



Working Together for Wellbeing

The report of the Northern
Ireland Embedding Wellbeing
in Local Government Programme

Full Report • September 2021

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- Rachael Craig and Colm Doherty, Derry City and Strabane County Council.

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e. Glossary

Co-production means building on the assets of communities of place and interest to deliver better wellbeing outcomes for all by sharing responsibilities and power equally between service users and those who advocate on their behalf, and service providers across all sectors.

Commissioning is the process through which a range of public services are procured, primarily from the private, social enterprise, voluntary or community sectors.

A **community of practice** is a group of people who work together to improve knowledge and skills through interaction and learning that improves services and programme delivery and finds solutions to complex policy and social challenges.

Community planning is an integrated strategy that brings together the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, resources, policies and programmes.

Enabling environment means putting in place the legislation, policy, structures and resources that support co-production and community engagement.

Engagement is about going beyond participation to involve communities in an interactive and relational process that gives them a meaningful say in the design and development of policies and programmes affecting them, their area or sector.

Governance refers to the way in which decision-making structures work outside formal government organisations to enable a wider range of civic actors, the private sector and special interests to make and take decisions affecting an area or problem.

Locality plans are area-based strategies that coordinate investment in response to the needs and priorities of local communities.

Organisational silos refer to the practice of central and local government which often works within structural, policy or professional disciplines.

Outcome planning involves setting clear indicators about how the lives of people living in a Council area will change over the life of a Community Plan. By setting clear, measurable and time bound outcome indicators, the beneficiaries of policies and programmes can see whether and how their lives have changed.

Participatory Budgeting is a structured process of decision-making, in which local people set priorities, take decisions and allocate public, private or charitable funding.

Prevention aims to anticipate and respond to policy issues before they emerge as more difficult and complex problems.

Shared leadership is where leadership is distributed amongst a set of individuals instead of being centralised in the hands of a single individual who acts in the role of leader

Wellbeing is when everyone in society has what they need to live well now and in the future. At Carnegie UK we believe that collective wellbeing happens when social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing outcomes are seen as being equally important and are given equal weight.

Whole of government is an over-arching term for responses to increased fragmentation of public services and a wish to increase integration, co-ordination and capacity.

f. Abbreviations

CES	Centre for Effective Services
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
CVS	Community and Voluntary Sector
ABC	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
DCSDC	Derry City and Strabane District Council
ODP	Outcome Delivery Partnership
LCCC	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
SCPP	Strategic Community Planning Partnership
TAP	Themed Action Planning
IAP2	International Association of Public Participation
DEA	District Electoral Area
NILGA	Northern Ireland Local Government Association

1. Background

Carnegie UK is the UK's leading wellbeing foundation with a 100-year history of inspiring, supporting and promoting wellbeing through philanthropy. We use our expertise to effect change that improves people's lives and work in partnership with individuals and organisations from all sectors to advance the ideas, evidence and practice that make a difference to wellbeing.

Over the past ten years, knowledge of wellbeing – and its application to policy and practice – has increased substantially. We have been proud to be part of this international movement to understand the concept of wellbeing itself, learning what it means to people and to governments (see Box 1).

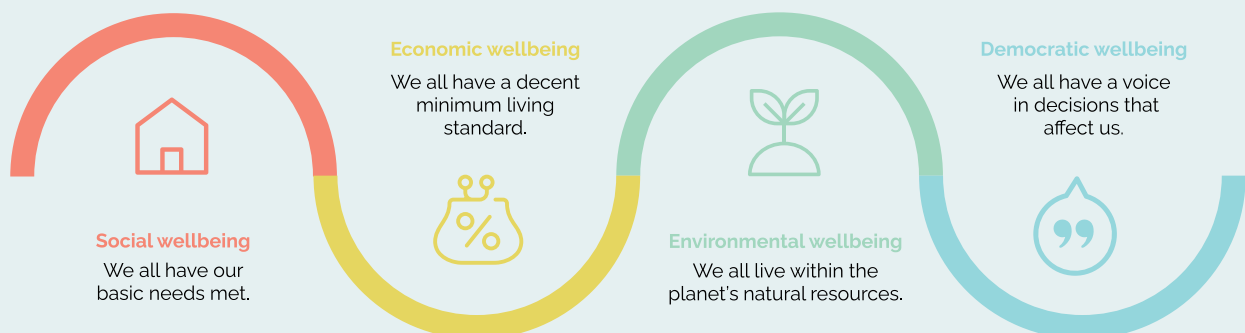
We experience each of the SEED domains of collective wellbeing in different aspects of our lives: our own personal wellbeing – our quality of life and our general happiness; the wellbeing of the community we are part of – whether we

have the assets and relationships in place to live well locally; and as a society – whether we all have what we all need to live well together and flourish (see Box 1).

Our geographical remit also provides us with a unique role in working across the four jurisdictions of the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. In our recent history we have worked to share policy and practice learning across these jurisdictions and to build relationships between those innovating to improve wellbeing in different fields in their own countries and communities.

Box 1: Carnegie UK Definition of Collective Wellbeing

Wellbeing means everyone having what they need to live well now and in the future. It is a multi-dimensional approach to social progress that gives **equal weight** to **S**ocial, **E**conomic, **E**nvironmental and **D**emocratic outcomes.



One example of this was taking our model of a successful roundtable on wellbeing in Scotland¹ and applying it to the unique constitution of Northern Ireland. The Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland reported in 2015 and influenced the outcomes-based approach and focus on wellbeing in the draft Programme for Government².

Around the same time, 2015, the reform of local government in Northern Ireland gave the 11 newly created local authorities the responsibility for leading community planning processes for their respective districts. Community Plans identify priorities for **improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing** of local districts and their residents, community cohesion and local quality of life, beyond local government electoral cycles into the long-term. The Community Plans have the potential to act as local wellbeing frameworks in which local authorities and their partners as Community Planning Partnerships must take an outcomes-based approach to their work.

Independent analysis commissioned by Carnegie UK confirmed that all of the Community Plans, to varying degrees, adopted both the language and substance of the wellbeing agenda and the outcomes model. However, local government was charged with the responsibility for developing Community Plans with little financial or other support.

As the political situation in Northern Ireland destabilised in 2017, Carnegie UK took the decision to shift our focus from the Northern Ireland Executive and public bodies to local government. This was a strategic decision that the Trustees of Carnegie UK made to provide what support we could to local democracy and community planning to improve wellbeing in the region.

1.1 Approach

Carnegie UK's Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project provided significant financial and in-kind support to the Community Planning Partnerships working in the following local authority areas:

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

The project supported the Community Planning Partnerships to overcome challenges in implementing their Community Plan which they themselves identified as priorities. As part of this three-year programme, a peer-to-peer support model was developed to allow the Community Planning Partnerships to learn from each other and from international best practice in addressing similar challenges, and to share this with the other Community Planning Partnerships.

The overall approach was to co-design the programme with the three local partners. In their applications all councils provided information on strengths and challenges, which were collated into packages of support. The key officers from each Council worked together to develop a package that maximised the impact of the funding and support. Our partner Stratagem carried out feedback interviews on our behalf throughout the programme to help us tailor the programme to the needs of the partners. A report of this has been provided in Appendix 10.2.

1 Carnegie UK Trust (2011) *More Than GDP: Measuring What Matters*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/more-than-gdp-measuring-what-matters/>

2 Doran, P., Woods, J and Wallace, J. (2015) *Towards a Wellbeing Framework for Northern Ireland*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/towards-a-wellbeing-framework-short-report/>

1.2 Advisory Group

At the outset, an Advisory Group was established that includes representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, civil society, and key stakeholders from the wellbeing and outcomes community based outside Northern Ireland.

The role of the Advisory Group was primarily to support the project design and delivery,

including the application process and the development of the packages of support for the project partners; to provide effective horizon scanning for issues relating to local government in Northern Ireland and advise on the likely impact of these on the project; and to support the dissemination of project learning to other Community Planning Partnerships in Northern Ireland and their counterparts in other parts of the UK and Ireland. The Advisory Group members are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Advisory Group

Name	Organisation
Aideen McGinley (Chair)	Trustee, Carnegie UK
Colm Bradley	Director, Community Places
Paul Braithwaite	Programme Leader, Building Change Trust
Siobhan Carey/ Tracey Power	Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Statistics Agency
Nicola Creagh	Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Executive (<i>Oct 2018 to Nov 2020</i>)
Kieran Donnelly	Comptroller and Audit General, Northern Ireland Audit Office
Katrina Godfrey	Director of the Programme for Government and Executive Support, Northern Ireland Executive (<i>until September 2018</i>)
Sorcha Hassay	Department for Communities (<i>from March 2021</i>)
Nancy Hey	Director, What Works Wellbeing
Helen Johnston	Senior Policy Analyst, National Economic and Social Council
Brenda Kent	Independent consultant
Derek McCallan	Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Majella McCloskey	Senior Manager, Centre for Effective Services
Pamela McCreedy	Local Government Auditor, Northern Ireland Audit Office (<i>until April 2021</i>)
Joanne McDowell	Northern Ireland Director, Big Lottery Fund Northern Ireland
Dawn Snape	Assistant Director, Wellbeing, Inequalities, Sustainability and Environment (WISE) Division, Office for National Statistics
Jennifer Wallace	Head of Policy, Carnegie UK
Louise Warde-Hunter	Deputy Secretary, Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Executive (<i>until February 2020</i>)

1.3 Application Process

The Community Planning Partnerships were invited to submit an Expression of Interest to participate in the programme. As part of the application process, the local authorities were asked to commit to the principles of openness, partnership working, shared learning and participation. Applicants were required to demonstrate support from the local authority Chief Executive and Chair of the Community Planning Partnership for their application. Expressions of Interest were received from all 11 Community Planning Partnerships.

The Advisory Group was convened to make a decision on the project participants. The Advisory Group selected project participants based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrable awareness and understanding of the issues affecting the communities and residents covered by the Community Plan
- Demonstrable awareness, understanding and balance of priorities across the different domains of wellbeing in the development and implementation of the Community Plan to date
- Evidence of efforts to align the Community Plan with the outcomes framework of the draft Programme for Government
- Demonstrable citizen and community engagement in the development of the Community Plan, and well-developed plans to continue to engage citizens and communities and the Community Sector in the delivery of the Community Plan
- Evidence of partnership working in the delivery of the Community Plan, with clear examples of different partners taking the lead in delivery of different aspects of the Community Plan
- Demonstrable commitment to sharing learning with other local authorities in Northern Ireland and counterparts across the UK and Ireland.

Study visits to each of the three successful areas were undertaken to identify key issues facing each Community Planning Partnership and the strengths and challenges in implementing their Community Plan to date.

1.4 Activities

Table 2: Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Core Activities

June 2018	<p>Support for three Community Planning Partnerships announced</p> <p>After an open Expression of Interest process, the successful project participants were announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; • Derry City and Strabane District Council; and • Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.
September 2018	<p>Launch of Peer-Support Network</p> <p>The Embedding Wellbeing Support Network was launched. This was a new virtual network for all Community Planning Partnerships in Northern Ireland and external stakeholders with expertise and an interest in local wellbeing, offering them the opportunity to share learning.</p>
October 2018	<p>Study Trip – New York</p> <p>The study visit consisted of an international seminar on wellbeing in Northern Ireland³, alongside a stakeholder engagement day ⁴ with those who were involved in measuring local wellbeing outcomes in North America.</p>
November 2018	<p>First peer-to-peer event was held with a focus on the use of data and evidence in Community Planning.</p>
February 2019	<p>Data and evidence for elected members</p> <p>Carnegie UK supported NILGA to pilot a training session for elected members on the use of data and evidence in Community Planning.</p>
March 2019	<p>Study Trip – Wales</p> <p>Representatives of the three Community Planning Partnerships project participants were provided with the opportunity to engage with Welsh policymakers and politicians, and to find out how the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has enabled Wales to improve the wellbeing of citizens⁵.</p>
June 2019	<p>Community Places Commissioned</p> <p>Commissioned Community Places⁶ to support the project participants on integrating co-production into public services and offering citizens a different – more inclusive, enabling – role, which utilises their strengths and capabilities.</p>
June 2019	<p>Centre for Effective Services Commissioned</p> <p>Commissioned the Centre for Effective Services⁷ to provide support on how to share leadership within, and outside of, partnership structures – to diffuse power and decision-making abilities; to maximise collective resources; and to improve outcomes which are greater than the sum of the partners' parts.</p>

3 Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs (2018) *International Seminar on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland* (video) Available online at <https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/programs/archive/wellbeing-northern-ireland>

4 Carnegie UK (2018) *From NI to NYC* Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/blog/from-ni-to-nyc/>

5 Carnegie UK / Bevan Foundation (2019) *Study Trip to Wales* Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/study-visit-to-wales/>

6 Community Places <https://www.communityplaces.info/>

7 Centre for Effective Services <https://www.effectiveservices.org/>

June 2019	<p>Peer-to-peer Hackathon</p> <p>Carnegie UK hosted a hackathon to support the Community Planning network in the development of effective visualisation and communication of the data in their Statements of Progress. The Statements of Progress is a report provided to the Department for Communities and the Partnerships' own communities on the progress made on the implementation of their Community Plans.</p>
December 2019	<p>Peer-to-peer event on Collective Resourcing</p> <p>This event was an opportunity to share learning, and to celebrate the publication of the Partnerships' first Statements of Progress.</p>
January 2020	<p>New Decade, New Approach was published and included a renewed opportunity to improve wellbeing in Northern Ireland⁸. A Carnegie UK infographic outlines our priorities for the next steps for the Executive, on the role of legislation, Ministerial oversight, and aligning with global policies, in order to improve the wellbeing of current and future generations.</p>
March 2020	<p>Major disruption due to COVID-19 pandemic with project activity moving online for the remainder of the programme.</p>
September 2020	<p>Peer-to-peer learning event: working with the community post COVID-19</p> <p>Delegates from across Northern Ireland had the opportunity to share experiences of emergency responses to the pandemic and heard from local government and voluntary organisations across the UK.</p>
May 2021	<p>Embedding a Wellbeing Framework in Northern Ireland: A contribution from Carnegie UK⁹ was published in response to the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government Consultation. In this paper, we called on the Executive to go further and put the wellbeing outcomes approach on a statutory footing to ensure their permanence.</p>
September 2021	<p>Publication of the final project reports bringing together the key findings from the course of the project, and recommendations for the Northern Ireland Executive and Community Planning Partnerships.</p>

8 Carnegie UK (2020) *New Decade, New Approach infographic*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/new-decade-new-approach-and-a-renewed-opportunity-to-improve-wellbeing-in-northern-ireland/>

9 Ormston, H., Pennycook, L. and Wallace, J. (2021) *Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland: A contribution from Carnegie UK Trust to inform discussions around the Programme for Government Consultation*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/embedding-a-wellbeing-framework-in-northern-ireland-a-contribution-from-carnegie-uk-trust-to-inform-discussions-around-the-programme-for-government-consultation/>

The support was co-designed with the project participants to ensure that it is both strategic for the decision-makers in the Community Planning Partnerships and relevant to the practitioners working to deliver projects designed to improve wellbeing in communities.

A key aspect of the model used by Carnegie UK for this project has been the ongoing engagement with civil servants, local government officers, non-governmental organisations and political parties. As a three-year project, we were keen to ensure that the emerging findings could be incorporated into practice as soon as feasible. From cross-jurisdictional learning symposiums to workshops, toolkits and learning modules, we supported local policymakers and practitioners to explore what works as an approach and in their local areas.

As a development programme much of the activity proposed to take place in 2020 was expected to be face-to-face. As the COVID-19 pandemic reached the UK and lockdowns commenced in early 2020 it was clear that we would be unlikely to be able to meet in person. In discussion with all the project partners, we took the decision not to stop the programme but to extend the timetable significantly. This allowed our delivery partners to shift to online webinars and meetings and continue engaging with local government and its partners through this unprecedented time. Throughout this report, references are made to the impact of the pandemic on local government and its partners.



2. Wellbeing in Policy: An Overview

What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted.

Stiglitz, et al., 2009¹¹



2.1 A Global Shift from GDP to Wellbeing

There are a number of phrases used to describe initiatives to improve measurement of social progress: Beyond GDP, sustainable development, human development, happiness, wellbeing (or hyphenated as well-being). Over time, the most commonly associated term in public policy has shifted towards wellbeing (see Box 2). These initiatives share a common target – to reduce the emphasis on GDP as shorthand for the progress of society.

Spurred on by the 2007 Istanbul Declaration there was an explosion of Beyond GDP initiatives. In February 2008, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France asked Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi to form the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress to review how statistics are used to measure progress in the economy and in society. It had the following objectives: to identify the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including the

problems with its measurement; to consider what additional information might be required for the production of more relevant indicators of social progress; to assess the feasibility of alternative measurement tools and; to discuss how to present the statistical information in an appropriate way (Stiglitz, et al., 2009)¹¹.

The Commission's 2009 report has been hugely influential. It builds on an increasing volume of academic and professional literature looking at how to improve measurement of economic performance and wider social progress. The unifying theme of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report is that the time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's wellbeing.

In 2011, UN member states unanimously adopted a resolution noting that GDP “was not designed to and does not adequately reflect the happiness and wellbeing of people in a country”. They instead invited countries “to pursue the elaboration of additional measures that better capture the importance of the pursuit of happiness and wellbeing in development with a view to guiding their public policies”.

¹⁰ Stiglitz, J., Sen, A., and Fitoussi, J-P. (2009) *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. Available online at www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr

¹¹ Ibid

Box 2: Internationally Significant Wellbeing Initiatives

1968	Robert Kennedy speaks of the failures of GDP as a measure of social progress
1987	United Nations Brundtland Commission reports
1992	UN publishes first Human Development Index
2000	Millennium Development Goals agreed by UN
2004	1 st OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy held in Palermo, Italy
2007	Istanbul Declaration on Measuring Social Progress
2009	Publication of Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report on Measuring Economic Performance and Social Progress
2011	OECD launches Better Life initiative
2012	UN publishes Well-being and Happiness: Defining a New Economic Paradigm
2012	UN resolution on International Day of Happiness
2014	Social Progress Index launched
2014	How's Life in Your Region? launched
2018	Group of Wellbeing Economy Governments launched
2018	Global Dialogue for Happiness held at the World Government Summit
2019	The New Zealand Treasury launches first Wellbeing Budget
2019	Lord John Bird launches bid to create new UK Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill
2020	Carnegie UK publishes first collective wellbeing index for England
2021	The Republic of Ireland Government published its first wellbeing framework

Since then, the OECD has led international efforts to improve measures of progress through its Better Life initiative and now through the WISE Centre¹². The programme includes online interactive tools to compare wellbeing across member states and guidance on measuring wellbeing.

Until this point, much of the 'action' around wellbeing was at a nation-state level. As the movement matured, more interest was generated at regional level. In October 2014, the OECD released How's Life in Your Region? the first analytical report on which their regional

wellbeing tool is based¹³. It provides a common framework for measuring wellbeing in regions, and guidance to policy makers at all levels on how to use wellbeing metrics for improving policy results, based on lessons from regions that have been using wellbeing metrics to improve the impact of policy¹⁴. There are now also increasing numbers of initiatives at second (federal/devolved legislatures) or third tier government (municipalities)¹⁵.

12 Centre on Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity (WISE) <https://www.oecd.org/wise/>

13 OECD (2011) *How's Life? Measuring Wellbeing* OECD, Paris

14 Coutts, P. and Wallace, J (2017) *Sharpening our Focus: Guidance on Wellbeing Frameworks in Cities and Regions* Carnegie UK Trust

15 Global Happiness Council (2018) *Global Happiness Policy Report 2018* New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network

2.2 A Public Service Shift from Targets to Outcomes

As the Beyond GDP movement was beginning to change its language towards wellbeing, a parallel development in social policy was also nudging governments in the same direction. By the mid-2000s, the literature was shifting away from support for New Public Management towards whole of government approaches to public policy.

New Public Management began during the early 1990s but rose to dominance in the UK during the New Labour years of 1997-2010. Itself a reaction to traditional public administration, a key aspect of New Public Management was its focus on measurement (the other elements included management and markets). Other countries such as New Zealand, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands also used this approach extensively¹⁶.

During this time, the approach of the UK Government was to set targets to be reached, for example improving waiting-list times or increasing the proportion of young people going into higher education, but increasingly it was criticised for 'hitting the target but missing the point'. A further set of problems with New Public Management was its tendency towards fragmentation. Departmental silos and silo mentality are endemic across public services, with many policy initiatives focusing solely on getting civil servants to plan together more effectively. By the early 2000s and the establishment of the devolved administrations, New Public Management was seen to have reached the limits of its effectiveness and public services were beginning to display behaviours which were creating mistrust within the population¹⁷.

A new approach was required and governments began to experiment with innovative ways of working. In 2020, Carnegie UK published an analysis of Commissions and Inquiries¹⁸ that identified six areas of cross cutting recommendations. These are the **cornerstones of a wellbeing approach** to government:

1. **Prevention:** A wellbeing approach requires problems to be identified and responded to before they become too entrenched and difficult to resolve or mitigate. The lost opportunities of intervening too late are often recognised as costly for today's public purse. But more fundamentally, they are costly for overall wellbeing.
2. **Participatory democracy:** The analysis demonstrates that social progress cannot be understood without engaging people about what matters to them, and that wellbeing cannot be 'done to' people.
3. **Equalities:** Inequality and exclusion are areas of significant wellbeing challenge for many countries and regions. They are not always visible in the statistics which measure population averages.
4. **Localism:** There are repeated calls to create a new relationship between central, regional and local government, based on a shared understanding of their objectives and allowing for local tailoring to suit the needs and priorities of individual communities.
5. **Integration of services:** Governments are increasingly realising that the solutions to wicked and complex policy problems can only be found by working together. Each part of the system (education, health, housing, and so on) is dependent on the others to achieve its objectives.

16 Colgan, et al., (2016) *A Primer on Implementing Whole of Government* Dublin: Centre for Effective Services

17 OECD(2017) *Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust* Paris: OECD

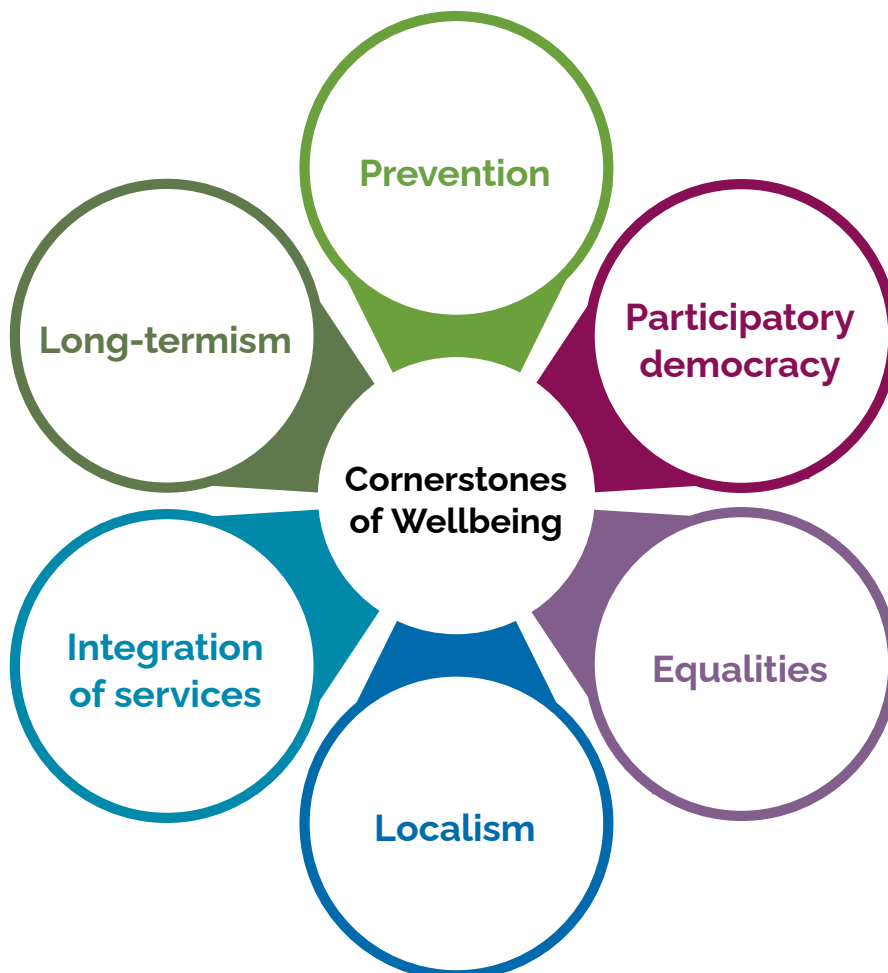
18 Wallace, J. et al (2020) *Gross Domestic Wellbeing (GDWe): An alternative measure of social progress*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/gross-domestic-wellbeing-gdwe-an-alternative-measure-of-social-progress/>

6. Long-termism: Recognising that we operate with finite resources, there is a growing acceptance of the principle that policy making should not benefit current generations at the expense of future ones. Although the implications of the climate emergency were not fully or adequately considered in all of the reviews, a number of examples have begun to identify policies and interventions (on active travel, green space, the food environment and energy efficiency) that could both reduce inequalities and mitigate the effects of climate breakdown; in doing so they demonstrate ambition to achieve positive outcomes right across the SEED domains and prevent negative consequences for generations to come¹⁹.

Taking a wellbeing approach to public services and governance more widely requires a significant shift in thinking within the civil services and public sector professions. This is described by the Centre for Effective Services as a whole of government approach (see Box 3). Whole of government approaches go further than joined-up or interagency working; they ensure that all stakeholders have the same vision and strategic priorities.

19 Ibid

Figure 1: Cornerstones of wellbeing



Box 3: Implementing a whole of government approach

(Majella McCloskey and Anne McMurray, Centre for Effective Services)

A whole of government approach aims to integrate the involvement of stakeholders across networks at national and local level in support of achieving best outcomes.

For the successful involvement of a range of agencies in [policy] implementation and service delivery, it is paramount that those agencies are involved in the development of the policy in the first place²⁰

A key dimension of change from this perspective is an understanding of and attention to cultural factors such as norms, values and beliefs in a system. According to Fixen, et al., "the essence of implementation is behaviour change" whether in relation to policy or practice²¹.

The literature on policy implementation suggests that key success factors in policy development and implementation include a clear evidence base to support the policy, active consideration of the implementation challenges, and a Theory of Change that maps the causal pathway from where things are to where they need to be²².

Implementation approaches generally identify key 'drivers' or enablers for making change:

- **Structures:** A set of practical structures or arrangements are needed to make community planning happen, shaped by its purpose, and for the lifetime of the initiative. Community planning which is intended to bring about significant long-term change may need more strongly embedded systems, including legislation, organisational redesign, new processes and new competencies²³.
- **Work Processes:** Community planning depends on the alignment of core work processes so that these are supportive of a whole of government approach. Key processes for alignment include accountability systems, budgets and information management, and according to a 2006 OECD report²⁴, the management of critical gaps in these areas.
- **Political and Administrative Leadership:** Shared leadership is seen as a specialised kind of leadership that enables people to manage the complex institutional arrangements that whole of government work requires. Leadership has to focus on building and sustaining relationships, managing complexity and interdependence, and managing multiple and conflicting accountabilities²⁵.
- **Culture and Capacities:** The key personnel operating in inter-organisational settings are 'boundary spanners'. The networking skills of the effective boundary spanner include capacity to cultivate inter-personal relationships, communication, political skills, and an appreciation of the interdependencies involved in understanding and solving complex problems. Empathy, reciprocity and trust, and an ability to see the problem from the social and values perspective of other stakeholders are key capacities. Collaboration is another key capacity, and it takes on a specific meaning in community planning.

To do this effectively, a shared vision of the type of society we wish to have in the future, and in particular the vision for the public sector, are fundamental requirements. Leadership is seen as critical to effective policy implementation²⁶.

20 Metcalf, A. (2011). Presentation to the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Canberra, November 2011. Cited in *Public Sector Governance in Australia*, by Meredith Edwards et al., ANU Press, 2012, *JSTOR*, Available online at www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24h92b19.

21 Fixen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blasé, K. A., and Friedman, R. M. (2005). Implementation research: a synthesis of the literature. Available online at <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nirn.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/NIRN-MonographFull-01-2005.pdf>

22 Williams, P. (2002). The competent boundary spanner. *Public administration*, 80(1), 103-124.

23 de Bri, F., and Bannister, F. (2010). *Whole of Government: Beyond Silos and Toward 'Wicked Problems'*. *Proceedings of the 10th European Conference on E-Government*: National Center for Taxation Studies University of Limerick, Ireland 17-18 June 2010

24 OECD (2006) *Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States*. DAC Guidelines and Reference Series. A DAC Reference Document.

25 Fafard, P. (2013) *Health in All Meets Horizontal Government*. First International Conference on Public Policy. Grenoble, France. Available online at http://www.icpublicpolicy.org/IMG/pdf/panel_61_s1_fafard_final.pdf

26 Ibid

2.3 International Learning

2.3.1 North America

In October 2018, as part of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project's commitment to policy learning, the project participants took part in a study visit to New York and met with policymakers and practitioners involved in the development and implementation of the following wellbeing frameworks:

- The City of Santa Monica Wellbeing Project²⁷ provided valuable learning on engaging with citizens beyond the usual places, spaces, and suspects.
- The Community Foundations of Canada²⁸, demonstrated the power of annual reporting on community wellbeing.
- Gross National Happiness USA²⁹ relayed to our participants that data alone is insufficient. Data needs to be framed and communicated effectively for it to be powerful.
- Measure of America³⁰, provided valuable learning on the need to have the audience at the forefront of plans to communicate wellbeing data.

The study trip was timed to coincide with an International Seminar on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland – a collaboration between Carnegie UK and the Carnegie Council for Ethics³¹. The seminar explored the political context in Northern Ireland; showcased wider perspectives outside of central and local government; identified contacts for potential future collaboration; and hosted discussions in

an international setting. However, the divergence between the political parties was stark, and the responsibility bestowed on community planning as one of the few levers available to improve wellbeing outcomes in a political and policy vacuum demonstrated the expectations of and pressure on the Plans to encompass all public services.

2.3.2 Wales

In March 2019, a second study trip was made to Wales. During the visit, the group heard directly from Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. She opened her presentation with a quote from a UN spokesperson:

We hope that what Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow. Action, more than words, is the hope for our current and future generations.

She explained that the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act had arisen from a 'national conversation', The Wales we Want. The Act was passed by the National Assembly in 2015 and she became the first Commissioner in 2016. The Act covers most public bodies in Wales, from the Welsh Government to local authorities, health boards, emergency services and environmental, sports and arts organisations. While the challenge for them varies depending on their role, the core principle is the same – decisions must be 'future proofed' to achieve a better and lasting quality of life for all.

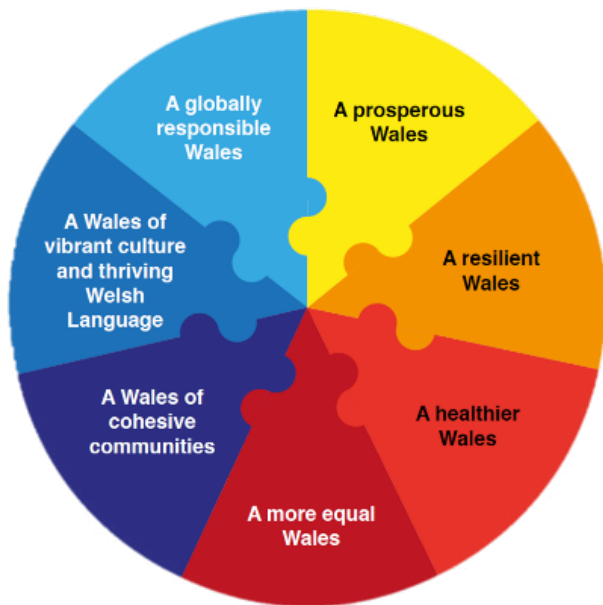
27 Santa Monica Wellbeing Project <https://wellbeing.smgov.net/>

28 Community Foundations Canada <https://communityfoundations.ca/vitalsigns/community-vital-signs/>

29 Gross National Happiness <http://gnhusa.org/>

30 Measure of America <http://www.measureofamerica.org/>

31 Senator George Mitchell: International Seminar on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland – YouTube 9 October 2018. Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cKWtM-PbnQ>

Figure 2: The Wellbeing Goals for Wales

There are seven wellbeing goals (Figure 2). These are to be achieved through five distinctive ways of working:

1. Long term: balancing short-term needs while safeguarding the ability to meet long-term needs
2. Integration: considering how a public body's wellbeing objectives impact on each goal
3. Involvement: involving people with an interest in wellbeing goals and ensuring that they reflect the diversity of the area
4. Collaboration: acting in collaboration with other people or organisations to help meet wellbeing objectives
5. Prevention: preventing problems occurring or getting worse, to achieve wellbeing objectives.

The commissioner explained that a definition of 'prevention' had recently been agreed with the Welsh Government, and that its draft budget for 2019/20 had been appraised against this understanding. At local level, bodies are required to work together through Public Service Boards, which must undertake a wellbeing assessment and prepare a wellbeing plan. Although the

legislation and guidance is relatively recent, there is already some evidence of change happening on the ground. This was reflected in the way that Public Service Boards were working locally and in the influence the commissioner's office had been able to bring to bear on policy at a national level, such as her interventions on environmental permits and on the priorities of city deals.

2.3.3 New Zealand

At the second peer-to-peer event in December 2019, participants heard from the Hon. Grant Robertson, New Zealand Minister of Finance, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage. The Minister provided an overview of New Zealand's recent wellbeing budget; the government's wider wellbeing approach; and the corresponding reforms which New Zealand is implementing to their finance system (see Box 4).

The New Zealand Government is looking to solve complex, intergenerational problems. The wellbeing budget is a first important step to addressing some of the challenges faced. The wellbeing budget is part of an overall programme to put the wellbeing of citizens at the heart of everything the government does. Achieving genuine and enduring change requires the public sector to move towards a new way of thinking.

Box 4: New Zealand's Approach to Wellbeing

In 2019 New Zealand delivered its first wellbeing budget which signalled a new approach and a significant change from traditional budgets, focusing primarily on economic data using a narrow range of indicators such as GDP. The wellbeing budget aims to place wellbeing at the centre of every step of the budget process, from setting priorities to analysing policy proposals, weighing up the trade-offs and making the decisions that the Government must ultimately make in a budget process. The wellbeing budget focused on five priority areas, as below:

- 1) Supporting mental wellbeing
- 2) Reducing child poverty and improving child wellbeing
- 3) Lifting Maori populations' skills, income and opportunities
- 4) Supporting a thriving nation in a digital age
- 5) Creating opportunities for productive businesses and regions to achieve a sustainable and low emissions economy.

The priorities were selected using an evidence base of indicators from New Zealand's Living Standards Framework dashboard, along with advice from key stakeholders. The framework has indicators on wellbeing, and has a similar structure to the OECD framework, allowing international comparisons.

A wellbeing approach includes three fundamental challenges, as below:

1. Taking a whole government approach: breaking down agency silos and working together to assess, develop and implement policies to enable wellbeing. New Zealand is reforming State Sector legislation, which will now be called the Public Services Act.
2. Intergenerational outcomes: the need to focus not only on present generations' needs, but also on the impact on future generations.
3. The need to move beyond narrow measures of success to track progress against broader measures, alongside traditional indicators in the budget.

Statistics New Zealand developed a new set of metrics called Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand³². They provide an over-arching source of statistics for measuring New Zealand's

wellbeing and a comprehensive sweep of over a hundred social, cultural, environmental and economic indicators.

The reform of New Zealand's public finance system aims to reduce the risk aversion inherent in public services and promote innovation. There is a need for a public finance system that enables the public service to positively assist and improve the intergenerational wellbeing of New Zealanders; increase the time and focus on strategic management of public finances; and shift the system towards improving intergenerational wellbeing. New Zealand recently amended the Public Finance Act to require the Minister of Finance and all government departments to report on child wellbeing and child poverty reduction at each budget. At the time of the budget, the Minister must discuss progress made in line with measures and legislation. In addition, the Act was amended to require all governments to set wellbeing objectives and explain how objectives guide budgets. They are required to report periodically on the state of wellbeing, to ensure that it is an enduring approach.

32 Stats NZ (2020) *Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand – Ngā Tūtohu Aotearoa*. Available online at <https://www.stats.govt.nz/indicators-and-snapshots/indicators-aotearoa-new-zealand-nga-tutohu-aotearoa/>

2.4 Wellbeing and Community Planning in Northern Ireland

The Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, a partnership between the Carnegie UK and Queens University Belfast, was established in 2013. It took its lead from the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission. The 18 members comprised civil servants and individuals from business, the third sector, youth, academia and local government. From the outset the Roundtable identified the need to encourage a new narrative or vision drawing on the language of wellbeing:

In order to move forward, we need an idea of where we are going and one that resonates with citizens. Wellbeing provides an easily understood concept which can form the basis of a new approach to the relationship between citizens and government, focusing on assets and shared responsibilities between citizens, communities, government and the private sector. The concept of wellbeing can be used to link the everyday experiences and priorities of people with the sometimes remote and often opaque world of policymaking and politics.³³

Following extensive engagement with civil society and through parallel engagement from the children's sector on outcome-based accountability, the Northern Ireland Executive published an outcome-based Programme for Government in 2016. There have now been three iterations of this Programme for Government, the first and second both issued in 2016, and a third 'working draft' that covered the period when the Stormont government collapsed³⁴. The development of the wellbeing approach was hampered severely by the lengthy period

of suspension of Stormont from 2017 to 2020. At the time of writing, a new Programme for Government with updated and revised outcomes is being developed.

There has been more stability at local level in Northern Ireland. The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 gave the eleven newly created local authorities (down from 26) the responsibility for leading community planning processes for their respective districts. In doing so they must identify:

- (a) long-term objectives for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the district
- (b) long-term objectives in relation to the district for contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in Northern Ireland.

The purpose of the reform of local government was to create efficiency savings (to be reinvested into services), strengthen the coherence of local public services and provide local government with the key role in relation to community planning³⁵. The language of sustainable development and wellbeing in the legislation cannot have been accidental. However, given the paucity of commentary on this aspect of the change (with most reports focusing on the reduction of council entities), the transformative nature of the legislation may not have been fully realised until some way into implementation.

The resultant Community Plans extend beyond the local government electoral cycle with six plans looking forward as far as 2030, and four to 2032. The Plans act as local wellbeing frameworks in which local authorities and their partners as Community Planning Partnerships must take account of wellbeing at a local and Northern Ireland level. As early as 2017, there were concerns that support for implementation had been limited to statutory guidance for the operation of community planning from the Northern Ireland Executive, and limited funding for Community

33 Doran, P., Woods, J and Wallace, J. (2015) *Towards a Wellbeing Framework for Northern Ireland*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/towards-a-wellbeing-framework-short-report/>

34 Northern Ireland Executive (2018) *Working Draft Programme for Government* Belfast, NI Executive

35 OECD (2016) *Public Governance Review of Northern Ireland* Paris: OECD

Places to provide short-term support³⁶. NILGA had called for more budgetary certainty to support longer-term council investment decisions designed to assist in the delivery of the Programme for Government and community planning³⁷.

2.4.1 Developments since 2017

By Majella McCloskey and Anne McMurray, Centre for Effective Services

Several recent reports have identified the challenge of implementing collaborative public policy in Northern Ireland and these are worth examining in the context of community planning. In addition, previous mechanisms to support reform and collaboration in Northern Ireland's public sector have yielded helpful learning about the challenges of this type of work. Pivotal Public Policy Forum³⁸ has outlined some of the challenges for government in Northern Ireland in delivering the New Decade New Approach deal³⁹. Its report has described the lack of shared vision, issues with competence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and "the fact [that] departments are funded in silos", and calls for greater engagement with agencies and organisations outside central government: "The Executive and civil service should enable this engagement by making information and opportunities available, for example in the development of the Programme for Government".

A report from Deloitte examined the impact and learning from investment to enable collaborative and innovative action in the public sector and stressed that collaboration is necessary to

achieve outcomes and ensure services meet the needs of service users and should become the 'norm'⁴⁰. This report describes investment by Atlantic Philanthropies at a systemic level in Northern Ireland and highlights the need to build innovative capacity and approaches, as well as shared budgetary practices and incentives for collaborative behaviours.

An independent evaluation of the Goal Programme for Public Service Reform and Innovation, which was a joint initiative between government departments in Ireland and Northern Ireland and the Centre for Effective Services, outlines a number of factors that supported the introduction of reforms in the public sector⁴¹. The report indicates that distributed leadership, which is aligned and cascaded throughout the organisation, is important for implementing public service reform and supporting collaboration. It also refers to the appropriate use of external supports to enable reform, particularly in enabling the use of tools and techniques which, for example, supported evidence use and collaboration. The evaluation also describes the importance of appropriate governance arrangements as an enabler of change and collaboration.

These reports demonstrate the significant challenges facing Northern Ireland's public sector in meeting growing demands, as well as an increasing body of learning now available to the public sector to enable collaboration in achieving outcomes. This includes data on approaches and mechanisms that have enabled reform to be successfully implemented.

In 2019, the Gallagher report on community places was also published. Funded by the Strategic Investment Board Northern Ireland

36 Community Places <https://www.communityplaces.info/>

37 See for example (2016) *NILGA Response to Draft Programme for Government (PFG) Consultation* Available online at <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/executive-office/draft-pfg-2016-21/pfg-consultation/nilga.pdf>

38 Pivotal Public Policy Forum (2020) *Good Government in Northern Ireland*. Available online at <https://www.pivotalppf.org/our-work/publications/3/good-government-in-northern-ireland>

39 Irish Government and UK Government, (2020) *New Decade New Approach*. Available online at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf

40 Deloitte and Social Change Initiative (2020) *Shifting Gear Accelerating Public Service Transformation: Opportunities for Northern Ireland*. Available online at <https://www.socialchangeinitiative.com/shifting-gear-accelerating-public-service-transformation-opportunities-for-northern-ireland>

41 Boyle, R et al (2019) *Evaluation of the Goal Programme for Public Service Reform and Innovation*. Available online at https://d1j85byv4fcann.cloudfront.net/cesdownloads/Summative_Report_CES_Final-26.11.19.pdf?mtime=20210210184719&focal=none

Table 3: Issues Raised by Community Planning Stakeholders in the Gallagher Report

TOPIC	AREAS TO BE ADDRESSED
Leadership, Performance and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope to strengthen leadership across all stakeholders. • Performance framework could be enhanced to enable greater central and local alignment. • Partners' performance not currently measured. Need better linkage into corporate/business plans. • Councils carrying the financial burden, partners struggling to contribute. Financial model unsustainable in the longer term.
Scope of Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By definition very broad – hard to fix all problems simultaneously. Strains resources when spread too thinly. • Need some prioritisation – to help show impact locally/regionally. • Highlight best practice and new approaches, laboratory of learning for others.
Use of Data and Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple data issues – lack of useful data, too much data, how best to use data to shape services. • Too much duplication of effort, more central support. • Benefits in more collective approach to evidence gathering.
Communications and Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more clarity on what community planning is and to improve visibility. • Approaches to community involvement vary considerably. • Role for all partners in community involvement. • How best to manage expectations and identify models that work well.

the report concludes that community planning has made some significant progress since its introduction, particularly in establishing partnerships in each area and in “agreeing and delivering action plans”⁴². However there are a number of areas where further attention is needed to enable community planning to have greater impact in Northern Ireland. These include strengthening leadership across all partners and embedding community planning into the corporate and planning structures of all partners. The Gallagher report also proposes refining the scope of Community Plans, so that resources are not spread too thinly and resources and effective approaches are utilised where they can make best impact. The report proposes refining and making better use of evidence and data to inform and guide planning and action. It also highlights a number of communication challenges for CPPs, in describing their purpose and engaging the local community in the CPP processes.

These four areas of action for community planning are typical of the types of implementation challenges faced by joined up or ‘whole of government’ approaches. Whole of government is an over-arching term for responses to increased fragmentation of public services and a wish to increase integration, co-ordination and capacity⁴³. The effort to reduce silos and to avoid having different policies cut across and undermine each other is why community planning can be described as a whole of government approach.

The literature suggests that whole of government policy implementation begins at the policy development stage; it is at this stage that policy makers can ascertain that a whole of government approach is a good ‘fit’ for the particular policy challenge, and lay the groundwork for successful implementation.

Northern Ireland is at a point where new approaches need to be implemented effectively in order to meet the growing needs of service users and improve wellbeing.

42 Gallagher, J (2019) *Towards a Programme of Support for Community Planning in NI*. Strategic Investment Board Northern Ireland

43 Ling, T. (2002). *Delivering joined-up government in the UK: dimensions, issues and problems*. Public administration, 80(4), 615-642.

3. Introducing our Project Partners

As part of an open process, all local authorities in Northern Ireland were invited to submit expressions of interest to take part in the Embedding Wellbeing programme. The process asked them to commit to the principles of openness, partnership working, shared learning, and participation, and they were required to demonstrate support from their Chief Executive and Chair of the Community Planning Partnership for their application.

The Advisory Group reviewed all the expressions of interest received, one from each council area in Northern Ireland. They were asked to select three Partnerships that were best-placed to share learning on improving local wellbeing outcomes across Northern Ireland and the UK and Ireland more widely.

The Advisory Group recommended that the programme support the Community Planning Partnerships working in the local authority areas of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Derry City and Strabane District Council; and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: The three Project Partners



3.1 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

The first Community Plan for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC) was called Connected and its vision is that by 2030:

We have a happy, healthy and connected community, a vibrant and sustainable economy and appealing places for living, working and learning.

It contains nine long-term outcomes, arranged around the three strategic themes of Community, Economy and Place, and three cross-cutting themes of Connectivity, Equality and Sustainability (see Figure 4). The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework to improve the quality of life of people and to improve the wellbeing of the borough.

Figure 4: ABC Connected: Our Plan on a Page

The Community Plan was developed through a series of thematic workshops, which were publicly advertised and open to all, and which were inspired by the Future Search methodology. Workshop participants were local residents, community and voluntary organisations, community planning partners, other statutory agencies, local businesses and councillors. Together, they looked at evidence through comprehensive baseline reports and used their own expertise and local knowledge to work towards consensus on the aspirations of and priorities for the borough.

Each of the nine long-term outcomes in the plan has associated population indicators, a total of 19 in all, to measure progress towards achieving the outcome over time, and also short-term outcomes which are the priorities for the first four years of the plan. The plan includes the story behind each outcome, why it is important and what people said about it during the development of the plan, as well as key statistics which provide a baseline for how they are doing on each outcome.

At the point of joining the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council had a Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) statistician seconded to work with them to help understand the evidence base for the Northern Ireland Executive Draft Programme for Government, and to maximise opportunities to align the population indicators in our Community Plan with the indicators in the Programme for Government. Therefore, they were able to select population indicators that were relevant to the aspirations of the community, and as some are also being used to measure progress centrally, they were able to create a golden thread between the two.

The Community Planning Strategic Partnership adopted an approach that combined three interconnected elements of partnership working, community engagement and using evidence:

- Partnership working – everything done in the name of community planning in the borough is overseen by part of the community planning governance structure, with opportunities for partners to lead on actions and thematic work streams;
- Community engagement – undertaken in line with our Community Engagement Strategy. The partnership has agreed to develop a collaborative framework for community planning. This element overlaps with partnership working, as a wide range of organisations including those from the community and voluntary sector (CVS) and business are active participants in the action planning teams, and this will be further developed through the Community and Voluntary Sector Panel; and
- Using evidence – using evidence from engagement, research, statistics and evaluation to determine priorities and what works. Using statistics and Outcomes Based Accountability performance measures to measure both progress over time and the impact of actions.

This approach has informed the borough's process for developing thematic action plans to deliver the outcomes in the plan. Partners led each thematic working group that developed the Community Plan and continued to lead, as each thematic action planning team was chaired by a statutory partner. In 2020 the Partnership set aside its thematic action plans to focus its energies on response to and recovery from the pandemic through the development of a 12 month COVID-19 Response & Recovery Plan. The plan included the TAK£500 Participatory Budgeting project and the three shared leadership programmes supported through the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project. The Participatory Budgeting and shared leadership programmes equipped community planning partners and communities with resources, skills and connections that helped them to respond.

In addition to taking part in the collective programmes on co-production and shared leadership, ABC also received the following bespoke support from the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme:

- Support for the development of their Community Engagement Strategy
- Development of Good Practice in Community Engagement
- Leadership and Engagement for Community Planning Training Sessions delivered by Dr Claire Bynner from Glasgow University and Dr Oliver Escobar, University of Edinburgh (both previously What Works Scotland)
- 3 Shared Leadership Programmes.

3.2 Derry City and Strabane District Council

The Strategic Growth Partnership (Community Planning Partnership) for Derry City and Strabane was formed in July 2016 to provide overall governance and oversight of the community planning process. This Partnership is co-chaired by the community and voluntary, business and statutory sectors along with the Mayor. The statutory partners named in the legislation are joined by political representatives, central government departments, the community and voluntary sector, Chairs of the 8 Local Area Growth Partnership Boards and key regional support partners – such as Ulster University and the North West Regional College.

Derry City and Strabane District (DCSD) Strategic Growth Plan/Community Plan was developed as a result of a co-design process and launched in November 2017. The agreed vision defined within the plan is to be a thriving, prosperous and sustainable City and District with equality for all. The plan's mission is to improve the social, economic and environmental **wellbeing** of all citizens and to do so in a sustainable way.

Over 15,000 people were engaged to agree the following eight outcomes:

Economic Wellbeing:

1. We are better skilled and educated
2. We prosper through a strong, sustainable and competitive economy
3. We live in the cultural destination of choice

Environmental Wellbeing:

4. We live sustainably – protecting and enhancing the environment
5. We connect people and opportunities through our infrastructure

Social Wellbeing:

6. We live long, healthy and fulfilling lives
7. We live in a shared, equal and safe community
8. Our children and young people have the best start in life.

In 2018 when Derry City and Strabane District Council joined the Embedding Wellbeing programme, a draft Partnership Agreement was in place for the Partnership which stated that those officers attending meetings “will be expected to speak authoritatively for their organisations and commit them to agreed courses of action”. In doing so partners demonstrate their commitment to the community planning process by being accountable for the successful delivery of actions which contribute to achieving their outcomes.

They had also developed the eight outcomes and eight corresponding Outcome Delivery Plans. Outcome Delivery Partnerships (ODPs) have been established to implement, deliver and report on the actions in the Strategic Growth Plan. Membership of the ODPs comprises all the partners responsible for the delivery of actions within a particular outcome. Statutory partners within the ODPs have agreed to lead on the implementation and be named as ‘Action Leads’ for specific actions.

Whilst this Community Plan/Strategic Growth Plan takes a strategic view of the whole District, it also recognises that it is important to connect to the needs and aspirations at a more local level within neighbourhoods and communities. As part of the co-design process, eight local area based Community Plans have also been developed. Local residents and statutory and support partners gave their views on how public services could be better provided in their own community areas and identified local actions aligned to the Strategic Plan that address local needs, reduce inequalities and improve wellbeing. Implementation of the local area Growth Plans is overseen by eight area based Local Area Growth Partnership Boards.

Brexit presents unique challenges and opportunities for a city and district straddling a cross jurisdictional border. DCSDC and Donegal County Council published research in February 2017⁴⁴ outlining that while the results of Brexit will

have a differential geographical impact across these islands, the effects on the North West Region may be significant and sustained unless coherent, decisive and mitigating actions are taken. Strong cross border collaborative arrangements have been put in place. The model is Council-led and is founded on a principle of partnership between local and central government, with place-making at its core and with a focus on driving regional economic growth and investment, physical and environmental development and social and community cohesion and wellbeing across the North West, in particular the Derry City and Strabane District and Donegal County Council areas. At a strategic level it comprises the North West Strategic Growth Partnership which includes the Chief Executives of both Donegal County Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council, the Mayor/Cathaoirleach of each Council, and representatives from the key government departments, North and South, with a brief in economic and regional development. This body plays a key role in supporting central government to deliver on the North West Gateway Initiative and in tracking key central government investments relevant to the growth of the North West Region. Moreover similar collaborations with the Centre for Cross Border Studies to create A Common Chapter for Collaboration ensure that grass roots communities are also engaged in dialogue to scope, mitigate and capitalise on the opportunities and challenges presented by Brexit.

In addition to taking part in the collective programmes on co-production and shared leadership, Derry City and Strabane also received the following bespoke support from the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme:

- Support for the creation of an innovative Natural Capital Account.
- Support towards the communication and marketing of the first Statement of Progress.
- Support for a Youth Participatory Budget Pilot.
- Support for the development of a Community Engagement Strategy.

44 DCSDC/ Donegal County Council (2017) *Initial Analysis of the Challenges and Opportunities of Brexit for the Derry-Londonderry North West City Region*. Available online at <https://www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/Strategic-Growth/Publications>

3.3 Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Planning Partnership's first Community Plan is described as a plan for improving the lives of everyone who lives and works in the area by building "an empowered, prosperous, healthy and inclusive community".

Their approach can be summarised as follows:

- **People:** The focus of the plan is firmly on the people who live and work in Lisburn & Castlereagh. We will know if the plan is working if people's lives have changed for the better – better health, better work, better education, better childhood, better old age.
- **Place:** Where we live and the communities we belong to are crucial to our wellbeing. This plan aims to help us live well together in places where we feel a sense of pride and belonging.
- **Partnership:** Community planning is a new approach to partnership between public bodies such as health, education, sport, police and the local council; partners work together towards common goals alongside other organisations who want to make Lisburn & Castlereagh a better place to live and work in.
- **Wellbeing:** The plan is backed by legislation requiring it to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Lisburn & Castlereagh. The Partnership's wellbeing vision is for an empowered, prosperous, healthy and inclusive community.
- **Sustainability:** The plan is about making life better now in a way that doesn't compromise the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of future generations. Sustainable development is the first core principle running through this plan.
- **Equality:** Inequality undermines the wellbeing of people, our communities, our economy and our environment. Reducing inequalities is the second core principle running through the plan.
- **Participation:** The ability to fully participate in a democratic society is vital for our wellbeing. This plan and the actions it will generate depend on the full involvement of citizens, community groups and business. This is the plan's third core principle.
- **Outcomes:** This Community Plan takes an outcomes based approach based on evidence of what is needed. This means that the focus is firmly on the changes we want to see as a result of the work we do: real changes in the quality of life in Lisburn & Castlereagh.
- **Actions:** The actions that this plan generates will all contribute to one or more of the outcomes. They will be the result of collaboration between the Community Planning Partners sharing ideas, experience and resources to produce better outcomes.
- **Accountability:** Regular public reporting will enable people to see how all those involved are making progress.

The plan is constructed around five themes, each with an outcome (aligned with the Programme for Government outcomes) and a number of supporting outcomes (see Table 4). The public consultation on the Draft Community Plan gave the partners, communities and individuals the chance to discuss the proposed vision, mission, outcomes and actions in more detail. As well as giving feedback on the document itself, people discussed what the Community Plan meant to them, their family and community. Organisations identified what role they could play in improving wellbeing. The feedback was received through public meetings, workshops, focus groups, an online survey, letters, emails and feedback boxes.

Table 4: Lisburn & Castlereagh's Five Outcomes

Theme	Outcome	Selected Supporting Outcomes
1: Children and Young People	Our children and young people have the best start in life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children and young people have an equal chance to fulfil their educational potential. • Children and young people in need and looked after children experience stability and positive transitions into adulthood. • The positive role of children and young people in the community is valued and encouraged.
2: The Economy	Everyone benefits from a vibrant economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits of growth and development are distributed fairly across society. • There is a good job for everyone who needs one. • People possess the skills needed to secure employment and/or start a business.
3: Health and Wellbeing	We live healthy, fulfilling and long lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good health will no longer be dependent on where we live or what income we have. • People of all ages are more physically active more often. • We enjoy good mental health.
4: Where we Live	We live and work in attractive, resilient and people friendly places, protecting the local and global environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhoods are designed and regenerated to promote wellbeing. • Everyone lives in an affordable home that meets their needs. • We have access to essential services, shops, leisure and workplaces.
5: Our Community	We live in empowered, harmonious, safe and welcoming communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public services are enhanced through co-design and co-production. • There is participation and volunteering in public and community life, arts, culture and sport by people of all backgrounds. • We feel a sense of belonging in our local neighbourhoods: urban, suburban and rural.

The Strategic Community Planning Partnership (SCPP) has overall control of the community planning process and agrees and approves the actions to be delivered by five Themed Action Planning Groups (TAP Groups). These comprise statutory and support partners and representatives from the community and interest groups, and each TAP Group has a chairperson from a partner agency or the Council.

A Partnership Agreement commits the SCPP and TAP Groups to share information, capture what is new (but acknowledges what each partner is already doing), and initiate actions. The actions set out in the Action Plan have been devised as a result of collaborative working and demonstrate that by working in partnership and sharing information new ways of tackling problems can be developed. Each action is interdependent with other actions. Each action in the Action Plan has a lead partner and a number of named delivery partners.

The community planning process aims to strengthen the voice of individuals and the community by influencing priorities and ultimately improving the delivery of public services through co-design and co-production. To action this, the council is developing a Community Forum which will form part of the Strategic Community Planning Partnership structure. Members of a community stakeholder forum will be drawn from across non-governmental organisations and community and voluntary sector organisations.

At the point of joining the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) was beginning to explore how this Forum would operate to ensure proactive engagement between members of the Forum and community planning partners and to move beyond information sharing and consultation. Similarly, a Youth Council had been established to enable young people to be involved with the Community Plan actions and more widely in the decisions that affect their lives.

The LCCC area shares boundaries with the five neighbouring councils and there is a host of inter-relationships between council areas. Lisburn & Castlereagh has worked collaboratively with the Community Planning Partnerships in neighbouring council areas to ensure outcomes are symbiotic and complementary.

In addition to taking part in the collective programmes on co-production and shared leadership, Lisburn & Castlereagh Community Planning Partnership also received the following bespoke support from the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme:

- Support for exploring the development of an emerging Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise infrastructure
- Support for a co-production engagement project to develop locality plans
- Measuring the impact of Vitality, a local wellbeing programme.

4. What we Learnt about Co-production

By Colm Bradley, Louise O’Kane and Brendan Murtagh (Community Places)

Co-production was identified by the project partners as one of the key areas for activity during the Embedding Wellbeing programme. This included shared activities on understanding and working with co-production and bespoke support for the project partners provided by Community Places. This chapter was produced by Community Places after a programme of work on co-production in community planning that involved background research, stakeholder engagement and work across community planning processes in three areas.

This chapter draws out the learning from the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme and in particular highlights the progress that has been made in terms of good practice in engagement and co-production but also the development needs of partners, in particular the community and voluntary sector. Examples or supporting evidence are shaded in the text to highlight the value of the empirical work with the councils and how these have shaped the learning themes. Six lessons are highlighted although these are clearly broad and do not aim to capture all the effects and barriers in delivering effective co-production and engagement. Each one is drawn from the initial symposium, the three council programmes and the final learning workshop, and emphasises the need for further support in co-production, engagement and wellbeing and, critically, the relationship between them.

4.1 Lesson 1: Building the Environment for Co-production

There is a general commitment to wellbeing and engagement as central components of community planning but it was also acknowledged that progress has been slow across council areas.

Stakeholders involved in the Co-production Symposium for example, felt that there needed to be a stronger enabling environment across local authorities, statutory organisations and sectors to deliver wellbeing outcomes in particular.

The work with the three councils and in particular the Symposium emphasised the need to better connect co-production to the wellbeing agenda and especially the needs of the most vulnerable places, groups and sectors. This emphasised a range of related issues:

Box 5: Six Lessons from the Programme of Work

Lesson 1: Building the enabling environment for co-production means putting in place the legislation, technical capacity and resources (including time) to ensure that it delivers meaningful wellbeing outcomes.

Lesson 2: Making engagement work in practice means committing to agreed principles, operating standards and guidance to ensure each actor can deliver outcomes in a collective and reinforcing way.

Lesson 3: Inclusive structures are needed to embed co-production at a strategic and operational level and to ensure that engagement is the basis for prioritising issues, delivering programmes (across themes and geographic areas), measuring progress and building a partnership culture.

Lesson 4: Co-producing resource-based outcomes by ensuring that capital and revenue budgets are aligned, integrated and influenced by the communities that are most affected by decisions.

Lesson 5: Making outcomes real by ensuring that it is changes in the quality of people's lives and in particular their individual and collective wellbeing that drive community planning processes.

Lesson 6: The success of co-production and engagement is dependent on interpersonal relationships, a continuous process of shared learning, and soft and formal networks that need to be nurtured and developed over the life of the community planning process.

Figure 5: Priorities for Co-production in Northern Ireland



- Co-design should be at the heart of the approach, especially to ensure upstream and meaningful engagement in order to set priorities, define local needs and agree specific outcomes in the Community Plan.
- This will require a more grounded bottom-up approach that moves beyond vague commitment to engage communities to design, commission and deliver programmes of work that meet their expressed needs.
- Central to this will be a better understanding of participative (as well as representative) forms of decision making, which will also require time and leadership in creating a new culture of inclusive delivery.
- Breaking down organisational silos, professionalisation and sectoral rivalries are all central to community planning and to how co-production might encourage a genuinely cooperative approach.
- Shifting the emphasis to a more planned and preventative approach requires better intelligence, analysis and information sharing, especially on setting and measuring outcome performance.
- All of this requires a change in the way in which the public sector thinks about and frames service users, towards a model that sees them as valued co-producers aimed at improving the alignment, effectiveness and efficiency of a range of programmes and interventions.
- Co-delivery implies a stronger role for the third sector as partners in programme implementation taking responsibility for agreed outcomes. As we saw in the Symposium evidence from Scotland, a more progressive enabling environment (social value procurement, community rights, asset transfer legislation and so on) has supported community anchor organisations and social enterprises in service delivery.

4.2 Lesson 2: Making Engagement Work in Practice

A recurring theme from the three councils is the need to define, agree and help operationalise community engagement in practice. For the Community Planning Partnership in the DCSDC area, this meant understanding and agreeing fundamental principles, recognising the limits as well as the potential of a range of methodologies, and better integrating engagement into the design and delivery of community planning outcomes. Drawing on the IAP2 Spectrum and Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement, Community Places helped to co-produce an agreed strategy for the Community Planning Partnership. The Strategic Growth Partnership has now agreed the Community Engagement Strategy with the partners committing to applying a common framework and standards for engaging people and communities and to sharing and learning from their practice.

However, this in itself also needed to be turned into action to make sure the principles were delivered in practice. Thus, the Partnership prioritised a practical guide to how groups within the community planning delivery structure could apply the principles of co-production. These groups include eight local planning groups and a number of Thematic Groups (older people, rural and so on). The Local Growth Partnerships are District Electoral Area based bodies comprised of community and elected representatives together with other community planning partners and are tasked with delivering a specific Local Growth Plan that aims to help deliver the overarching Community Plan. The objectives of the Guide were to strengthen partnership working; create a common understanding of co-production and how to operationalise it; and in particular to implement the outcome on 'partnership working to co-design and deliver services' (See Box 6).

Box 6: The Guide to Applying Co-production in Community Planning

The Guide to Applying Co-production is concerned with how partnerships can best apply the principles of co-production through:

- A common understanding of the characteristics of 'good partners'
- An agreed definition of co-production and its principles
- A charter of co-production commitments
- 12 practical steps to applying the principles in all meetings between partners
- A template for ongoing evaluation and reflection on progress.

A toolkit has also been produced by Community Places*.

* Carnegie UK / Community Places (2021) *Guide and Charter for Partnerships on Applying Co-Production* Available online at www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

Similarly, the Community Planning Partnership in the ABC area emphasised the need to go back to basic principles so that all the partners shared a commitment to engagement by agreeing what it meant, applying more rigorous methodologies and connecting it more clearly to wellbeing outcomes.

The Community Planning Team recognised that engagement was itself an ill-defined concept, which partners interpreted very differently, especially how it should be operationalised. Taking as its starting point the IAP2 Community Engagement Framework⁴⁵ and the Scottish National Standards⁴⁶, the work helped to develop a Community Engagement 'How To' Guide covering:

- agreeing common terms and standards
- how to plan and design engagement processes
- an Engagement Plan Template supporting the application of the standards for engagement which those planning a process completed
- details of 19 methods of engagement and guidance on how to select the most appropriate methods
- a self-evaluation framework for reflection on the process and outcomes.

On completion of the Guide two training workshops were delivered for officers from across the Community Planning Partnership and CVS representatives. However, for the ABC Partnership, having multiple strands to effective co-production involves not only a strategy of engagement but also a means of relating to new structures to ensure that it works in practice.

45 International Association of Public Participation. <https://www.iap2.org/>

46 Scottish Government/Scottish Centre for Community Development (2016) *National Standards for Community Engagement*. Available online at <http://www.voicescotland.org.uk/>

4.3 Lesson 3: Inclusive Structures and the Co-production Chain

How co-production fits within community planning structures and area-based delivery in particular is a concern raised through the programme at both a strategic and operational level. The Co-production Symposium emphasised the need to effect a cultural change in engagement that means sharing power in resource allocation, blurring boundaries and surrendering control over decision making. This in turn requires governance structures that are aligned with outcomes rather than the functional responsibilities of government agencies or community actors.

In the ABC area the Community Engagement support laid the foundation for the adoption of a shared policy by partners and a range of methodologies with ways of implementing them through their Community Engagement Strategy. The partnership prioritised both themes

of the Embedding Wellbeing Project within its governance structures with the establishment of a Leadership & Community Engagement Community Planning Strategic Partnership Sub-Committee, chaired by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Here, co-production is embedded at a strategic level.


The Community Planning Partnership in the ABC area (see Figure 6) prioritised two area-based plans with a view to creating a more localised approach for coordinated investments in each neighbourhood. Facilitated and action-focused engagement secured meaningful involvement by enabling community organisations and statutory partners to prioritise, plan and set related outcomes in each case. In parallel to this work the Partnership began engagement with the CVS to explore what type of structures or processes would best enable the ongoing involvement of the sector at District Electoral Area (DEA) level.

The importance of inclusive decision-making structures also relates to the way in which co-production works through substructures;

Figure 6: ABC Community Planning Partnership



the importance of leadership and cultural change; and the systems that are needed within Community Planning Partnerships to effect a long-term commitment to engagement. These related issues need to be addressed in the future of community planning in Northern Ireland:

- How does co-design, commissioning and dissemination appear in community planning structures (including thematic and area-based working groups) and what is needed in the future to strengthen a more strategic approach?
 - Similarly, are structures capable of enabling co-production (which in turn looks at the significance of networks, hybrid governance models and blurring the boundaries) as opposed to conventional governance arrangements and consultation opportunities?
 - Leadership, co-working and commitment are critical, given the different roles and constraints placed on politicians, officials and community representatives. People, mind-sets and effecting a cultural shift in the way in which policy is made in practice are essential to embedding co-production in community planning.
 - What systems make co-production work in practice, particularly in vital areas such as procurement, setting and measuring outcomes and putting in place the regulatory environment to facilitate effective engagement (as noted under Lesson 1)?
- 

4.4 Lesson 4: Co-producing Resources and the Importance of Budgets

The ability of co-production processes to change how resources are managed and coordinated, and how they deliver meaningful change for communities, was viewed as a key test for the impact of engagement on Community Plans. The three councils showed a commitment to innovation and creative thinking in how resources could align with what communities say they need and want. For example, a number of the community planning partners in the ABC area expressed interest in working together to plan, design and deliver a Participatory Budgeting project based on the Public Health Agency's Take 5 programme. This encouraged people to take 5 steps to better wellbeing by improving

social connections; getting active; slowing down and appreciating nature; learning new things; and supporting others. Because of COVID-19, the approach used the Council's Citizen Space Platform to involve the entire council area.

Figure 7 shows that Tak£500 involved community planning partners pooling resources to address the isolating effects of COVID-19, and engaging local people in setting priorities, developing new interventions, and allocating finance in an integrated way. The approach connected wellbeing outcomes across the entire council area to form a co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered budgetary process.

The community planning team used the establishment of a PB network to generate interest from a wide range of partners, provide information and training and explore the creation of one brand for PB for the borough. The network

Figure 7: Tak£500 – ABC's Participatory Budgeting Scheme



was well attended and contributed to the broad membership of the TAK£500 PB Working Group, which has superseded the network. Community Places provided information on the scope of Participatory Budgeting within community planning processes, the benefits of coordination, and the practical aspects of implementing such a process. This involved learning from practice; drawing on the experiences of Participatory Budgeting in youth services, policing and housing; and, finally, establishing the network across the ABC Community Planning Partnership area.

The Partnership in DSDC also wanted to pilot test a Participatory Budgeting Project, focused on young people. Through the Carnegie UK work, Community Places facilitated the establishment of the Youth Co-Design Panel and a subsequent series of design workshops to tailor the Participatory Budgeting process to their needs. Young people set the themes, eligibility criteria to assess Participatory Budgeting proposals,

timeframes and branding as well as marketing for the YOUth Making it Happen Participatory Budgeting process. Going online extended the reach of the initiative and allowed a multimedia approach to engagement across geographic areas, especially where youth participation had been traditionally weak⁴⁷. A total of 46 initial applications and 33 videos for shortlisted projects were received. Videos were uploaded to the Council's Citizen Space site to allow an online poll, with people aged between 12 and 25 years asked to vote for the three projects they wanted to see delivered in their area. In total, 842 young people voted and the winning projects included drama, culture and arts; improvements to green spaces and rivers; fitness, health and wellbeing; gifting and intergenerational activities; and education and skills.

⁴⁷ Derry City and Strabane Borough Council *YOUth Making It Happen Participatory Budgeting*. Available online at <https://growderrystrabane.com/youthpb/>

4.5 Lesson 5: Making Outcomes Real

A key concern at a strategic and council level was the way in which outcomes were aligned with community priorities, how engagement shaped their delivery and how success was measured – did an outcome-based approach really make a difference to wellbeing? Attention was drawn to innovative interventions that aimed to improve the lives of the most vulnerable groups and places. For example, in Scotland, initiatives such as Children’s Neighbourhoods used a place-based approach to coordinate interventions that aim to improve life-chances, education outcomes and family cohesion⁴⁸.

The Partnership in the LCCC area also tested the relationship between wellbeing, co-production and community planning through an area-based

48 Children’s Neighbourhoods Scotland. Available online at <https://childrensneighbourhoods.scot/>

approach. Two DEAs were selected for pilot Locality Plans: Lisburn South and Castlereagh East – with Community Places working with community planning partners and officers to set out a process for engagement, informing and facilitating the discussions and developing the Plans. The Plans aimed to integrate actions across agencies and sectors and show how outcomes in the Community Plan needed to be delivered locally, and they used an area-based approach to community engagement. This is illustrated in Figure 8 which emphasises the importance of Local Action Plans to both co-production and delivering wellbeing outcomes.

The core elements of the engagement approach included awareness raising workshops with the CVS; briefing and training for staff involved in assisting with the workshops on the use of the Place Standard Tool; and proactive outreach to community, voluntary, charitable and faith groups and local councillors including encouragement to participate in a series of planning workshops.

Figure 8: LCCC Community Plan

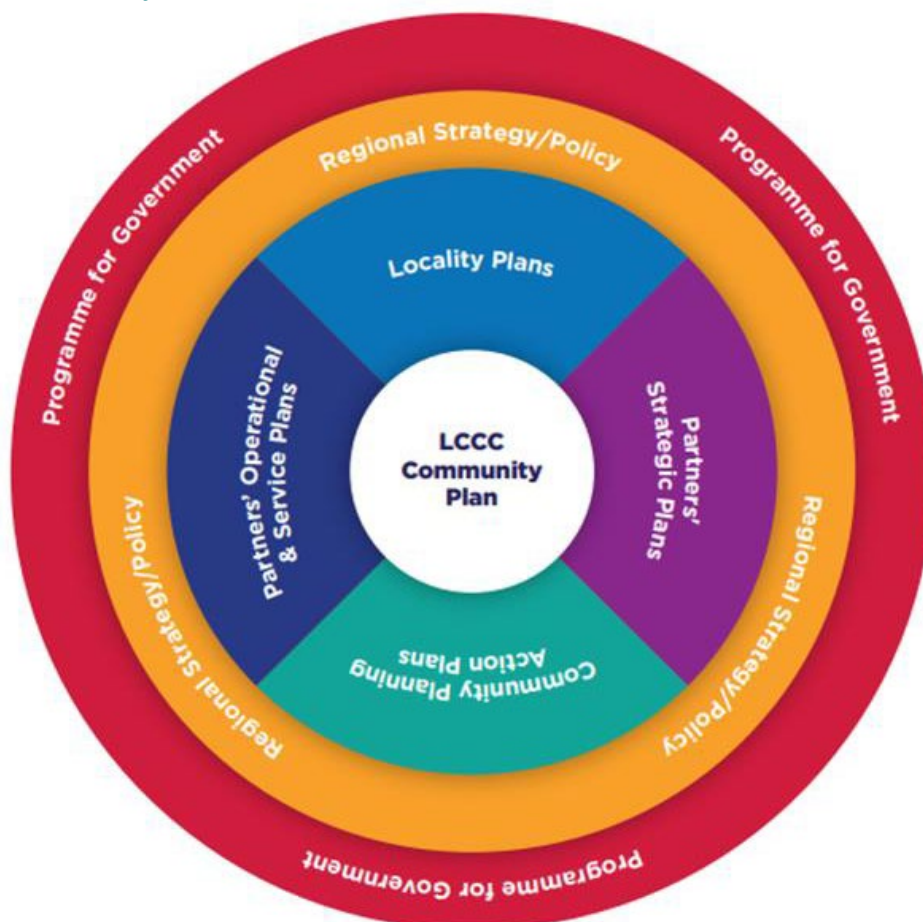
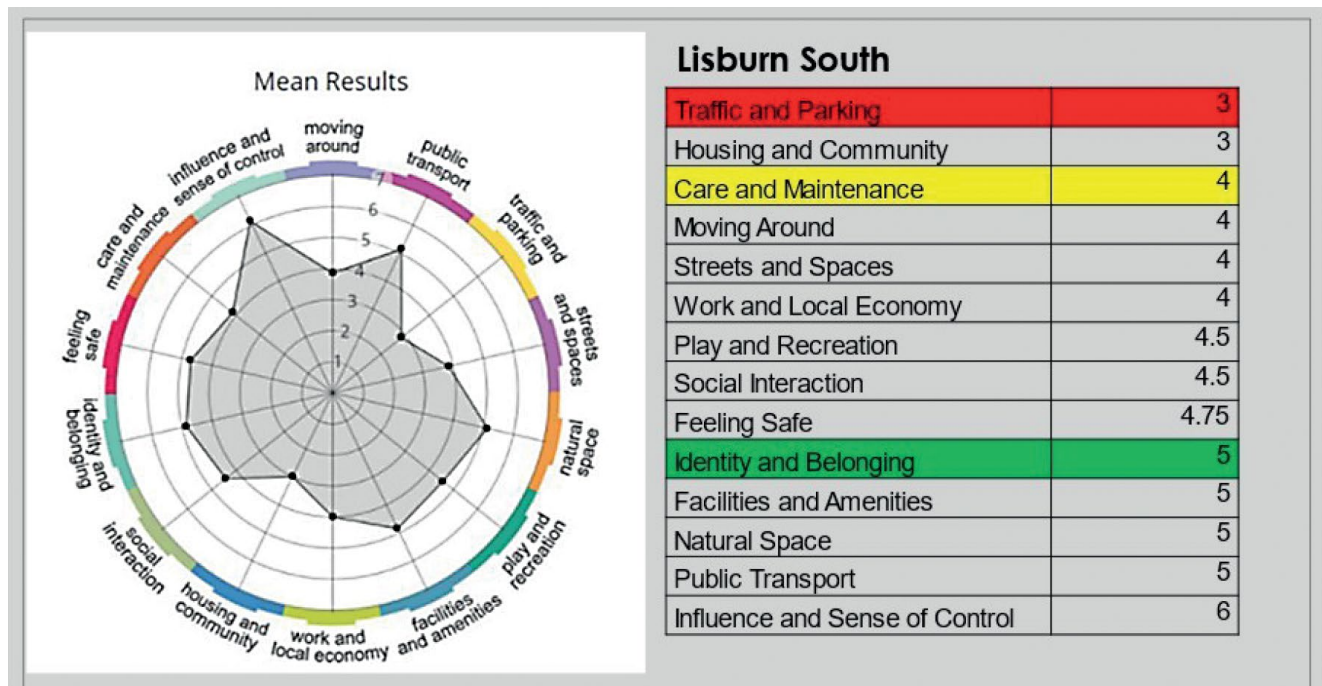


Figure 9: Lisburn South DEA Place Standard Assessment



Baseline indicators helped profile each area and shape neighbourhood priorities within the context of the Community Plan. Council officers formed a project team which was involved in shaping, delivering and promoting engagement with communities in each area; community and faith groups; elected members; statutory agencies on the CPP; and key departments within the council. Skilling up council officials in engagement concepts and workshop participation was facilitated by Community Places, but this demonstrated the need to develop competence across departments, functions and staff levels. Two workshops in each area first brought together sectors, agencies and community planning partners to explore the data and set out priorities for each neighbourhood; the assets of the DEA; and the issues and areas for improvement. A sub-group of community planning statutory partners considered the analysis and priority development issues, which were presented at the second workshops to which all partners were invited along with the CVS, 11 councillors and council officers. This focused on generating actions to address the areas identified for improvement based on the Place Standard approach⁴⁹.

The second workshop in each DEA was structured around the 14 Place Standard themes, which in turn align with the themes and outcomes of the Strategic Community Plan. The Place Standard technique enabled participants to discuss and assess their area and to collectively agree a score for each theme against a rating of 1 (most room for improvement) and 7 (least room for improvement). The Place Standard tool produces a visual result and snapshot of the process and an example from the Lisburn South DEA is presented in Figure 9.

Drawing on the outcomes of the workshops, Community Places prepared a Plan for each DEA setting out the vision and outcomes of the council-wide strategic Community Plan and how it links with DEA Locality Plans, and the engagement process used to inform and develop the Plan. An action plan for further consultation and a process of adoption within the context of the Community Plan and the CPP were then mapped out for the Council and the two neighbourhoods.

49 The Place Standard <https://www.placestandard.scot>

4.6 Lesson 6: Supporting Soft and Formal Relationships

A number of respondents at the learning workshop highlighted the importance of interpersonal contact and informal networks in making co-production and engagement work in practice. They noted how communities of practice have developed in which groups of people across sectors, organisations and geographic areas as well as at different levels work together on a common aim (and even on formal outcomes). Each brought specific expertise, resources and organisational buy-in and relied on trust and mutual respect to build from intersectoral relationships. However, these are often undermined by changes in staff, organisational priorities or reductions in budgets. Carnegie UK has researched the importance of informal networks, tactical knowledge and trust as building blocks of effective inter-agency working⁵⁰. These networks need support to grow, consolidate and develop outside the formal

structures of community planning and how it is delivered through the council committees and working groups. The regulated and rules bound cultures of local government (and other bureaucracies) is important but these informal relational networks have enabled people from across sectors to engage with each other in an everyday but deeply productive sense.

Running parallel with formal community planning structures could be an investment in networks organised around geographic areas, sectoral themes or priority actions set out in the Plan. This worked well via area based and sectoral strategies or where Participatory Budgeting brought a range of partners together on a particular objective. The Toolkit emphasised the need to develop interdependency, trust and durable relationships and networks that operate more flexibly outside partnership structures and operating systems, and enable momentum to be maintained, especially across the people actively involved in delivery. To be clear, the network would be complementary to the Community Planning Partnership and would be used by the partners on focused areas (sectors, delivery projects, finance and so on) where they add value to co-production and engagement.

⁵⁰ Ilona Haslewood (2021) *A review of the evidence on developing and supporting policy and practice networks*. Available online at www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

4.7 Enabling a New Approach to Co-production

The programme of work with the three councils, seminars and the learning workshop revealed a number of related priorities in connecting co-production to the wellbeing agenda within community planning:

- The principles and practice of empowerment need to be understood, agreed and acted on by partners as the basis for effective community planning.
- This means that the community has the power to influence; make and take decisions; and be able to hold the Community Plan to account (and be held accountable) for delivering agreed outcomes.
- To do this, structures of decision making and especially the Community Planning Partnership needs to operate in an inclusive and integrated way that is committed to co-production in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes.
- Budgets therefore need to be aligned and integrated to deliver priority outcomes, and managed in a way that empowers the community to allocate resources.
- This requires careful selection, design and implementation of agreed outcomes that need to be aligned with responsibilities (across the public, private and community and voluntary sectors) to deliver wellbeing for the whole community.
- Meaningful collaboration involves communication, transparency and trust in the way in which Community Plans are designed, delivered and evaluated. Resources, time and honest commitment are needed to ensure that this co-production process is carried out efficiently and effectively.
- This in turn will require leadership, new skills and different ways of working to ensure that the partners can deliver a genuinely intersectoral, organisational, and cross-practitioner approach to community planning.
- The difference this makes to people's lives needs to be clear in the way in which progress towards outcomes is measured, and all the partners, including the community and voluntary sector, need to be held accountable for the delivery of social wellbeing in the council area.
- Engagement and co-production are continuous processes that need to be nurtured and developed in order to build momentum in community planning across council areas.

5. What we Learnt about Shared Leadership

By Majella McCloskey, Anne McMurray and Melanie Stone,
Centre for Effective Services

Shared Leadership was identified by the project partners as one of the key areas for activity during the Embedding Wellbeing programme. A programme was developed by the Centre for Effective Services to support Shared Leadership. Similar to our other strands of work, this programme was affected by COVID-19 and went through a process of re-design to enable online delivery.

This chapter reports on the Shared Leadership Programme developed and delivered by the Centre for Effective Services. The agreed purpose of the Shared Leadership Programme was to increase impact within individual CPPs and encourage collaboration and the sharing of power, resources and decision making as well as impacting on community planning practice across Northern Ireland.

The methodology is shared in this chapter, as well as perceptions of the difference the programme has made. This chapter also captures the perceptions of participants and wider stakeholders on the progress made in implementing community planning in Northern Ireland.

5.1 The CES Shared Leadership Programme Approach

This section describes two phases that formed the Shared Leadership Programme: the work undertaken prior to COVID-19, and the revised approach developed following the onset of the pandemic. The approach is shared here for learning and to enable it to be replicated.

CES commenced a co-design process to develop the programme in July 2019, engaging with the programme leads in each council. Meetings were also held with those delivering other elements of the wider Embedding Wellbeing programme to ensure alignment and complementarity across different programme strands. These early plans included:

- Co-designing shared leadership indicators with the participating councils. These were to be used as a pre-programme self-assessment which would be repeated at the end of the programme as part of the evaluation process.
- Co-designing a workshop to develop the initial thinking in the original proposal into a tailored programme for the CPPs. This was held in November 2019.

A draft programme was developed with plans to commence in spring 2020. However with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, by March 2020 it was clear that the Shared Leadership Programme could not run as it was originally intended. This led to the development of a new approach to distil the learning about shared leadership during this crisis as it was being experienced.

Early research indicated that the level of support to process and reflect on what was happening during the pandemic would increase the potential benefits of the future recovery phase^{51 52}.

To test out the views of the CPPs, CES facilitated a Shared Leadership action learning online session on 14 May 2020. This was an opportunity for the CPPs to embed leadership practices that had worked in the early stage of the pandemic and recognise the collaborative efforts that had been demonstrated. The outputs from this session provided the content and design of the subsequent programme that emerged through the crisis and which was delivered from September 2020 to January 2021.

The programme redesign comprised a series of style webinar sessions for all three CPPs, followed by action learning sessions a few weeks later provided individually to each CPP team.

Action learning⁵³ is a method of collaborative learning where a small group of participants (an 'action learning set') meets regularly to reflect on real work issues. Its basic philosophy is that the most effective learning takes place when dealing with real problems to solve. Action learning enhances the way in which people learn,

by drawing on actual experience to make sense of challenges and develop effective strategies for implementation. Its effectiveness can be measured through practical results and its application to real life challenges.

Based on feedback and redesign with participating organisations, it was agreed to run the webinar series on the themes of:

1. Community wellbeing
2. Addressing inequalities
3. Partnering with communities
4. Partnering with government.

The format consisted of 90-minute online sessions using Zoom Business Version, with invited 'thought leaders', policy leads and contributions from CPP members. The leadership associate chaired the sessions and managed the interaction and plenary sessions, supported by CES technically who also recorded the content. Following each webinar, a resource pack summarising the event and sharing the key themes, ideas and useful information was produced. This was circulated to each CPP to inform their action learning session.

As part of the Shared Leadership Programme design, the action learning sessions had the dual purpose of developing team working through joint problem solving. Table 5 shows the overall programme structure, dates and contributors from a variety of perspectives including Carnegie UK, academia, government departments and the voluntary sector, as well as the three contributing CPPs.

51 Frahm, J. *Leading in Truly Uncertain Times* (2020). Available online at <https://drjenfrahm.com/leading-uncertain-times/>

52 Hougard, R, Carter, J, and Mohan, M. (2020) *Build Your Resilience in the Face of a Crisis*, Harvard Business Review March 2020

53 Revans, R. (2011) *The ABC of Action Learning*. Routledge. Available online at <https://www.actionlearningassociates.co.uk/action-learning/reg-revans/>

Figure 10: Revised Shared Leadership Programme

Carnegie Shared Leadership Programme

Phase 1

Pre COVID-19

Codesign programme
engagement and planning

Phase 2
COVID-19 Crisis

Listening event
Fundamental redesign
• virtual delivery
• relevant topics
• action learning
• cross fertilization

Phase 3

- External Thought Leaders
- Showcasing practice
- Reflection and application

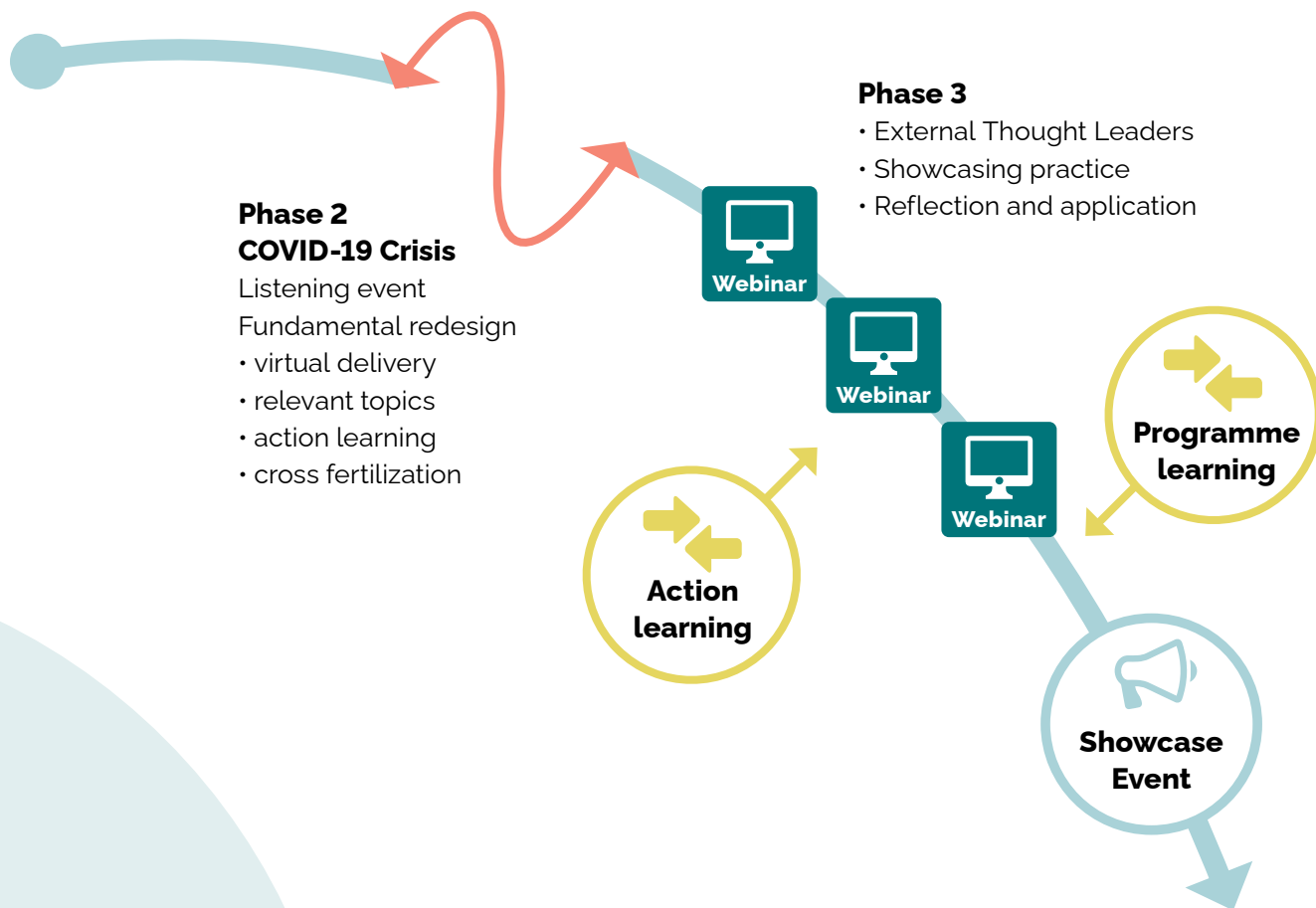


Table 5: Revised Shared Leadership Programme

Topic	Date
Webinar on wellbeing	14 September 2020
Action learning sessions for the teams from each CPP 1. How important a concept is wellbeing for your work? 2. What aspects of well-being need most attention in your community? 3. In what low cost/no cost ways can your partnership increase community wellbeing? 4. How are the community partnerships communicating to the politicians and the public about 'wellbeing'?	22 September 2020
Webinar on how we can address inequalities	29 September 2020
Action learning sessions for the teams from each CPP 1. How well do you understand the cause of inequalities in your area? 2. How can you work better together to reduce the unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes? 3. In what low cost/no cost ways can your partnership reduce inequalities? 4. How are the community partnerships communicating to the politicians and the public about inequalities at this time?	15 October 2020
Webinar on partnering with communities for recovery	23 October 2020
Webinar on partnering with government departments for community planning	26 November 2020
Action learning sessions for the teams from each CPP 1. How can you partner more effectively with central government? 2. How will you influence the way in which community planning goes forward in the next 3 years? 3. What difference do you notice in how you share leadership in December 2020 compared to December 2019?	15 December 2020
Implications for the future of community planning The learning outcomes from this session were that participants were able to: 1. Reflect on and transfer their learning across the three partnerships 2. Plan how to progress community planning in 2021 3. Plan the next six months of their development	13 January 2021

The action learning sessions provided the CPPs with the opportunity to reflect on the relevance of the topic to their work, problem solve, and apply the learning to their work together.

The programme methodology represents the experience of the CPPs during 2019 – 2021. The structured 'steady state' plan was upended by the onset of COVID-19. The CES response with the CPP partners was not to mothball and wait till things returned to normal but to pivot and

pragmatically make rapid changes, learning 'on the run' how to deliver the outcomes in a completely different way. There was a lot to be learned from this approach.

In addition to the work carried out across all three councils, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council also invested their bespoke wellbeing budget on shared leadership to deepen their practice. Their work is reported in Box 7.

Box 7: ABC: Shared Leadership in Practice

“Connected” is the first Community Plan for the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough with a clear focus on delivering sustainable outcomes that improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough’s people and place.

In response to the pandemic, ABC’s Community Planning Partnership came together to develop a 12-month COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan (the COVID-19 Plan) to reduce the impact of the virus across the Borough. An intensive, community-focused engagement and research exercise identified the Plan’s 5 main priority areas and 28 collaborative actions to maximise the Partnership’s response to the community’s existing and emerging needs, and to strengthen their partnership working and delivery.

In essence, the Programme provides the ‘back at base’ tangible and strategic support to leaders as they drive forward the delivery of better outcomes that respond to the community’s changing wellbeing needs, aspirations and expectations in collaboration with others across all sectors and policy areas.

The overarching aim of the Programme is to build a strong cadre of connected, confident, collaborative and resilient leaders of positive change. It operates across 3 interlinked levels: network, group and project.

1. The ABC Peer Network (the Peer Network) is a collective space that is open to everyone involved directly and indirectly in delivering the COVID-19 Plan across organisations, sectors and policy areas to come together.

2. Participation in the Planning Group is by self-selection following an invite issued to all Peer Network members wishing to join a small group responsible for convening and chairing the Peer Network meetings.

3. The COVID-19 Plan incorporates 5 priorities and some 28 collaborative actions that collectively contribute to the Borough’s response and recovery from the pandemic over the next year.

The Programme is realistic and open about the leadership challenges and complexities that cross-sectoral and collaborative working presents. It also recognises the real short and long-term benefits to be accrued from the provision of deliberative, strategic and adaptive one-to-one and group-based approaches that together help to release the potential of shared leadership in practice.

Outcomes and learning: The Programme has empowered individuals and provided them with opportunities to exercise leadership roles in the Peer Network, and within their respective projects and areas of expertise. Participants have grown in self-confidence and in their readiness to adopt and embrace the shared leadership role to better realise community wellbeing outcomes. For some, this has meant stepping outside their comfort zone to chair the Peer Network, and for others it has meant leading out on an initiative where they did not have direct authority for the delivery of the project.

Connections and networking: The Peer Network provided a safe, supportive, creative space where partners could meet up, get to know each other better, and build their sense of trust and solidarity. It has proved valuable and necessary in building the connectedness and resilience that enables leaders to better coordinate and develop ideas.

Co-design and shared decisions: Partners have demonstrated the openness and capability to work collaboratively to co-design, develop and implement new and more coordinated approaches to their work, and to negotiate the sharing of skill sets, decision-making and information with others across different organisations and sectors. This has been particularly helpful in unlocking creativity and promoting a willingness to work together in new

ways to deliver better outcomes in areas that have been historically difficult to unpack and respond to.

Pooling and maximising resources: The Programme participants have demonstrated a growing level of openness and trust in each other to share financial, human and in-kind resources across their respective organisations and sectors, and also to make joint funding submissions to departmental COVID-19 programmes to deliver better outcomes together.

ABC Community Planning Partnership also ran two additional shared leadership programmes, one with the Community & Voluntary Sector Panel and another with action leads from across the partnership.

5.2 Development of Strategic Indicators on the Success of Shared Leadership

It was always intended that learning about this programme would be captured and shared for wider use across community planning and other wellbeing and public service reform initiatives. Like other aspects of the programme, the original learning plan was impacted by the pandemic and the resulting need to redesign and pivot the delivery platform and process. CES did continue to gather learning across all elements of delivery, including the collation and sharing of resources and learning from each element of the programme for participating teams.

The approach to gathering the learning included the following methods:

- The co-design and periodic implementation of a set of indicators of shared leadership in community planning
- Design and administration of a survey
- Undertaking of interviews and focus groups with participants and other key stakeholders
- Workshop with CPP managers to consider key issues emerging from the learning and propose recommendations.

The CES team co-designed the set of indicators for the Shared Leadership Programme. These were developed at the point when the programme was initiated, based on a review of available evidence and a co-design workshop with programme participants. CES then collected data from participants at the beginning and end of the programme and reviewed changes in the data, inviting participants to score indicators as follows:

- 0 if Not in place
- 1 if Beginning
- 2 if Progressing
- 3 if Achieved.

We were aware that the pandemic had caused significant shifts for Community Planning Partnerships, as partnerships stepped in to respond to needs in the community, engaged in regular crisis planning or worked together to meet needs on the ground. This shifted perceptions and accelerated relationship building in ways that were not anticipated. It is difficult to draw concrete conclusions from the changes in scores noted below. In addition, the number of respondents at the final stage of data collection was lower than at other stages. However, the data is an interesting 'point in time' score for the three CPPs.

Table 6: Average Scores – Strategic Indicators of Community Planning (ranked by change)

	Co-design stage Nov 2019	Pre-programme engagement sessions Spring 2020	Programme closure Jan/Feb 2021	Change
Ownership of community planning as a way of working	1	1.77	2.17	+1.17
Resources to deliver community planning	0.83	1.42	1.61	+0.78
Infrastructure in place to deliver community planning	1.83	1.92	2.58	+0.75
Public seeing benefits	1	1.08	1.63	+0.63
Partners seeing benefits	1.6	1.70	2.22	+0.62
Evidence of reconfiguration	1	1.83	1.61	+0.61
Evidence of sharing	1.5	2.36	2.04	+0.54
Chair managing the CPP business beyond meetings	2	2.11	2.17	+0.17
Implementation plans being expedited	2	1.77	2.14	+0.14
Political energy and support	1.3	1.90	1.32	+0.02
Accountability and review mechanisms in place and meaningful	2	1.95	1.97	-0.03
CPP members have decision making authority	2.3	1.93	1.94	-0.36

Table 6 provides information on the baseline and post-programme rankings for the indicators. Interestingly, the indicator that had the largest average difference in indicator scores from 2019 to 2021 was "Ownership of community planning as a way of working" (1.17), which may reflect the engagement that happened as a result of responding together to the crisis.

Overall, the lowest scored indicator averaged for the three Community Planning Partnerships (2021) was "Political energy and support" (1.32), whereas the highest was "Infrastructure in place to deliver community planning" (2.58), which may indicate appreciation for the team and partnership arrangements in place.

5.3 Role of and Relationships with Central Government

The relationship between central government and Community Planning Partnerships arose throughout the programme and was a focus of one module. There appears to be several key factors at play here, namely:

- How central government departments are structured to collaborate with each other on issues of common concern or interest to CPPs.
- CPP participants reported a perceived internal disconnect between senior and middle grade civil servants in regard to commitments and undertakings with CPPs. This is particularly related to how information is shared within departments so that CPPs experience a consistent approach from departments on CPP issues.
- How community planning is reflected in central government planning through the allocation of resources, shared accountability, cross cutting governance, coordination of partner involvement and the positioning of CPPs within the Programme for Government.

Regarding the perceived “disconnect” between central government departments on issues of common interest, participants cited that there was “less understanding of how each other [departments] work” and reported a “poor collaborative relationship between government departments”, with the proposal for central government to coalesce differently: “Look at issues and themes rather than focusing on the departments”.

Participants were enthusiastic about the promise of community planning and for the approach to be supported and utilised more widely: “There is a need [for] the policy imperative to work in a community planning way across all sectors and organisations”. However, participants widely expressed a view that involvement from

statutory partners needed to be embedded in the day to day operations and workplans of each organisation, that it is “partnerships and action groups who are responsible for implementing community planning more than central government” and that it should not be left to the enthusiasm of individuals or organisations, but rather organised through central government: “Community planning needs to play a stronger role in day [sic] jobs which can be pushed by central government”.

The Programme for Government was cited as an important vehicle for a shared vision, coordination and planning in Northern Ireland. There was disappointment that community planning did not feature as a valuable implementation mechanism for the Programme for Government, e.g. “Learning from shared leadership on community planning should be embedded in the Programme for Government” and “The Programme for Government is an important enabler across all sectors in Northern Ireland but community planning has suffered by not being included”. It was suggested that the Programme for Government needed a bottom-up approach, looking at shared leadership at local level to find methods that work in local communities.

There was also a recognition of the potential savings emerging from CPPs “using money efficiently by working together”. The CPPs’ understanding of what is going on at a local level was also cited as valuable to central government, as there is a “need to understand issues at local level to be filtered up for problems to be understood and dealt with”. There was a concern about central governance, especially as churn in CPP representation becomes more widespread, with a resultant loss of knowledge and relationships. It was suggested that the Department for Communities “look at infrastructural changes in senior level involvement within statutory organisations and agencies, and make changes to implement community planning from top down”, perhaps through some new central coordination of departmental involvement.

5.4 Relationships within CPPs

This theme of building relationships was also reflected when participants talked about their own CPP, where they were keen to understand the role and scope of each other's organisations and how they could each contribute to the Community Plan, as well as ensuring adequate sharing of accountability and resourcing. Building stronger relationships was a key message, with suggestions that there was a "lack of awareness about other organisations' roles, resources and service proposals", and that it would be valuable to create "a forum to understand other organisations". Existing efforts to share understanding within CPPs was appreciated: "Explaining roles at meetings to other members to help shared knowledge on how community planning can collaboratively work"; and "[we] need this to be continued every couple of months for new members who join the partnership".

It was stated in several different engagements that there are core organisations which have successfully taken work forward together, whereas others have yet to successfully engage: "There are key organisations that make an important contribution". It was also suggested that greater shared engagement would lead to a "stronger sense of joint accountability and responsibility for community". The value of these relationships was clearly understood as important to CPP governance: "there is a need for trusting relationships that adhere to policies such as safeguarding"; and "there is a need for confidentiality for community planning".

Whilst there is a legislative imperative for statutory bodies to engage in community planning, many participants noted that current CPP involvement is not considered part of normal job roles, leading to several respondents asking to have community planning as a measurable part of everyone's job, rather than forming an additional piece of work: "Community planning shouldn't be an extra job – it should be carried out as part of current roles"; and "Community Plans should be reflected in corporate plans [or those of participating agencies] to help it filter through departments into more senior levels than Head of Community Planning".

It was also acknowledged that the local authorities carry the greatest burden of organising and resourcing the CPP: "Council is at heart of community planning"; "Council [is] expected to do most of the work". Some considered that government had not fully engaged with local government and statutory bodies on how community planning should be implemented, with a view expressed that community planning had been "thrown on the desk of local government". A concern about a lack of adequate resources was also expressed. Interviewees also thought the moment had come for innovation in pooled or participative budgets: "[we] need to overcome worry about how other people are using our budget – shared resource, shared money, shared assets for all of the community"; and "[we] need to share assets – physical assets and people as they are [for the] community".

The role of the community and voluntary sector was another significant topic for discussion during the programme, as well as in post programme learning. There was a recognition that the sector can offer 'on the ground' engagement and delivery as well as new innovative models of practice, e.g. "[International Voluntary Organisations] have innovative models and challenge statutory practice". However, there are still issues to overcome in relation to the community and voluntary sector's position in CPPs such as "lack of awareness of what community is and what it means" as well as the "importance of listening to what the community wants".

It has also been noted that voluntary and community organisations are not reflected in the legislation in the same way as statutory partners. This has led to a sense of an uneven playing field, with a call for "more engagement with the community and voluntary sector" made in several discussions. Participants also shared the "importance of bringing assets, e.g. individuals and shared expertise, to meet the needs of the community".

Concerns were expressed that several years on from commencement of community planning, some key individuals would be moving on into new roles or into retirement, creating issues of succession planning, knowledge management and relationship building: "stepping down will leave us unsure if the next person will maintain community duties if it is not specified in their job description"; and "relationships are impacted through retirement, promotions etc". The value of good relationships within CPPs to enable joint working and action was stressed repeatedly: "Community planning and engagement work depends on the individuals' interests"; and "personal relationships build more than relationships with organisations".

5.5 Relationships across CPPs

Participants related the need to continue to build relationships and share learning across all CPPs, stating there was a "need for more cross partnership working", and that they were, for example, "unsure who the other chairs are", as well as uncertainty if other councils and group members were "on the same page or where they are at". There was a call for "more collaboration with the other eleven partnerships to help reduce overlap and duplication" as well as a comment on the "importance of sharing knowledge to improve outcomes with other partners to work collaboratively".

Participants recognised the value of the Shared Leadership programme in this regard: "this programme has helped bring partnerships together".

5.6 Key Learning and Actions for Shared Leadership

Participants have reinforced the importance of sharing knowledge with all partners to improve outcomes and work collaboratively. This includes within organisations and CPPs, and regionally across all CPPs as depicted in Figure 11 below.

Participants want to build in mechanisms to better understand the range of partnership organisations and the services they provide, as well as their perception and position on community planning. The potential to build awareness of what other partners are doing can bring consistency and efficiency across partnerships. This should be delivered through workshops, regular 'special' meetings (every 12-18 months) and forums. The Shared Leadership Programme has been a valuable start to building collaborative working but should be developed.

Whilst offering insightful feedback on the delivery and content of the programme, participants also proposed that this format of programme has the potential to support the implementation of community planning more broadly. A blended or online format, together with a co-designed programme and the opportunity to process content through action learning or team coaching would be of value.

There is a need for further testing and refinement of the strategic indicators developed during the Shared Leadership Programme. Ongoing benchmarking and space for discussion are areas that need greater attention across CPPs.

There was also a request that this programme feed into 'shared leadership' thinking at the highest levels of public administration in Northern Ireland, for adoption and implementation through all departments and public bodies.

Figure 11: Relationship based outcomes within and across CPPs



6. What we Learnt from Peer-to-Peer Learning

From the outset of the project, the three local authority partners were committed to sharing their learning and experiences with the wider Community Planning network in Northern Ireland. It was a commitment that was taken very seriously and actioned through participation in peer-to-peer learning and ongoing communication through their own officer networks.

6.1 The Use of Data and Evidence

A repeating theme during the peer-to-peer learning events was the importance of data and evidence for the planning process. It was acknowledged during the sessions that obtaining good quality monitoring data which demonstrates where change has occurred is challenging. NISRA was seen as having a key role in this regard.

There has been significant investment in the Labour Force Survey and Safe Community Survey which involved doubling their sample sizes during the period that this programme was in place. This investment related to the Programme for Government requirement for reduced sampling error in population indicators. This has provided reliable, high-quality statistics at local government level for important indicators such as economic inactivity, employment, victims of crime, workforce qualifications, underemployment and life satisfaction. The Labour Force Survey is particularly important for local government. Attendees were also signposted to the free Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service workshops which provide guidance and can help with

developing the skills required to allow the Community Planning Partnerships to identify what data they are looking for.

An external speaker from NESTA, Tom Symons, provided insight based on their own experience of data programmes. The issues involved in local government use of data could, in their view, be summarised as:

- Lack of senior leadership support
- Data sharing, with data often not being at the right level for effective use, or partners being unwilling or unable to share their data
- Data quality: There is a need to demonstrate the value of good quality data and show those responsible the implications in terms of the accuracy of their decision-making.

Throughout the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme, we observed difficulties in accessing quality and timely local data. The NISRA statisticians who worked with local government (on a commissioned basis) were valued by the Community Planning teams but the model proved unsustainable particularly due to the impact of COVID-19. Given the lack of resource available at local government level for statisticians, our view at Carnegie UK has been

that there is a shortage of skill available locally to source and tailor the available data to the needs of the Community Planning Partnership.

A further issue relates to how wellbeing data is collated to improve decision making. Analysis often presents data in different categories and units. We were pleased to be able to support

the Derry City and Strabane District Council Natural Capital Account (see Box 8). Natural capital accounting is an approach to estimating the economic benefits provided by greenspaces, particularly for public health and wellbeing. A Natural Capital Account (NCA) can help inform and improve decision-making by framing public green and blue spaces as economic assets.

Box 8: Natural Capital Account: Derry City and Strabane District Council

The NCA was developed by Vivid Economics, in coproduction with Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) and its Green Infrastructure (GI) Stakeholders, which form part of the Community Planning Partnership.

Natural capital describes components of the natural environment (including greenspaces) that provide economic benefits for people. These benefits can include cleaner air and water, improved physical health, mental health and wellbeing, carbon storage, temperature regulation and flood risk regulation.

The NCA assigns a monetary value to key services provided by greenspaces. This makes it easier to compare benefits with ongoing spending, investment and with spending on other public services. Without such an account, the benefits and value for money are seldom explicit.

We found that:

- Derry City and Strabane District Council supplies more than £75 million in benefits to residents each year through its 223 greenspaces.
- Greenspaces will provide £1 billion in benefits over the lifetime of Derry City and Strabane District Council's Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan (2019- 2032). This value could increase if parks are enhanced to encourage more, longer and active visits.
- There are more than five million visits to Derry and Strabane recreational greenspaces each year. Visitors benefit from mental wellbeing and physical health improvements. The town of Strabane and non-urban areas of the region have fewer greenspace options compared to residents in Derry City, but this could increase if the study were extended to include all publicly accessible greenspaces. These benefits are provided at low cost.
- It only costs £1 to deliver over £22 of benefits. Greenspaces provide over £500 of benefit per adult resident per year.

These figures were provided prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is estimated that they now hold an even greater value.

6.2 Statements of Progress

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires Community Planning Partnerships to produce a Statement of Progress on a two-year reporting cycle. The Statement of Progress has to be meaningful and understandable to local people, who are the intended audience. It should reflect what the Community Planning Partnership is trying to achieve for the recipients of local public services and be engaging and inspiring in a way that goes beyond the usual services and communications. The statement should highlight practical achievements which are understandable to citizens and provide a lead into discussions and engagement on the next steps for the Community Plan.

The second peer-to-peer learning event provided an opportunity for officers from across the 11 council areas to outline their experience of producing Statements of Progress. Community Planning Partnerships have trialled a range of different tools and delivery mechanisms in communicating their Statements of Progress to citizens in line with the statutory requirement. A range of accessible outputs, such as engaging reports, infographics, and video clips, were used to reflect on progress made and to provide a focus for the future. The messages in the Statements of Progress were also taken to the places and spaces where citizens spend time, such as public transport, cinemas or leisure centres, and social media. Derry City and Strabane Community Planning Partnership committed resources from this project to further develop their communication activity, including the use of billboards⁵⁴. Multiple communication routes created an opportunity for dialogue, in contrast to the traditional one-way communication style of government, and an opportunity to redefine the relationship between government and citizens.

A panel discussion allowed stakeholders to reflect on the learnings, noting:

- The need for a culture change in ways of working as well as how the Statements of Progress documents are produced. It was reflected that local government is further ahead on the journey on a number of key processes, such as community engagement and the use of data, than their colleagues in central government.
- The importance of gathering and sharing stories of change and qualitative evidence as well as data.
- The importance of local authority leadership; attendees should be encouraged to seek forgiveness rather than permission, and to be bold.
- The importance of collaboration in all of the examples cited; on harnessing individual energies for the collective good; culture change; and moving outside of areas of expertise and comfort zones.

54 DCSDC (2019) *Statement of Progress*. Available online at https://growderrystrabane.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/DCSDC_StatementOfProgress_draft22.pdf

6.3 Working with Communities

The final peer-to-peer event was held in September 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such there was a strong focus on what had been learnt during the initial phase of the pandemic, including the first lockdown. In particular, attendees reflected on their changing relationship with communities during this time.

In normal circumstances, local authorities are civic leaders, agreeing on and delivering local priorities; being accountable for public money and resources; delivering services; and providing facilities, events and activities. During the pandemic these roles stayed much the same but the context, priorities, services delivered and financial considerations changed radically. Councils and communities had to be flexible and responsive, and develop strong relationships in a rapidly changing situation. With the new priority of keeping people alive, safe and well came radical changes. Income generating services, such as theatres, arts venues, leisure centres and community centres were brought to a halt. Facilities were re-purposed as food distribution centres, changing facilities for health care workers, and PPE production centres. Advisory services were enhanced and extended, and innovation in the use of technology and new ways of working grew. How money was being spent altered dramatically, being redirected, for example, to support community organisations, community resilience, and sports hardship funds.

New roles were developed, such as delivering food, fuel and cleaning materials, collecting prescriptions and reducing loneliness and isolation. The Department for Communities as well as Health Trusts and community response teams from the community and voluntary sector were supported by council staff, building on existing collaborative relationships. The robust community planning structures have therefore been tested since March 2020, and have enabled coordination on the ground, and encouraged and supported volunteers through the development of community hubs. Community hubs provided a focus for the response to the crisis, and a wider picture of the pandemic for councils.

Alternative service delivery methods were also developed. For example, in some areas waste collections became more frequent while Household Waste Recycling Centres were closed. Virtual services, such as arts and culture, were developed to support wellbeing. Civic leadership was also delivered through social campaigns on, for example, kindness, respect, and supporting victims of domestic abuse, thereby reinforcing public health messages. Elected representatives also relayed public messages of support, and provided practical, local assistance. Finally, good work in challenging circumstances was recognised.

Councils took a holistic approach to supporting wellbeing during the pandemic. In terms of social wellbeing, local authorities coordinated and assisted with the distribution of food, prescriptions and arts supplies; coordinated volunteering efforts; and conducted campaigns designed to promote mental health. To support environmental wellbeing, councils tackled fly tipping, promoted biodiversity and encouraged home growing where possible. Volunteers came out in significant numbers to assist with these activities, helping to foster a sense of community cohesion. Support for economic wellbeing included providing business grants, job opportunities, advice and promotion of local businesses. A key role of the civic leadership of councils was also to build relationships, to recognise when people went above and beyond the call of duty, and to encourage others to do so.

Good coordination is vital to avoid duplication and confusion, and in this regard the pre-existing community planning structures were immensely helpful and enabled councils to act quickly. Volunteer Now and the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) were critically important in helping to address the overwhelming volume of offers of help from volunteers. Councils now appreciate the need to improve Northern Ireland's digital connectivity, and how a crisis can be used by some as an opportunity. There is also a need to build on the growth of social capital that has emerged during the crisis – and in the more connected communities, the new relationships and build-up of trust.

7. What Next for Community Planning in Northern Ireland?

2021 is a pivotal time for community planning in Northern Ireland. Shortly after this report is published, Community Planning Partnerships will issue their second Statements of Progress.

A review is promised into the functioning of community planning. But after the experience of the pandemic response, the future of community planning as a model is perhaps less in doubt than it might have been. The benefits of joint working across public services and with communities have been seen in action, and while the pandemic may have been a baptism of fire, it provided proof of concept.

Our experience of working alongside Community Planning Partnerships for over three years has provided Carnegie UK with a unique opportunity to explore and develop recommendations on how community planning could be strengthened in the Northern Ireland context.

7.1 Core Funding

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 requires local government and its statutory partners to pioneer innovative new ways of delivering public services in Northern Ireland. Yet despite the need to execute new powers, to work within new partnership structures, and for new, professional skill sets to deliver new services, community planning as a policy function does not receive dedicated funding from the Northern Ireland Executive or the other Community Planning partners. The administrative costs are borne solely by local councils, despite the language of shared endeavour.

Consequently, small community planning teams have been developed to support Northern Ireland's 11 Community Planning Partnerships to improve community wellbeing outcomes as far into the future as 2030 or 2035. In some cases, a lack of dedicated funding has led to capacity issues when operationalising community planning and has limited the ability to innovate and extend activities which could improve local wellbeing outcomes.

Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland provided essential funding for activities such as shared leadership training and community engagement. From our evaluation of this programme we have no doubt that this was money well spent. These activities are critical to the success of Community Planning Partnerships but the cost of such important, multi-agency programmes of activity should not be borne by one partner alone. And, while we were happy to step in, we cannot help but note that such basic practice development support for a statutory requirement should not have had to be provided by philanthropy.

Our programme has highlighted the capabilities of local government as delivery agents of change when they are adequately resourced. While the support the Executive has provided to local authorities to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 crisis is welcome – and recognises that councils are instrumental in understanding and responding to the needs of communities – community planning, as a long-term process and statutory requirement, needs greater stability of financial support.



Recommendation 1

All statutory Community Planning Partners (including agencies and central departments) should contribute to a fund for the administration of community planning, to ensure the Partnerships' ability to deliver on improving local wellbeing outcomes over the course of the current Plans.

7.2 Local Government Powers and Responsibilities

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 was significant in reshaping the relationship between central and local government. However key policy areas remain at central level, limiting local government in their place-making.

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 included provisions for an 'Augmentation Review' following the establishment of the 11 new local authorities and the consolidation of their services. No significant transfers have taken place since 2015, perhaps due to the wider policy and political vacuum in the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and the COVID-19 pandemic.

We heard consistently that the omission of regeneration from the portfolio of local government both renders the transfer of necessary powers incomplete and undermines the ability of community planning to address inequalities at the local level. This is particularly important to remedy in the light of COVID-19 with councils turning their attention to the need to support the local recovery in a way that maximises the impact on social, economic and environmental wellbeing.



Recommendation 2

As part of an Augmentation Review, the Northern Ireland Executive should amend the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to include regeneration among the portfolio of powers for local government thereby completing the transfer of the necessary powers required to address inequalities to the local level.

7.3 Building Relationships between Central and Local Government

Naming local authorities as the lead partner for community planning in legislation has created the perception that community planning is owned by the local authority, or one department within it. However, community planning is better understood as a shared endeavour between equal partners to act together on agreed priorities. A more mature, strategic approach is therefore required to facilitate this.

Our findings suggest that there is significant variation in partnership working, falling into three categories: those who are proactive and see community planning as central to achieving their objectives; those who view community planning as helping them to deliver peripheral aspects of their work rather than their core activity; and those who are still trying to see how community planning assists them in the delivery of their core work programme. While we understand that there will always be some statutory partners who will be closer to community planning than others, we believe that all partners should explore the extent to which there is scope for closer alignment between their organisation's objectives and the outcomes outlined in the Community Plans.

These findings echo the earlier Gallagher report and we share their conclusion that all public bodies need to build community planning further into their core working practices. There were multiple cases cited where the central departments or arms-length bodies were not being represented by decision-makers within those structures, limiting the ability of the Community Planning Partnership to act collectively towards their shared priorities.

There is a similar effect at play in the Programme for Government where alignment of outcomes is largely perceived as a one-way process of local government aligning with central government, rather than seeing the process as a shared activity to identify outcomes and the priorities and programmes that flow from them.



Recommendation 3

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister should issue a directive to all departments, statutory bodies, and arms-length bodies to participate fully in the community planning process.



Recommendation 4

Departmental Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executives of arms-length bodies should ensure that those representing their organisations at community planning meetings have sufficient authority to commit resources (human and financial) to actions designed to deliver on agreed CPP outcomes.

7.4 Pooled Budgets

A key barrier for achieving Community Planning Partnership outcomes was the continued difficulties in arranging pooled budgets for agreed priorities and activities. Pooled budgets are an arrangement where two or more partners make financial contributions to a single fund to achieve specific outcomes. It is a single budget, managed by a single host with a formal partnership or joint funding agreement that sets out aims, accountabilities and responsibilities.

During the emergency phase of COVID-19 we observed examples of partners being more flexible with their approach to funding. The challenge now, in the recovery phase, is to ensure that flexibility is retained where it can be seen to improve wellbeing outcomes for local populations.

Pooled budgets, where they did occur, were seen as effective in tackling the type of policy issues that have a detrimental effect on a wide range of public service areas such as mental health, access to green and blue space and children's services. Often the activity required is preventative, with benefits accruing across the public services but no one agency clearly responsible for delivery.

We note with interest the guidance on the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 whereby councils, departments and agencies are empowered to make contributions to a pooled fund to provide services for children's wellbeing. Given the wide definition of children's wellbeing used in the Act, this would apply to many of the activities under Community Planning Partnerships where children are direct and indirect beneficiaries. This approach should be trialled with demonstration projects, to gain evidence of the outcomes that can be achieved when resources are pooled and sought to be scaled up.



Recommendation 5

The Department of Finance should urgently issue regulations on pooled budgets under the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 and make it clear how this can be applied to a broad range of public service areas.



Recommendation 6

The Department of Finance, working with NILGA and the Community Planning Officers Network should identify a number of pathway projects on pooled budgets resulting in high quality guidance that can be applied across all public services.

7.5 Building Relationships with the Community and Voluntary Sector

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the community and voluntary sector demonstrated its speed, flexibility, resilience, and ability to reorient and deliver services critical to citizens' wellbeing. There is an opportunity in a post-COVID society to develop a new relationship between the Northern Ireland Executive, Community Planning Partnerships and the CVS which utilises partners' relative strengths and draw on the organisations best placed to deliver services to improve citizens' wellbeing.

Attendees at the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Co-production Symposium⁵⁵ identified a legislative framework, similar to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which strengthened the legitimacy of co-production with politicians, civil servants and communities, as a priority for improving the implementation of Community Planning.

55 Carnegie UK Trust (2020) *Report of Co-Production Symposium*. Available online at <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/embedding-wellbeing-in-northern-ireland-report-of-co-production-symposium/>

✓ Recommendation 7

Community Planning Partnerships should co-design, co-deliver and co-manage public services with the Community and Voluntary Sector at all levels of service delivery, as part of a new relationship and way of working with the sector.

✓ Recommendation 8

Community Planning Partnerships should invest in building the capacity of Community and Voluntary Sector Panels (or other appropriate engagement mechanisms) to allow their members to share leadership in the delivery of the Community Plan, and to co-produce services within it.

✓ Recommendation 9

Community Planning Partnerships should review the model used to secure community and voluntary sector representation in community planning, to ensure that it supports the flexibility and responsiveness of the sector and capitalises on the energy in local communities realised during the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.6 Building Relationships with Citizens

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 established a duty on Community Planning Partnerships to "seek the views of the community, encourage them to express their views, and take their views into account in the community planning process". As such, local authorities and their statutory partners undertook significant citizen engagement in the development of their Community Plans.

The New Decade, New Approach agreement committed to making public consultation meaningful, putting it at the heart of government policy, with a particularly important commitment to holding annual Citizen's Assemblies. This means ensuring that consultations are not simply part of the process, but that they inform policy development, and that citizens can meaningfully engage in shaping policies that affect their lives.

The projects carried out under the Embedding Wellbeing programme included two Participatory Budgeting projects, both carried out in the difficult circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those involved improved

their skills and confidence in using Participatory Budgeting but this is far from a widespread approach in the region⁵⁶.

It is important to ensure that co-design and co-production is not seen as an 'added extra', but that it is the fundamental basis on which policy is developed and delivered. Learning on previous community engagement activities by the statutory partners should be shared to improve practice across Northern Ireland.

Recommendation 10

Community Planning Partners should co-ordinate their citizen engagement strategies and activities, including Participatory Budgeting, to avoid duplication, ensure coherence, and maximise the impact on collective wellbeing.

⁵⁶ See for example the Northern Ireland Audit Office (2021) *The Northern Ireland budget process*. Available online at https://www.ncchpp.ca/docs/2016_GouvIntGov_PresHiAP_En.pdf

7.7 Improving Leadership in Evidence

The long-term nature of many community planning outcomes requires good quality, consistent data to be gathered over a number of years, enhanced by the requirements to publish Statements of Progress. Data availability and access were key issues faced by Community Planning Partnerships over the time period of the programme.

Northern Ireland is relatively well served by official statistics, but issues remain about timely access to this data particularly when CPPs are producing Statements of Progress. Carnegie UK believes that the enhanced use of NISRA data could help Community Planning Partnerships to better inform the public of progress and ask relevant questions on how to improve the wellbeing of citizens across the local authority areas.

We heard concerns about the slow development of administrative data for policy use. During the COVID-19 crisis, administrative data presented as an issue in terms of both how it can be shared, and how its insights can be utilised.

Administrative data offers rich information that could inform policy and service delivery, particularly where pre-existing inequalities have been deepened by the crisis. Tensions presented in the gathering and sharing of data during COVID-19 due to concerns about sharing across agencies. The systems required to share data required considerable effort and going forward there needs to be greater clarity about how, and for what purpose, data can be shared across partners to improve wellbeing.



Recommendation 11

NISRA and NILGA should work together to review support to local Community Planning Partnerships on sourcing and analysing data, including consideration of a pool of statisticians that CPPs could access.



Recommendation 12

The Northern Ireland Executive should provide guidance on the sharing of administrative data that can support the delivery of Community Planning, to ensure that local partners apply legislation on data protection appropriately and consistently.

7.8 Space to Reflect and Learn

There is considerable value in investing in spaces for Community Planning Partnerships to learn from each other. Our project partners reported the value of the Community Planning Officers Network as a source of support as they sought to develop their Community Plans and undertake new ways of working.

Within the Embedding Wellbeing programme, the interest of those involved in community planning in learning from their counterparts in other local authority areas and organisations has been demonstrated through the extensive uptake of participation in peer-to-peer learning events, and in the over 200-person membership of an online platform designed to share learning on improving wellbeing outcomes.

At the local level, similar policy learning should take place between Community Planning

Partnerships and their counterpart structures in other jurisdictions. The opportunities to undertake study visits to New York and Wales were welcomed by the project participants as rare occasions on which they could learn from experts outside of Northern Ireland who are also working to improve wellbeing outcomes at a similar scale.

Recommendation 13

The current Community Planning Officers Network should be supplemented with a larger network to provide a supportive environment in which all members of the Partnerships (including non-statutory members) can discuss key areas of community planning to improve their practice.

8. What Next for Wellbeing in Northern Ireland?

Northern Ireland has once again been through a period of significant and deep disruption. When the next Northern Ireland Assembly is elected and takes its seats, there will be the opportunity to fully review the Programme for Government. At that point, there will be a choice – to continue to seek a different way of working through the wellbeing approach, or to fall back to the old system of silos and departmental priorities.

The original ethos of the Carnegie UK work in Northern Ireland was to explore whether wellbeing provided a strong enough narrative to provide a space for policy development that was above the day-to-day reality of a mandatory coalition. While clearly this has not emerged in the period of instability from 2016 to 2021, we believe it still remains the right path for Northern Ireland.

Our experience of working with Community Planning Partnerships has reinforced this. Working within the same context, they have found a common language through wellbeing outcomes to develop shared solutions. They have done so with a myriad of practical, funding and organisational obstacles. They have also challenged themselves to look beyond electoral cycles by setting out plans for the long-term. There are lessons here for the Northern Ireland Executive.

Throughout this project we have sought not only to provide information in real time to Community Planning Partnerships to support their work, but also to the wider policy community. We have tested and reflected with others on what the best next steps are for wellbeing in Northern Ireland. In none of these conversations did anyone, at any point, advocate abandoning the wellbeing approach. Instead, the message was of a job left incomplete in 2017 that needed to be picked up as a matter of urgency.

8.1 Re-commit to the Wellbeing Approach

Political support is key to ensuring the long-term change which community planning seeks to achieve over the course of a generation. This requires commitment, maturity and understanding from politicians in local and central government to ensure those charged with delivering community planning have the support and resources to do so.

The development of a new Programme for Government, post-election, is an opportunity to articulate the golden thread between the New Decade, New Approach Agreement, the Programme for Government and Community Plans, and wider global commitments, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to deliver wellbeing outcomes.

Collective leadership is critical for the delivery of a wellbeing framework and an outcomes-based approach; by definition it requires new

approaches to administrative leadership and practice. Throughout our work in Northern Ireland, the need for stronger collective leadership 'at the top' has been highlighted as a serious and significant issue. This leadership is required to strengthen joined up working horizontally between departments, and vertically with other tiers of government and public services. Community Planning Partnerships, required to work across professional and departmental boundaries to achieve their outcomes, themselves have experienced confusion about the lack of joined up thinking at a broader, regional level.



Recommendation 14

All Northern Ireland Executive Ministers should demonstrate collective leadership in ensuring the delivery of the wellbeing approach.

8.2 Hold a Citizens' Assembly on Collective Wellbeing in a Post-COVID-19 Society

Undertaking good quality citizen engagement provides the Executive with the opportunity to improve citizen understanding of and support for its work and to improve trust and relationships between communities and central government. The benefits of extensive citizen engagement and deliberative methods are well known. However, they will only be achieved if the Executive is clear in its communication as to the purpose of its engagement; how feedback from citizens will be used; and how the Executive will continue to communicate with those who took part in the process.

In implementing the Programme for Government, the Executive should build on international best practice on citizen engagement – such as the International Association for Public Participation's Spectrum of Public Participation – to inform its engagement strategy. Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership and Derry and Strabane Community Planning Partnership have committed to embedding the Spectrum and the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement in engaging their communities at the local level.

To transform decision making and address inequality, it is important that the engagement strategy enables all citizens of Northern Ireland to feel their voices and opinions are recognised, heard and valued. For this to be achieved, the public needs to see these reflected in the Programme for Government. We recommend that the Executive hosts a full public conversation on societal wellbeing in a post-COVID-19 society, as an initial step. This could include a Citizens Assembly on the indicators and outcomes in the framework. Any initial engagement should be followed up with a longer-term strategy for ongoing engagement about collective wellbeing.

Recommendation 15

The Northern Ireland Executive should hold a Citizens' Assembly on collective wellbeing in a post-COVID-19 society and build a strategy for ongoing public engagement in the framework and recovery.

8.3 Legislate to Protect the Wellbeing of Current and Future Generations

The outcomes approach currently sits in the Programme for Government policy process. From our international experience, we know that the Northern Ireland Executive is unique in locating its wellbeing framework solely in this planning document, creating confusion about its status. During the three-year suspension of the Assembly and Executive, there was no agreed framework. This created difficulties as the extent to which regional or local government were expected to embrace a different way of working was not clear.

A statutory basis would elevate the outcomes approach from being one of many initiatives to becoming a framework for all aspects of governance in Northern Ireland. Public organisations should have a duty to consider and make progress towards the outcomes, and the outcomes themselves should be subject to high-quality engagement and dialogue with citizens every four years (in line with the assembly session).

We are aware there are multiple calls for a wellbeing law in Northern Ireland – variously referred to as the Wellbeing of Future Generations, Climate Change or a Sustainable Development law. There is also an overlap with other legislative calls on public sector reform. For Carnegie UK, the title of the Bill matters less than the urgent need to solidify the approach through statutory mechanisms.

Enshrining an approach which improves wellbeing in law would safeguard it against further interruptions in governance and electoral cycles. This has been achieved in Scotland through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and in Wales through the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In addition, we believe it would add legitimacy to the actions of civil servants and improve collective accountability.

Recommendation 16

The Northern Ireland Executive should legislate, as a matter of urgency, to protect the wellbeing of future and current generations by placing the wellbeing outcomes and indicators on a statutory footing.

8.4 Legislate for a Duty to Co-operate

The Trust's project work has highlighted that there are varying levels of commitment to community planning as a policy vehicle by statutory partners and government departments, which raises wider concerns about collaborating for outcomes in the Programme for Government.

Attendees at the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Co-production Symposium identified a legislative framework, similar to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which strengthened the legitimacy of partnership working with politicians, civil servants and communities, as a priority for improving the implementation of community planning and the outcomes-based approach. This exists for children's authorities under the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 which requires:

"Every children's authority must, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of its children functions (functions which may contribute to the well-being of children and young persons), co-operate with other children's authorities and with other children's service providers in the exercise of those functions" AND "The Executive must make arrangements to promote co-operation"

As non-statutory bodies, the community and voluntary sector would not be included in the duty to collaborate, except where they are providing public services under contract to a public body. Our experience is that the community and voluntary sector is committed to involvement in design, as well as delivery, of public services, as demonstrated in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Partnership between the Department for Communities and councils, and among councils and community groups, was seen in action during the initial phase of the pandemic and has also been recognised during wider emergency situations, demonstrating their important role⁵⁷.



Recommendation 17

The Northern Ireland Executive should introduce a Duty to Co-operate for services for the whole population, requiring departments, agencies and councils to work together to improve social, economic, environmental and democratic wellbeing outcomes.

⁵⁷ Department for Infrastructure (2020) *Mallon praises community partnership in face of Storm Francis and urges caution as warnings remain in place*. Available online at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/news/mallon-praises-community-partnership-face-storm-francis-and-urges-caution-warnings-remain-place>

8.5 Build a Multi-sectoral Leadership Community to Deepen Wellbeing Practice

The lack of cross-sectoral knowledge exchange that we identified at local level is replicated for Northern Ireland as a whole. Our conversations confirmed that there is no clear space for leaders (broadly defined) to come together and talk about social progress and the barriers to improvement.

Our work with partners identified a number of 'fault lines':

- Central departments versus arms-length bodies versus local government
- Public versus private versus voluntary sector
- Professional interests versus citizen and community interests

We call these fault lines because we observed numerous occasions where the partner not in the room was 'at fault'. While undoubtedly there

are occasions where a sector or group has not operated effectively, the culture of finding fault and attributing blame reduces the opportunity to understand and explore together what might be happening to create the barrier to change and how they might be effectively overcome.

There were different views on whether this should be established by the Northern Ireland Executive, but while there were some reservations about the level of control this might exert, there remained a sense that the Northern Ireland Executive is the only body that can give permission for such a forum to be convened.

Recommendation 18

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister should launch and fund a multi-sectoral leadership forum that brings people together across sectoral groupings and professional boundaries to explore how partners work collaboratively to improve wellbeing.

9. Endnotes – Reflections from the Carnegie UK Team

The Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland programme was conceived in the midst of two connected crises – the Brexit vote in 2016 and the collapse of the Assembly in 2017. It continued in the face of a third unprecedented crisis, the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Each of these three upheavals hit local government, and community planning, hard. Each of them required new knowledge to be generated, stretched already strained resources and took a personal toll on those working to improve lives in their communities.

And so our final reflections are not on the structures and processes of policy making. We have said enough about those. Our endnotes are about relationships. The relationships between the community planning officers at the heart of this project deepened as the requirements of the job changed around them. The relationships between local government officers and community groups and citizens shifted as they all came together to do what they could in the face of unprecedented need.

As each of these relationships was tested, it was strengthened, and helped to build what some people call resilience. That each of our project partners was able to rise to the challenges of shared leadership and co-production within such a difficult era is testament to their commitment and skill as public servants.

Other relationships did not come together. There are fundamental power differentials between the centre and the local in Northern Ireland. Our view is that the days of command and control are over. The current and next leadership in Northern Ireland should look to local Community Planning Partnerships for guidance on how to work together, for the collective wellbeing of all their people.

10. Appendix – evaluation

10.1 The Outcome Map

Working with Matter of Focus, the team produced an outcome map linking the activity in the project to the outcomes we seek. Figure A. 1 illustrates the outcomes that the project sought to achieve.

Qualitative evidence was sought to show the extent to which the outcomes were being realised through the project. The final column of the difference that the programme has made is the hardest to evidence. There is evidence of progress towards embedding wellbeing in each of the three partnership areas and in the wider stakeholders engaged in public service delivery in Northern Ireland. For project participants, including those engaged in Participatory Budgeting and community engagement activities, there are reports that suggest improved wellbeing. However, given the effects of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of the population within the three areas it is not possible to ascertain any direct benefit on citizens at this time.

Carnegie UK acknowledges that there remains work to do across all of the outcome areas, and the examples illustrated here are not an exhaustive list. However, they demonstrate both the progress that has been made during a short time period, and the further progress that could be made across the project outcomes, if the wellbeing approach – and its principles of shared leadership and coproduction – are further progressed.

10.2 Evaluation Survey by CES on Shared Leadership Programme

At the close of the Shared Leadership Programme, CES administered an online qualitative and quantitative survey to assess participant views of the programme and any difference this made to their experience of community planning. We asked participants to score their perceptions of the extent to which aspects of their CPP experience had changed as a result of the programme, as well as their views of future development needs. A total of 13 responses were received. In reported results below, CES has noted results for those who scored 4 or 5 (to some or to a great extent) in their responses.

The survey results indicated that respondents did feel that there had been some changes to their experience of the CPP as a result of the programme. Notably, 75% of respondents felt that (to some or a great extent) the programme had provided a space for strategic thinking, whereas 76% indicated the programme had increased dialogue and creative thinking and number (76%) indicated there were increased opportunities to learn from one another and they felt empowered to participate. Similarly, 77% indicated the programme had built relationships in the CPP to some extent. Over 60% indicated that the programme had, to some or a great extent, equalised power between members of CPPs.

Almost 60% had indicated their knowledge of inequality had increased, whereas over 60% had increased their understanding of community wellbeing and 53% indicated that their knowledge of partnering with government had increased. Sixty eight percent had increased

Figure A.1 Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Outcome Map, created using OUTNAV software

What we do	Who with	How they feel	What they learn and gain	What they do differently	What difference does this make?
Provide collective and individual support to the CPPs to work together better to deliver a wellbeing-focused community plan	Three CPPs participating in the Enabling Wellbeing programme	Carnegie is respected as a convener and expert	Knowledge, skills and confidence to embed wellbeing-focused community planning	Keep wellbeing at the centre of decision making for local citizens	People in the three CPPs have improved wellbeing
Facilitate CPP network to share learning	Three CPPs and wider CPP network	Listen to and valued	Understand the value of evidence for community planning	Work together better within the CPP	Wellbeing is embedded in both policy and practice
Convene cross-system conversations to raise awareness and make the case for a wellbeing approach	Senior leaders	This is relevant, timely and helpful	Changed mindset to enable more transparent working	Share learning and progress honestly	People in Northern Ireland have improved wellbeing
Provide independent expert support to implementation of wellbeing approaches	Regional stakeholders	Safe, supported and committed to make change	Improved understanding of the importance of focusing on wellbeing and how it has been successfully applied around the world	Promote, champion and create the conditions for wellbeing approaches	Extrapolate from experience and evidence to scale-out wellbeing approaches
Capture and share learning from the programme	MLAs	We are inspired and engaged to change	Evidence, tools and resources that enable putting a wellbeing approach into practice	Make better use of existing networks and improve partnership working	
			Confidence in using evidence for community planning		

their understanding of community partners. However, a lower number (46%) reported that the programme had increased their understanding of the strategic policy context.

We asked participants to describe ways in which they have put programme learning into effect. Responses included specific impact, for example, on locality plans "Feedback from working group into SSCP meeting with impact on our locality plans" to feedback on the overall collective approach, for example "Proposals to reduce jargon, engage young people, share the leadership within the CPP" and "By highlighting the importance of solving problems collectively in the interest of community wellbeing".

10.2.1 Assessing the Online Learning Platform

As one of the first online leadership programmes undertaken for those involved in community planning, CES was interested in assessing the impact of online delivery. Participants did value the convenience, such as travel time saved and ease of access of the programme, as well as facilitation of the programme. The online platform offered participants a 'chat' and 'reaction' function as well as speaking opportunities which increased participation for everyone, and reduced the dominance of extrovert participants that can occasionally imbalance engagement with in-person delivery.

However, participants expressed the value of in-person delivery: "there is no replacement for actually being with each other (in the physical) and building relationships, sharing more stories of new partnering work", and the impact of losing informal discussion and networking e.g. "Only less personal in that didn't make same relationships with people". A blended delivery may work in future, which would balance convenience and relationship building.

CES also asked participants about future development needs. There were a number of suggestions for further engagement and learning, including building relationships in and between CPPs e.g. "Continue to build relationships between partners"; "Learning from the other 10 partnerships"; "CVS engagement and collaboration of partners"; building technical knowledge e.g. "understanding for all partners of the legislative requirements on statutory partners", "procurement" and "evidence"; and spending time deepening planning in CPPs e.g. "breakout sessions to consider the key priorities for our partnership".

The online survey results are an encouraging reflection of the difference the programme has made, particularly in areas where change was required, such as in sharing leadership and rebalancing power. These themes were further explored in interviews and focus groups.

10.2.3 Interviews and Focus Groups

CES held a number of interviews and focus groups with programme participants and strategic leaders in the 3 CPPs. In addition to assessing views of the difference the programme has made, the interviews considered the ongoing challenges faced in implementing community planning in Northern Ireland.

One theme explored in the interviews and focus groups was the difference the programme made to individual participants and their role within the CPP. For some who have been engaged in the response to the pandemic, it has been difficult to digest the learning: "Difficult for [Statutory partner] to take learning and leadership further due to stress of COVID-19 e.g. processing crisis payments is a priority". For others, the programme provided a valuable thinking and learning space on themes generated in the May 2020 workshop, e.g. "Enjoyed the content of program for example on health inequalities" and "the programme has made a difference in terms of knowledge and giving [a] framework

for a new way of thinking, showing how shared leadership will work". The leadership content was also valued: "Put the focus on thinking about leadership; format good – well structured, reasonably informal format, good questions, good diversity of participants".

Participants also reported a sense of being recommitted and thoughtful about their partnership, feeling more "energised, enthusiastic and reengaged" with their CPP due to the programme, and "personally it has enabled me to distil my thinking on this issue and to use this thinking and learning into my work – in particular into the development of the future planning model for [local area]".

For some, it was regarded as an initial step towards change, the "start of a journey rather than an end", with the potential to reach those who did not participate in the programme and were not inclined to be active partners: "Would have liked to engage with a wider reach of partnership ...tend to be the same people being committed in community planning".

Participants also said there was a need for further progress on shared leadership: "Haven't fully achieved shared leadership", particularly due to the "need to build further clarity about partner roles and contributions".

Some participants wanted more time to observe changes from the programme and had suggested a forum for further connection, while others stated they wanted "more time to apply knowledge and learning". It was also suggested that communication strategies were developed for each CPP to continue sharing work emerging from the programme.

We explored the transition to an online programme with participants. There were both benefits and challenges of using this method reflected in interviews and focus groups – "the online communication increases attendance, reduces travel issues, more practical" – whereas others reflected the fatigue often experienced

by online calls: "online communication can lead to zoom fatigue", and the challenge of fully engaging: "difficult to read behaviours and non verbal cues in online meetings". The consensus favoured a blended approach of on-line and in-person methods for future programmes.

10.3 Evaluation of Wider Activity by Stratagem

Quarterly evaluation calls undertaken by Stratagem, alongside stakeholder feedback provided directly to the Trust and independent anecdotal evidence formed the basis of the project evaluation.

The various rounds of stakeholder evaluation have illustrated shifts in the level of partnership working, yet elements of the old culture still remain. This is particularly clear among regional CPP partners who find it difficult to work on a local scale or struggle to participate unless they are able to prove how something they have done specially has led to service improvements. The following offer a few examples of feedback:

Additional support would look something like Carnegie UK bringing more global experience to NI. Leveraging their name and reputation to bring speakers and expertise to NI that is not currently here." (Sept 2019).

"What would be useful for Carnegie UK is to, again, apply their knowledge of effective intentions elsewhere, both in GB and internationally, so we can see what works and doesn't work." (Sept 2019)

"The direct bespoke support has been fantastic and we are very happy with the support we are receiving. Having Carnegie UK attached to our work holds a lot of weight." (Jan 2020).

Influencing Decision Makers

Over the course of the project, Carnegie UK has convened several cross-system and party conversations to raise awareness of the project and make the case for a wellbeing approach. Carnegie UK has formally provided evidence to the Committee for Communities, Committee for the Executive Office and Committee for Finance, alongside 1-to-1 meetings with members of the Executive Office, Members of the Legislative Assembly and the Communities and Junior Ministers. With the Assembly not meeting between January 2017 and January 2020 – and no Ministers in post- engagement has taken place more in the second half of the project period.

The impact of Carnegie UK's influence on progress along this pathway is less clear due to the level of decision-makers, particularly among politicians and Ministers. We can't for example, ask decision-makers directly how they perceive or view Carnegie UK in terms of being trusted experts and conveners. However, we can take a high degree of confidence from the success of the Trust's influencing around wellbeing, and its place at the heart of two successive Programmes for Government. We can also take confidence from the fact that Ministers, individual MLAs, Permanent Secretaries and senior civil servants and Committees have all met and received briefings from Carnegie UK on numerous occasions over the past number of years.

The following offer a few specific examples of evidence to suggest an increase in the support for a wellbeing approach:

- Collective wellbeing was placed at the heart of draft Programme for Government, 2016-21, following the 2015 Roundtable convened by Carnegie UK. There was a further commitment to wellbeing in the New Decade, New Approach Agreement and to place it again at the heart of the new Programme for Government, 2021-26.
- An increase in the use of language around societal wellbeing, for example when First Minister Michelle O'Neill MLA responded to a question in the Assembly on economic recovery, noting a commitment to an "inclusive, joined up and collaborative Programme for Government to deliver good outcomes", adding that "dialogue with stakeholders is critical for strengthening and enhancing societal wellbeing."
- Following briefings by Carnegie UK to the main political parties in the Stormont Executive in February 2020, the Trust was mentioned during a meeting of the Economy Committee in relation to food poverty and wellbeing by Sinn Féin chief whip John O'Dowd MLA.
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council received a letter from the First Minister and Deputy First Minister acknowledging the Council's support for Carnegie UK's recommendations. In it, both Ministers said they were "encouraged by the Council's endorsement of an Outcomes-based approach" and that they "welcome the Carnegie report as a useful addition in our efforts to deliver on an agenda which brings societal wellbeing to the fore."

As outlined in Carnegie UK's response to the Programme for Government Outcomes Delivery Framework, Northern Ireland's journey towards a wellbeing outcomes approach has been an intermittent one. At this point in time, and as we move forward to recover from the pandemic, a strong indication of commitment to societal wellbeing as a whole of government approach is still required. The draft Programme for Government was a helpful starting point, but we believe that the Northern Ireland Executive has the potential to go further in implementing its wellbeing approach.

Peer-to-peer Learning

Carnegie UK has convened a number of peer-to-peer events throughout the duration of the Embedding Wellbeing Project, to encourage more collaborative, partnership working, promote the value of evidence for community planning, and change mindsets to enable more transparent working.

The peer-to-peer learning events were each well attended by representatives from across the 11 Community Planning Partnerships, with encouraging engagement during the events themselves. Activities have included a hackathon, international study visits to New York and Wales, and an online Slack channel for sharing learning.

The study visit to Wales has frequently been highlighted by project participants as providing them with knowledge about how a wellbeing approach could be taken forward and implemented at community planning level.

The success of the peer-learning approach is demonstrated by the following examples:

- Derry and Strabane District Council adopted the Community Engagement Plan that had been created by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council as a result of the shared learning at the December 2019 peer-to-peer event.
- The Embedding Wellbeing Project is a standing agenda item in the Community Planning Officers Network monthly meeting.
- Increased communication within the Community Planning Partnerships participants report that they now feel able to seek support and guidance from peers outside their own partnership.

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