



Locality Planning Forum

The Aberdeen City Alliance
Locality Planning Forum

10 am Thursday 18 June 2009
Town House, Broad Street, Aberdeen.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Approval of minutes of 23 April 2009
3. Matters arising from previous minutes
4. re-design of Neighbourhood Planning – workshop session
5. Date and items for next meeting
 - i. Proposed: Thursday 3 September 09; 10am

Re-design of Neighbourhood Planning

Workshops

Workshop 1: Wednesday 17 June; 2 to 5pm

Locality Planning Forum Workshop: Thursday 18 June: 10am to 12pm

Workshop 2: Wednesday 24 June; 2 to 5pm

Workshop 3: Tuesday 30 June: 2 to 5 pm

Workshop invitations:

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|-----------------|-----|
| Grampian Police | – 3 |
| GFRS | - 2 |
| NHS Grampian | - 3 |
| Civic Forum | - 3 |
| Elected members | – 4 |
| ACC officers* | - 6 |
| ACVO | - 2 |

* 1 each from Social Care; Housing & Community Safety; Environment & Infrastructure; Culture, Learning & Sport; an NCPO; a CLD worker.

The re-design of Neighbourhood Planning

Workshop 1 and 2 Background and Programme

Re-design purpose: to produce a simpler and more effective approach to Neighbourhood Planning that learns from past experience and fits with new and ongoing partner structures.

Workshop purpose: to bring together representatives of different stakeholder groups to consider how we improve the key processes in Neighbourhood Planning.

Background information

Introduction

The Best Value Audit recognized our considerable commitment to engaging with communities to deliver more responsive local services and found that there were tangible results. There remains a consensus, amongst all of the stakeholders involved (ie elected members of the City Council, chief officers across the community planning partnership, and community representatives), that we should continue to use and develop Neighbourhood Planning. There is also a wish to base future development on a simpler more effective approach. This paper sets out the broad issues to be clarified before a new approach can be set out for further consultation.

Reflecting on the past

Neighbourhood Planning has delivered many improvements to our local communities and we have a lot of good practice to build on. However, whilst Neighbourhood Planning was developing over the past four years there were a number of aspects that did not make the progress we would have hoped. These were:

- Some parts of the process were not sufficiently resourced including data collation and analysis (this undermined a robust evidence based approach to identifying local priorities); and communications (this meant residents, elected members and operational staff were not always aware of progress).
- Tasking & Coordinating Groups (T&C) were set-up before getting 'buy-in' from partners and the Locality Planning Forum and as a result the T&C Groups did not all take ownership of the Neighbourhood Community Action Plans (NCAPs).
- It followed that the NCAPs were not fully effective because they were not based on robustly identified priority issues and they were not fully integrated into service management arrangements.
- Some partners although supportive were not able to play into the process effectively (eg NHS could not provide representation at all T&C Groups; the voluntary sector could not find a meaningful link).

- The three Area approach led to inconsistencies in implementation of the 'Framework for Neighbourhood Planning & Service Delivery' (this led to confusion amongst stakeholders and variable results).
- Neighbourhood Planning was not integral to service planning and service governance arrangements (this meant officers were held more to account by their Service or Board/Committee than by T&C Groups to the detriment of responding to neighbourhood priorities).
- Some participants found the approach too bureaucratic or too vague (eg being asked to identify issues at T&C Group meetings instead of presenting evidence based issues and then being held accountable for responding).
- Community engagement did not progress beyond infrequent large consultation events (this meant that an ongoing empowering dialogue did not become established). Community representatives felt there was insufficient feedback on progress from services and that residents did not understand the neighbourhood planning process.

These are the weak aspects that require improvement but many actions were delivered to neighbourhoods and there is an ongoing commitment to making services locally responsive and to engaging with local communities.

Key features

The key features of Neighbourhood Planning that should be sustained are:

1. **'Natural' communities** as identified by local residents rather than bureaucratic boundaries – ie the 37 neighbourhoods.
2. **Ongoing dialogue** between communities and local services that identifies neighbourhood priorities, action to address them and a means of monitoring progress.
3. **Neighbourhood priorities** that are based on a combination of community experience, objective data, strategic priorities and promoting the concept of 'well being'.
4. **Integrated service planning** that ensures that neighbourhood priorities are built into service plans and budgets, and that all services work together to maximise their impact.
5. **Neighbourhood Community Action Plans** composed of 'SMART' actions that will ensure progress on neighbourhood priorities through partnership working.
6. **Governance arrangements** that ensure both that the community planning partnership can monitor the implementation of NCAPs and ensure that neighbourhood planning links into each agency's management arrangements.
7. **Impact** in improving the well being of communities in greatest need and maintaining service standards across all neighbourhoods.

Key processes

For neighbourhood planning to work effectively the following processes need to be in place; and we need to consider how best to facilitate each process.

1. **Community involvement** that reaches all sections and interests within each neighbourhood.
What arrangements and support are required to ensure representative community groups can speak for a broad range of interests in their neighbourhood? How will we coordinate the community capacity building posts across the partnership?
2. **Community engagement** based on a working relationship between the community planning partnership and each community, and that includes regular communication, effective consultation and promotes community empowerment.
How can this be targeted to be meaningful and make best use of people's time; and adhere to the Standards for Community Engagement? Which group(s) should represent each neighbourhood? Should community councils provide the main focus for community engagement? How will a simpler approach maintain the focus on the 37 natural communities?
3. **Facilitation** is required to provide inter-agency links and coordination, organisational capacity building and community capacity building.
How can we respond to the reduction in NCPO and CLD posts?
4. **Data collation and analysis** is required to enable an evidenced based approach to priority setting.
How do we identify resources to support this process?
5. **Partnership arrangements** that support Neighbourhood Planning within the capacity of each agency. The agreed priorities within NCAPs should focus on partnership working (and not on routine business or wish lists).
What structures are required to facilitate joined up responses to neighbourhood priorities? How do we balance the need to have a focus on each neighbourhood with the need to avoid time consuming duplicate procedures and structures? Should we plan 'geographically' but task 'thematically'?
6. **Decision making** that is linked into relevant operational structures and governance bodies.
How do we ensure that service managers are empowered to work within partnership forums? How do we link to existing structures for integrated working (eg the GIRFEC Group, challenge forums)?
7. **Content of NCAPs** needs to be clarified
What should be included? – complaints about service standards; responses to routine problems/incidents ; addressing local issues?
What can NCAPs reasonably achieve?

8. **Alignment with strategic plans** so that NCAP priorities can be integrated with agency plans, the Community Plan and the SOA; and fitted into the budget setting process.
Should NCAPs be presented within the format of strategic priorities?
9. **Monitoring** that enables representatives from all the stakeholder groups to ensure effective implementation of NCAPs with responsibility to refer issues to relevant structures or the NCPO. And which facilitates reporting on the Single Outcome Agreement indicators.
At what geographic level should monitoring groups operate and who should participate?

Workshop task

To consider those issues that need to be tackled to improve the neighbourhood planning process.

Programme:

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| 2:00 | Introduction by chairperson and Dave Valentine |
| 2:15 | Small group discussion: work through the 5 issues set out on the second page of the paper entitled 'Who, what, why, where, how? ' (3 groups of 10) |
| 3:15 | refreshment break |
| 3:30 | Initial feedback: 10 minutes per group |
| 3:50 | Small groups – review, agree and record main options for improvement |
| 4:45 | Conclusion – next steps and volunteers for workshop 3. |

Workshop 1 & 2 input : Who, what, why, where, how?

What do we want and why?

We want our services to be more effective by working together and being more responsive to local needs.

We want to engage with communities so that they have more influence over local service delivery and to encourage higher levels of community involvement.

We want to do more preventative work so that we can make a difference in neighbourhoods with particular needs.

Who is involved?

The key stakeholder groups are:

- Public sector services represented by local service managers
- Elected members of the City Council
- Residents, community groups and community representatives
- Staff who facilitate and support the process

Where is our focus?

The landscape we are working within can be represented by the following diagram. The re-design of Neighbourhood Planning needs to keep to the 'public sector/local' domain but have effective connections with the other domains.



How will we do it?

To achieve these aims through Neighbourhood Planning we need to improve the process – and we need to be realistic about what can be achieved. For example, NP itself will not create integrated service delivery – and there are more specialist partnership groups that will do this (eg GIRFEC group).

Feedback to date has identified some aspects that clearly need to be addressed...

Fewer partnership groups: -

(previously 12 Tasking & Coordinating Groups) - the optimal number of groups that bring together service managers from across the partnership and maintains a balance between a local focus and a manageable commitment is probably around 6. The role of these groups should also be clarified.

Better community engagement:-

Communication, feedback, ongoing dialogue and levels of community involvement all need to be improved – whilst this is an ongoing project through community capacity building and developing community engagement skills there is a case for creating a closer link with community representatives. Should there be a joint stakeholder group for clusters of neighbourhoods that would create a closer working relationship?

Enhanced identification of priorities:-

NCAPs need to be focused on fewer better evidenced priorities. This can be achieved by removing issues which are about routine service standards or issues that can reasonably be dealt with routinely and within existing resources. What remains are the more complex and intractable issues requiring longer term projects. Evidence needs to combine neighbourhood profiles, service data and community views.

Integrated planning:-

The implementation of agreed actions to address NCAP priorities must be integrated with Service Plans. This requires the production of annual action plans to be synchronised with Service Planning and budget setting. It also requires service managers to liaise effectively between NP partnership groups and their own management team. Is this feasible?

Implementing actions:-

How we ensure delivery of the agreed actions is critical. To date we have depended on a partnership group (T&C Group) supported by a NCPO – is this sufficient? In many areas (esp England) there are Neighbourhood Manager posts for those areas with the greatest needs or for specific themes (eg community safety). Another device (which can be linked to Neighbourhood Managers) is the Community Agreement which is a publicly launched contract between public services and a local community.

The workshop discussions should be directed towards these issues and agreeing **how** we should do neighbourhood planning more effectively.