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Dear Chief Executive

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR 04/2019

Community planning monitoring & reporting guidance

I enclose a copy of the above guidance for community planning, which enhances current guidance on the Operation of Community Planning published in 2015. [LG Circular 28/15 refers].

The guidance was first issued by correspondence to Community Planning Partnerships and Statutory Community Planning Partners on 20 December 2018, and is now published as a local government circular.

Yours sincerely

NICHOLA CREAGH
Local Government & Housing Regulation Division

Community Planning

Monitoring & Reporting Guidance

Contents

- 1. Context**
- 2. Monitoring and reporting on community plans**
- 3. A Statement of progress**

Annex – Statement of Progress template

1.1. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires the council and its community planning partners to make arrangements to monitor progress against meeting the objectives of community plans and the effectiveness of the actions taken in aiming to achieve those objectives.

1.2. The legislation requires that councils report to the public by way of a published statement highlighting progress on outcomes achieved and actions taken. Community planning partners must provide the council with relevant information to enable them to prepare this statement. The statement is to be published once every two years with the first of these required within two years of the publication of the community plan.

1.3. The first community plans were developed at various times between late March and early November 2017. With this in mind, and taking into account that NI council elections will take place in May 2019, the Department has decided that it is appropriate that the first statement of progress for each community plan should be published by November 2019.

1.4. The [2015 Statutory Guidance for the operation of Community Planning](#)¹ provides some overarching principles on the requirements of monitoring and reporting on community plans. The purpose of this additional guidance is to provide further practical advice for community planning partnerships on the arrangements for monitoring and reporting. It has been developed with the assistance of a working group comprising council officers, representatives from statutory partner organisations and officials from the Executive Office (TEO).

¹ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-lg-2815-%E2%80%93-statutory-guidance-operation-community-planning>

2. Monitoring and reporting on community plans

2.1. There are two distinct aspects to monitoring and reporting on community plans, these are:

- 1) Monitoring and reporting on the progress made in the achievement of the outcomes² in community plans through the Statement of Progress; and
- 2) Monitoring and reporting on the performance of the actions in community plans through the completion of report cards.

2.2. The diagram on the next page illustrates the relationship between the two.

² The general move in both local and central government is to use an outcomes based approach. The Community Plan should use such an approach. See NIAO publication [Performance Management for Outcomes](#) June 2018

OUTCOMES

These are the conditions of well being each community partnership has identified in their community plans as important for the people of their Local Government District. For example:

“Everyone experiences good health and wellbeing”

The performance of indicators enables the monitoring of overall progress in the achievement of outcomes



Indicators

Each community partnership has identified a series of indicators for each of the outcomes in their community plans. These indicators are used to monitor progress in the achievement of outcomes.

For example:

- **Life expectancy at birth**
- **% babies born at low birth weight**
- **Preventable deaths**
- **% population obese etc.**

The impact of actions contributes to the achievement of outcomes



Actions

Each community plan sets out the actions identified to contribute to the overall achievement of outcomes. For example:

- **Early intervention programmes**
- **Belfast Bikes Scheme**
- **Build affordable housing etc.**



Performance Measures

For each action, a report card should be developed which sets out the following:

- **How much did we do?**
- **How well did we do it?**
- **Is anyone better off?**

Report cards enable effective performance monitoring of actions.

3. A Statement of Progress

3.1. The legislation sets out that each council and its community planning partners must monitor:

- i) The progress made and outcomes achieved in meeting the community plan objectives for its district; and
- ii) The effectiveness of actions taken and functions exercised for the purpose of meeting those objectives.

3.2. The statement of progress therefore provides an opportunity for partnerships to update local people within the district/borough on the actions that have been taken and to demonstrate the impact these actions are having on the achievement of the outcomes outlined in the community plan. In order to do this it should contain the following information:

3.3. Vision

This is the statement of overall purpose or intent that sets the direction for the district or borough over the long term, and which drives the actions of the partnership in the short to medium term. The vision has already been articulated in the community plan and simply needs to be restated in the statement of progress. If the vision has changed within the two year period the justification for this needs to be explained in this section of the statement

3.4. Outcomes

The community plan outcomes should be presented separately and a short narrative provided on what the outcome is trying to achieve and why this is important in terms of supporting the overall vision for the district/borough.

The associated indicators for each outcome should be presented showing the most recent available data. This information should be supported with an explanation in terms of achievement of progress towards the outcome, any planned new actions or changes in emphasis being considered in light of new research findings or as a result of latest evidence of what is working well and

what is not. Partnerships may also want to take the opportunity to mention good news stories, noteworthy achievements and good practice which have led to impactful and sustainable change and improvement, particularly where collaboration, engagement and innovative working with others has been involved.

3.5. Actions

An update should be provided on each action which has been completed/commenced from the associated delivery/action plan in terms of –

How much did we do?

To describe the *quantity* of effort. For example the number of local people who benefited from a project or programme or the number of activities carried out.

How well did we do it?

To describe the *quality* of effort. For example the percentages of activities delivered on time, levels of attendance, satisfaction, adherence to standards.

Who is better off?

To describe the *impact* a programme or project has had on local people. For example the number and percentage of changed behaviours, shifts in attitudes, changes in circumstances, increases in knowledge and improvement in skills.

3.6. The information for this section of the statement should be readily available from the associated report cards that should be in place for each of the actions within the delivery/action plans.

There are many useful examples of outcome based report cards available such as those demonstrated in Appendix 5 of the NIAO³ Good Practice Guide for Public Bodies – *Performance Management for Outcomes*.

It will be important for community planning partnerships to regularly measure progress on community planning objectives through the report cards. These can for example be used to provide updates to the partnership and to share information with the local community. These report cards should also be presented in terms of: How much did we do? How well did we do it? Who is better off? This means the information can be lifted directly from the report card

³https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/sites/niao/files/media-files/NIAO_performance%20management%20for%20outcomes.pdf

to the statement of progress.

3.7. The reporting on actions in the statement should be grouped and presented to demonstrate how the legislative requirements to identify long term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the district are being met. A template for the Statement of Progress is provided at Annex A for completion by each partnership.

Community planning Statement of Progress 2019

Community Planning Partnership for borough/district Council

Section 1 - Vision

A statement of purpose or intent that sets the overall direction for the district or borough over the long term and which drives the actions of the partnership in the short to medium term. This can be restated from the community plan – unless there have been any changes. If the vision has changed within the two year period the justification should be explained in this section of the statement.

Section 2 - Community plan Outcomes (each presented separately)

- Short narrative outlining what an outcome is trying to achieve and why is this important in terms of supporting the overall vision for the district/borough.
- Present the associated indicators for each outcome showing the most recent available data.
- Explain what the data is showing in terms of achievement of progress towards the outcome.
- If appropriate describe any planned new actions or changes in emphasis being considered in light of new research findings or as a result of latest evidence of what is working well and what is not.
- Highlight good news stories, noteworthy achievements and good practice which have led to impactful and sustainable change and improvement.
- Provide examples of collaboration, engagement and innovative working with others.

Section 3 – Community plan Actions

Actions to improve Social well-being of the district

What did we say we would do?	How much did we do?	How well did we do it?	Who is better off?
Action cited from Delivery/Action Plan	Quantity of effort i.e. number of local people who benefited from a project or programme or the number of activities carried out.	Quality of effort i.e. the percentages of activities delivered on time, levels of attendance, satisfaction, adherence to standards.	Impact i.e. numbers and percentages of changed behaviours, shifts in attitudes, changes in circumstances, increases in knowledge and improvement in skills.

Actions to improve Economic well-being of the district

What did we say we would do?	How much did we do?	How well did we do it?	Who is better off?
Action cited from Delivery/Action Plan	Quantity of effort i.e. number of local people who benefited from a project or programme or the number of activities carried out.	Quality of effort i.e. the percentages of activities delivered on time, levels of attendance, satisfaction, adherence to standards.	Impact i.e. numbers and percentages of changed behaviours, shifts in attitudes, changes in circumstances, increases in knowledge and improvement in skills.

Actions to improve Environmental well-being of the district

What did we say we would do?	How much did we do?	How well did we do it?	Who is better off?
Action cited from Delivery/Action Plan	Quantity of effort i.e. number of local people who benefited from a project or programme or the number of activities carried out.	Quality of effort i.e. the percentages of activities delivered on time, levels of attendance, satisfaction, adherence to standards.	Impact i.e. numbers and percentages of changed behaviours, shifts in attitudes, changes in circumstances, increases in knowledge and improvement in skills.