communities & representative groups involved in design; • Consideration of access to buildings, transportation & natural environment; • Good design should provide equal access to services	• Capital plans, better use of space/shared space promotes good relations – build into design; • Links to interface removal & regeneration; • Connectivity will improve cross-community mobility; • Consideration of promoting neutral spaces with absence of flags etc.; • Develop a collective identity	• Consideration of Social clauses in procurement • Develop community engagement plans alongside capital plans e.g. Peoples Park • Consider signage and way finding; • Promote combined sense of place, ease of orientation & belonging • Places welcoming to all which are accessible and usable

Rural Development	
Challenges	**Opportunities**
"No definition of rural" - Poor broadband & mobile connectivity; - Fewer facilities/resources, social hubs; - Fewer rural job opportunities; - Weak transport links; - Need to understand differences in rural/urban educational attainment; - Young people leaving the area; - Planning applications for business can be difficult; - Isolation issues; - Political divisions can be more acute; - Varying community infrastructure; - Literacy issues amongst older people; - Poor information dissemination - Lack of succession planning amongst farmers - Easier to plan and justify budgetary spend for condensed population of urban areas - Models developed for urban e.g. transport etc. - Rural needs white paper/bill - Deprivation indices don't reflect rural needs and deprivation - Investment – RDP money - Better use of existing built resources so funding can be better targeted	- Link to Infrastructure TWG; - Improve marketing through partnership with Ulster Farmers Union, faith based organisations & community & voluntary sector; - Use halls & facilities in community to create hubs (grants programme to revitalise); 48% of the rural area in the ACBCB Council area is rural but the area doesn't get 48% of the budget - Concentrate on long term sustainable development - Rural Needs bill should be taken seriously and implemented - New model to identify deprivation needs developed.
Communications	
Challenges	**Opportunities**
- Reaching those in most need; - Information overload; - Different communication needs amongst specific groups (e.g. Interpreters, people with visual impairments, young people, older people) - Connection with strategic partners - Uncertainty of roles and plan ownership; - Engagement in consultation process	- Need central communication portal & consistent message (Communication Plan with tailored communication methods); - Shared databases (MOU) - Maximise the use of other events to consult/disseminate information, Better coordination within councils - Creative messaging – arts & drama, use free marketing tools, new technology, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, involve young people - Use of community hubs & pop ups - Community plan/ Local Development Plan can be used as a vehicle to steer TNI Strategy - Use TNI and other events to communication the work of the community plan - Section 75 participation to gauge penetration of message

5.   Next Steps

As this is the final workshop for the TWG, Sharon O'Gorman, ACBCB Council and Alibhe Hickey, NIHE thanked the group for their continued support and expertise.

Next Steps are:

- Consideration and prioritisation of outcomes from all six thematic working groups by Statutory Partners (Sept/Oct 2016);
- Consultation and engagement with local citizens and communities (Sept/Oct 2016);
- Draft Plan and formal consultation (Oct- Dec 2016);
- Conduct formal assessments (Oct-Jan 2017);
- Development of final plan (Dec- March 2017).