

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership

Community Engagement Network

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 8 December 2009

Attendance

Donna Anderson, Youth Services, North Ayrshire Council
Diane Beckett, Scottish Churches Housing Action
Carole Blair, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Nadine Bloomfield, Scottish Health Council
Lorne Campbell, KA Leisure
Margaret Craik, North Ayrshire Council
Craig Crosthwaite, CVSna
Pam Crosthwaite, North Ayrshire Council
Karine Emberson, Ayrshire Leadership Forum
Linda Gillespie, Radio City
David Hammond, North Ayrshire Council
Jeff Holt, Scottish Health Council
Cally, Hughes, North Ayrshire Council
Ian Johnstone, Barnardo's
Gordon Jones, Strathclyde Police
Louise Kirk, North Ayrshire Council
Sophie La Pietra, Impact Arts
Allison McAllister, North Ayrshire Council
Angela Morrell, North Ayrshire Council
David Morrison, Scottish Ambulance Service
Karen McGillvray, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
James McKie, North Ayrshire Council
Stephen McLaughlin, Volunteer Centre
Cllr Peter McNamara, North Ayrshire Council
Justina Murray, Community Planning Co-ordinator (CHAIR)
Patricia Quinn, Ayrshire Leadership Forum
Morna Rae, Community Planning Officer
Ann Ronald, Community Horizons
Elaine Savory, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Mary Scott, North Ayrshire Council
Fiona Thomson, Add It Up
John White, Skills Development Scotland

Apologies

Jim Nichols, Arran CVS
Diane Graham, NHS Ayrshire and Arran
Cllr Margie Currie
Cllr Margaret McDougall

1. Welcome/ Introductions

Justina Murray, Community Planning Coordinator, welcomed everyone to the third meeting of the Community Engagement Network. Introductions were made around the room.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Noted.

2.1 Matters Arising

Justina fed back the results of the evaluation of the last meeting. This information had also been circulated with the agenda.

3. Three different approaches to participation and engagement

3a. Developing a Participation and Citizenship Strategy for Young People

Angela Morrell, Team Leader – Youth Services, Community Learning and Development, delivered a presentation on a new Strategy for Young People which is currently in draft form, and is being presented to the Integrated Children’s Services Plan Steering Group later this week. It is a value-based and youth-friendly document which shows the commitment to young people in North Ayrshire.

The development of this started by looking at what is already out there in terms of strategies for young people, and included a number of consultation events to ask young people what they want to see in terms of consultation. Young people identified that they want consultation to be engaging, interactive, and for people to feed back to them afterwards. Young people have explained why they think their voices are as important as adults.

A number of actions have been developed under the Community Planning Priorities – these are not service-specific, or just for North Ayrshire Council to deliver. The Strategy includes self evaluation methods, so progress made can be reviewed in the future. It is expected the document will be finalised by January 2010.

3b. Promoting Citizen Leadership

Pam Crosthwaite, Team Leader – Capacity Building, Community Learning and Development, delivered a presentation on Citizen Leadership in North Ayrshire. This was developed in response to the 21st Century Review of Social Work. North Ayrshire is one of two national pilots (with Scottish Borders) in a programme developed by the User and Carers Forum in Scotland. A document outlining the Principles and Standards of Citizen Leadership was launched in April 2008, and a training programme was developed to promote these, and to develop the leadership potential of people who use, or work for, social work and social care services. The approach is person-centred, and aims to change the culture towards more user and carer involvement and leadership.

Pam explained that 11 people attended an initial training for trainers course, before the pilot training was delivered in North Ayrshire to 22 people, including 3 days for staff and 3 days for people who use services and carers. These two groups then joined together for 2 days to develop an action plan. Follow up days have also been held, and have demonstrated some of the concrete actions that have been achieved as a result. This includes the development of the Ayrshire Leadership Forum which addresses issues for adults with learning disabilities, and which is now attended by over 40 people. The feedback on the training has been very positive.

Pam was joined by carers who have participated in the programme. Karine and Tricia talked about their own personal experience of the training, and what they had gained from this. They concluded it was a life changing experience, and resulted in strong friendships, greater confidence and support, and better understanding of how you can make a difference. Other participants' comments were also shared.

Pam concluded by saying that a national evaluation of the pilots has now been completed, and a DVD has been produced and distributed to all councils in Scotland. A Training the Trainers course has also been funded by North Ayrshire Social Services. Two further courses next year are to be jointly funded by Social Services and the NHS. Social Services are developing a wider Participation Strategy, and a Citizen Leadership Network has been established.

3c. Using the National Standards for Community Engagement for tenant participation

James McKie, Tenant Participation Officer, delivered this presentation on behalf of Tracey Wilson, Tenant Participation Manager, who had had to submit her apologies. James explained the National Standards were launched in 2005, and over 500 people were involved in developing them. The Standards relate to formal and informal community engagement, and include a number of agreed principles. James explained the Standards are as follows:

- Involvement
- Support
- Planning
- Methods
- Working Together
- Sharing Information
- Working With Others
- Improvement
- Feedback
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

James explained that Housing Services have used the National Standards for a number of years. Their use includes Tenants Conferences (held twice a year) and the Local Housing Strategy events. Seven of the 10 Standards are used, in particular the Working Together Standard.

James referred Network members to the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) website for further information on the Standards – www.scdc.org.uk.

Justina explained that a copy of the Standards had been circulated with the previous agenda, and that some hard copies were available on the tables today.

4. Engaging hard to reach groups

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

5. Cllr McNamara – Question and Answer session

Justina reminded the Network that at the previous meeting Cllr McNamara had offered to attend future meetings for an open question and answer session with Network members. Cllr McNamara said he was particularly keen to talk about the Council's budget situation, which is affecting all Council services and geographical areas. The Council has to save £60 million, which is a 15-18% cut. This will have a massive impact. It is estimated the Council will lose 800 staff, although they will do their utmost to ensure there are no compulsory redundancies.

Cllr McNamara explained he can impart the views of the Network members to the Council's Executive. He felt the budget and other changes would result in a stronger voluntary sector, and that this is happening across Scotland. He then opened the meeting to questions:

The questions/ issues covered included:

- The need to look long term rather than rushing into changes
- Consultation and engagement with the wider community
- The impact on any political restructure, if the Council was delivering fewer services
- The growing role for volunteering
- The difference with the NHS where there is a legal requirement to consult
- The challenge for partner organisations to engage on future service developments with the Council, when services are unable to commit due to uncertainty
- The Scottish Ambulance Service model of volunteer First Responders
- The issue of 'saturation' as all public sector bodies seek to engage volunteers
- Scottish Churches Housing Action's experience of engaging volunteers in preventing homelessness, including through Recycling Enterprise North Ayrshire (RENA) in Ardrossan, which is helping to establish and maintain tenancies
- The tension between community planning's aim of engaging communities in the decisions that affect them and the crisis situation with budget changes, which limits engagement
- The impact of budget cuts on staff and volunteer morale
- The risk of 'tinkering with the bolts on the wheels' (so the wheels will ultimately fall off)
- How far budget cuts are proportionate for different services
- The request by the Executive that services look at what they can do with minimal impact on frontline services.

Cllr McNamara explained the Council has set up a change committee (the 'Change Sounding Board') to look at all these changes. He agreed to return to the next meeting of the Network for a further Q&A session.

6. Preparations for Community Planning Week 2010

Morna Rae, Community Planning Officer, presented a report on preparations for Community Planning Week 2010. The report summarised the aims of CP Week, and the activities undertaken and lessons learned from the first CP Week in 2009. The dates for CP Week 2010 have been set as 17-21 May, with scope for weekend events if required.

The CPP Strategic Partnerships are beginning their preparations for CP Week now. The Network members were asked to begin to think about any activities their own organisations, or the Network as a whole, may wish to carry out as part of CP Week 2010. This item will also be on the agenda of the next meeting.

ACTION: MORNA

7. What is everyone planning for 2010?

This item will be followed up by email, and will also be added to the next agenda.

ACTION: JUSTINA

8. Consultation on the Local Development Plan

David Hammond, Planning Officer, delivered a presentation on the development of the new Local Development Plan (LDP). He explained this is being developed in the context of new planning legislation which is designed to make planning faster, more efficient, more inclusive and fit for purpose. The Main Issues report is being published online in December and in hard copy in the New Year, with the proposed Plan due in late 2010. There will then be an examination by the Reporter in 2011/12 before the Plan is adopted in 2012/13.

The Main Issues report concentrates on key changes to be addressed by the Plan, and the Council's ideas for future development. David explained that a range of factors influence the Main Issues report. The Main Issues have been identified as:

- How much housing and where?
- New uses for 'old' sites
- The future of our town centres
- Rural, coastal and island development, and
- Providing infrastructure.

The main consultation period will be after the publication of the Report in January. David outlined the use of The Pod and Community Council toolkits as two innovative methods of consultation used so far. The Pod is an interactive, touch screen video recording booth (previously demonstrated at the Community Engagement Network), which records broadcast quality video footage of individuals' responses to a number of questions. David used The Pod to capture the views of young people in three North Ayrshire secondary schools. The Community Council Toolkits were sent to the 13 Community Councils in North Ayrshire, including worksheets, a quick reference guide, and disposable cameras, with 11 responses received. This approach enabled the Community Councils to explore the 5 Main Issues for themselves in their own local context.

David finished his presentation by outlining some of the challenges of consulting on such a strategic, long term document, and identifying the next steps. He emphasised he is interested in any synergies or joint working opportunities with your organisation.

9. Libraries and Information Services Website

Allison McAllister, Lifelong Learning and Online Manager, intended to demonstrate the Libraries and Information Services Website. However due to lack of time, Allison circulated flyers outlining all the available services, and agreed to circulate further information by email.

ACTION: ALLISON/ SHIRLEY

10. Evaluation and Future Agenda Items

Shirley Caine, Community Planning Assistant, led the Network through an evaluation of the meeting using the PP Vote electronic voting system.

Justina explained the PP Vote system is available to borrow from the CPP team. 100 handsets are available from the CPP team, with additional handsets available from other

partners. The system can be run by anyone who has completed the PP Vote training, which takes place as required.

11. Any other business

There were no additional items.

12. Dates of 2010 Meetings

These were confirmed as:

Tuesday 16 March

Tuesday 15 June

Tuesday 14 September

Tuesday 14 December

All meetings will begin at 10am (coffee/ tea available from 9.30), and will be held at Greenwood.