

To: BELLSHILL & DISTRICT LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP		Subject:  JOINT COMMUNITY PLANNING EVENT REPORT
From: CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
Date: 7 May 2009	Ref: SMcK/PN/ss	

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Partnership members with a copy of the full report on the joint Community Planning Event which took place on 16 January 2009 at Gartlea Community Centre and to seek approval for future actions.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 At the February 2009 Local Area Partnership members received a report providing an update on the key findings from the joint event. It was agreed that a full report would be submitted to this meeting along with proposals for driving forward the findings from the event.

## 3. Report and Action Plan

- 3.1 Attached, as Appendix 1, is the full report which details the key findings and range of issues raised by partners. The issues on the whole fit within a number of key community planning themes i.e.

- Developing Our Single Outcome Agreement
- Improve Partnership Working and links to NLP Board and Thematic Groups
- Developing Our Neighbourhood Improvement Plans
- Local Area Partnerships and Local Area Teams
- Community Engagement

- 3.2 The North Lanarkshire Partnership Officers Group at its last meeting discussed and considered the key findings detailed in the report and has proposed a range of improvement actions to drive forward the agenda across the community planning partners. The key improvement actions are detailed in the Action Plan attached. (Appendix 2)

- 3.3 It is proposed that the North Lanarkshire Partnership Officers Group has responsibility to ensure the effective implementation of the Action Plan at a strategic level and the Area Teams at a local level.

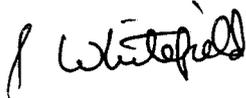
- 3.4 It is proposed that a joint event is organised with members of the Local Area Teams in June 2009 to discuss some of the issues arising from the event including the agreement to provide a Terms of Reference for Local Area Teams and develop the wider Community Engagement Agenda.

- 3.5 Attached at Appendix 3 is the calendar of event for 2009/2010.

#### **4. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Local Area Partnership:

- (i) Agree Appendix 2 of the attached report
- (ii) agree that an update on progress will be provided to future Local Area Partnership meetings
- (iii) otherwise note the content of the report



**Chief Executive  
North Lanarkshire Council**

**Community Planning in North Lanarkshire  
Report from Joint Event - 16 January 2009  
Gartlea Community Centre**

**Background**

One of the key issues highlighted in the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning is communication between partners at both a local and strategic level. Some of the Community Fora members have also indicated that links to the North Lanarkshire Partnership could be improved.

At their meeting on November 08 Board members agreed to develop a joint Community Planning event in January 09. The NLP Officers Group undertook this task and the event 'Community Planning in North Lanarkshire' was held in Gartlea Community Centre on 16 January 2009.

**Key Findings from Event**

A total of 127 delegates from across the partnership participated in the event including members from the Board Community Fora, Local Area Partnerships, Local Area Teams and Chairs of the Themed Working Groups.

The event provided an ideal opportunity for partners to discuss and debate a number of community planning issues i.e. the Single Outcome Agreement, How to Improve Our Communication and Partnership Agreements.

An evaluation form was provided to all delegates, the findings of which were reported at the last meeting. However, a total of 55 evaluations were returned from a total of 127. The findings from the evaluation demonstrate that:

- 100% of respondents found the event useful
- 100% stated they had an opportunity to give their views
- 89% rated the venue excellent or good
- 94.5% stated we should have similar events on an annual basis

Other comments on the overall day were very positive. Samples of these are detailed below:

- A very valuable event which allowed good partnership mix
- Discussion brought out a lot of good information and agreed processes
- Great venue and atmosphere with plenty opportunity to talk
- Overall a very well run event
- A lot of great ideas, hope they also get taken forward by partners at local level
- Excellent opportunity to meet with people who are committed to improving the life of NLC residents, some valuable relationships made.

Eight staff from across the partnership facilitated the group work discussions, and detailed are a number of the key points raised during these sessions.

## **Our Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)**

Most of the discussion on the SOA focussed on the links to the local Neighbourhood Improvement Plans (NIPs). The development of the Neighbourhood Improvement Plans was generally seen as a positive area of work being undertaken across the localities. Partners saw the benefits to having such a plan which allows them to capture local issues, and importantly local actions that link directly to the outcomes detailed in both the SOA and the Community Plan.

Partners recognised that the process for developing the NIP has changed significantly over the last year which meant there was a steep learning curve for all involved as we became more familiar with the outcome focussed approach etc. They recognised that the process for developing the NIPs and the SOA is ongoing, and one which can often be shaped by discussions nationally. There is however a commitment from partners to build on what we have achieved to date and take the lessons learned into future years of the planning process.

Although local people were involved in the process for developing the NIPs, there was a feeling that the documents would be more useful if there was more of a neighbourhood focus. The view was that the outcomes in the SOA were broad enough to accommodate this. It is important that local people have ownership over the process of developing the NIPs and the SOA and it should be a bottom up as well as top down approach.

Ideas for future action / consideration:

- Undertake more engagement and planning activities across the partnership to determine local priorities.
- Need to clearly outline timescales for the development of and consultation on any future NIPs and SOA.
- Ensure communities have ownership over the process of the development of the NIPs and the SOA.
- Review local priorities on six monthly basis – linked to SOA

## **Improving Communication**

Partners acknowledged that communication across partners generally worked well and that there were adequate opportunities to raise issues. Communication within each of the partnership structures i.e. LAPs, LATs and Community Forums were also felt to be quite good, although perhaps communication could be improved between the local structures and also directly to the NLP Board.

Partners recognised that there had been significant changes to how the local community planning structures operate and the type of business that they are now involved in. Partners also recognised that they are learning new ways of working together, and their role and responsibilities increasing and developing on an on-going basis. At times this can be extremely challenging especially when timescales can be tight.

Partners recognised the key role that the Community Fora have within the wider engagement agenda. However, at present they do not always accurately represent the multi-cultural nature or distinct communities within the broader community e.g. young people. It was recognised that, for the most part, the only way to get people engaged with enthusiasm is where there was a 'problem'. Partners and the local Community Fora need to start working on making continual engagement worthwhile for local residents, ensuring that it is targeted and specific methods suited to their requirements e.g. youth engagement should be made more appealing for young people.

There is a general commitment to build on the success of our partnership arrangements and to find ways to communicate more effectively good news stories, and the excellent work being undertaken across North Lanarkshire. We need to communicate our successes so that we are not constantly being measured on failures.

Ideas for future action / consideration:

- Make better use of existing engagement mechanisms e.g. NL News, Residents Survey, Citizens Panel, Survey of partner agencies and make connections with unconnected groups
- Partners need to be aware of other structures and engagement processes that are in place e.g. Bi-annual Social Work Client Survey.
- Need to use our partners more effectively to improve communication.
- Celebrate success and have more local events
- Avoid jargon and ensure information to communities is in plain English
- Radically change how we advertise meetings and access to minutes etc.
- Need to feedback progress to participants when communities do engage
- Improved links between themed working groups and LAPs / LATs
- Need for clear communication strategy across all partners.

### **Local Area Partnerships and Local Area Teams**

Partners generally saw the benefits in having Local Area Partnerships and Local Area Teams to drive forward the local community planning agenda. They valued the role that they play to help improve communication and to encourage better planning across the community planning partners.

The way that formal communication (timescales, minutes, agendas etc) takes place was also felt to be generally quite good; however the communication between the LAP and local community forums (and the wider community) could be improved.

The way that the LAP does business was debated. There was a feeling that issues or questions were raised in one meeting and would rarely resurface, therefore the circle wasn't being closed and rather than an organic and continuous dialogue there were a series of isolated meetings that appeared, at times, to lack continuity. This can lead to a delay in reporting progress to the local community forums. Some partners also raised concerns about the overall decision making process within the LAPs and that they felt disengaged from the process.

The role of the LAT was particularly valued as members recognised that there have been positive outcomes for local people resulting in the quick resolution of urgent local issues. The role and responsibilities of the LATs, and their individual members, could perhaps be more explicit. There is a need to improve how information is shared and the reporting and recording procedures, particularly those back to the Community Fora. There is a view that there is a lot of 'invisible good' being done that is not always documented as it often happens outwith the formal meetings, partners need to find ways to document and capture this.

We need to learn from our successes as well as our failures. There is a willingness by partners to make the structures work better for them and for local people and therefore realise the wider local and national outcomes.

Ideas for future action / consideration:

- More local events across the LAPs, LATs and Community Forums

- Have an annual community planning event across all partners
- Training for elected members and partners on the National Standards for Community Engagement
- A day / session dedicated to looking at the role of the LAT and how we could further develop partnership working and deliver projects with real benefits; and how they can link and feedback progress more effectively to the local Community Fora.
- Change the culture of reporting at LAPs and make them more informal
- Need to review, define and clarify routes to make engaging with structures easier for local people and how local people can get involved
- Timing and timescales of meetings, letters, reporting processes should be improved e.g. LAP meetings to take place in evenings.
- NLP Board minutes should go to the LAPs.
- Reports from LAPs to NLP Board outlining progress

## **Developing Our Partnership Agreement**

There was broad agreement to the development of a Partnership Agreement with the LAPs. Partners saw the benefits to such a document set out clearly roles, responsibilities, principles and clear lines of communication. It would help to ensure that we have the right people in the right places that can influence and have responsibility for driving the community planning agenda forward at a local level. It was suggested that the document should be broadly the same as the NLP Partnership Agreement. However, others were of the opinion that the agreement should be added to the existing NLP Partnership Agreement.

There was a suggestion that additional information could be developed to sit alongside the Partnership Agreement e.g. pack with details on individual LAP and LAT partners, each partners roles and responsibilities and the membership. This would help clarify what partners have been mandated to do and would increase awareness of everyone's role and what each individual member brings to the LAT and LAP e.g. through the development of a role descriptor for members.

The document would need to be based on the principles of the National Standards for Community Engagement. An agreement such as this would reinforce what is expected of partners, including the Community, and would be a particularly useful tool in determining the parameters of the partnership model of working. Training should be provided to community forum members, elected members and partners on the engagement standards and how they relate to their business.

It would be important as part of the process for developing such an agreement that partner's consider any issues with regard to its implementation, particularly around the principles and practice.

It was recognised that such a document would need the approval of the NLP Board in the first instance.

Ideas for future action / consideration:

- Need to negotiate agreement with partners locally
- Need for flexibility for any agreement
- Partnership Agreement should be in plain English and ensure there is a more 'user' friendly local version
- Partnership Agreement should reflect the National Standards for Community Engagement

- Should be an appendix to the NLP Partnership agreement and not a separate document.

### **Future Action**

The report captures a wide range of issues raised at the event. However, there were a number of other issues raised that are more specific to each of the localities which require some consideration by local partners. A copy of the notes for each locality will be distributed to the appropriate partners for consideration.

The Action Plan for future is attached for information and details the key actions to drive forward the issues on behalf of the partnership with the Local Area Partnerships, Local Area Teams and Community Fora driving those that relate to the localities.

A calendar of events is being developed to provide details of the key milestones in relation to driving forward both the local and the strategic community planning agenda. This will be agreed at the next NLP Officers Group meeting.

Community Planning in North Lanarkshire  
Joint Event across Partners  
Gartlea Community Centre  
16 January 09

**Action Plan**

<b>Issue (s)</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Developing Our Single Outcome Agreement 2011	Develop detailed work plan for consultation on SOA and ensure local communities involved in process through locality events.	North Lanarkshire Partnership Officers Group  Local Area Partnerships
Improve Partnership Working and links to NLP Board and Thematic Groups	Annual joint event organised for partners at both a strategic and local level.	North Lanarkshire Partnership Officers Group
	Provide regular update reports and minutes on NLP Board and Thematic Groups to Local Area Partnerships and improve links across structures.	Local Area Partnerships  Chairs of Themed Working Groups
	Develop a communication strategy across all partners.	North Lanarkshire Partnership Officers Group
<b>Issue (s)</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Developing Our Neighbourhood Improvement Plans	Localised Joint events developed for stakeholders in each locality on bi-annual basis.	Local Area Partnerships Local Area Teams
	Develop and implement the NIPs ensuring community involvement in process.	Local Area Partnerships Local Area Teams
	Detailed work plan developed outlining timescales for consultation and process for developing the NIP.	Local Area Teams
Local Area Partnership and Local Area Teams	Develop and implement Partnership Agreement with Local Area Partnerships.	Local Area Partnerships Local Area Teams
	Review the role of the Local Area Teams and update terms of reference.	Local Area Teams
	Provide progress reports on LAPs to NLP Board.	Local Area Partnerships Local Area Teams
	Change the culture of reporting at Local Area Partnerships and make them more informal.	North Lanarkshire Council
Community Engagement	Training programmes developed across partners (including elected members) on the National Standards for Community Engagement	North Lanarkshire Partnership Officers Group / Community Engagement Sub-Group
	Ensure a range of mechanisms are in place to engage more effectively with local residents e.g. NL News, Residents Survey and Citizens Panels, and share findings with all partners.	NLC Information sharing Group
	Work with Community Fora to broaden representation on community forums and involve residents in the wider community engagement agenda.	Community Engagement Officers
	Ensure feedback on any consultations / decisions to Community Fora.	Community Engagement Officers / Local Regeneration Managers / LATs

Appendix 3

LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING  
CALENDAR

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2009		<p>Team Meeting with CEO's &amp; LRMs / Operational Plan</p> <p>NIPS to Community Forums</p>	<p>NIPs to Community Forums</p>	<p>NIPs to LAPs along with Gartlea Report &amp; Approval for development of Partnership Agreement</p> <p>LAP'S 5-7 May 2009</p>	<p>Joint Event with All LATs / Terms of Reference and National Standards for Community Engagement</p>		<p>Partnership Agreement to LAPs for final approval</p> <p>LAP's 11-13 Aug 2009</p>	<p>Annual Local Event / Review NIPs and actions for following year and Training on National Standards for Community Engagement</p> <p>Distribute Final Partnership Agreement to all partners</p>	<p>LAP's 6-8 Oct 2009</p>		<p>Progress Report to LAPs on NIPs and Action Plans</p> <p>LAP's 8-10 Dec 2009</p>
2010											
<p>Meetings with LATs and Community Forums to Discuss draft Annual Action Plans for NIPs</p>	<p>LAP's 16-18 Feb 2010</p>	<p>Annual Community Planning Event</p> <p>LAT Meeting to finalise NIP Action Plans</p> <p>NIP Action Plans to Community Forums</p>		<p>Annual NIP Action Plans to LAPs</p>	<p>Joint Event with Community Forums</p> <p>LAT Meeting</p>			<p>Annual Local Community Planning Event / Review NIPs and determine actions for following year</p> <p>LAT Meeting</p>			<p>Progress Report to LAPs on NIPs and Action Plans</p>