



# Working Together for Wellbeing

Background reports prepared for the  
Northern Ireland Embedding Wellbeing  
in Local Government Programme

September 2021



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# New York – Stakeholder Engagement Day

Carnegie Corporation of New York, 437 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022  
Wednesday 10 October 2018

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Martyn Evans, then Chief Executive of the Carnegie UK Trust, welcomed attendees to the Carnegie Corporation of New York and thanked the presenters for taking the time to share their knowledge and experience with the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project participants. All attendees introduced themselves to the group.

## 2. Julie Rusk, Chief Civic Wellbeing Officer, City of Santa Monica

Julie Rusk, Chief Civic Wellbeing Officer at the City of Santa Monica, provided an overview of The Wellbeing Project. Julie explained that a good way of tracking and measuring wellbeing is to do so at a community level. Capturing community data allows an understanding of what is happening within different demographics and





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the strengths, assets, and learning of different groups. Community leaders in Santa Monica wanted good data, and so the City of Santa Monica looked into ways of obtaining this. The City of Santa Monica won the Mayor's challenge to create a wellbeing index, and worked with schools, families, and young people to develop this. Investing in a wellbeing index allowed citizens to be more at the front and centre of decision-making and therefore enabled better decision-making for the community.

In partnership with RAND and the New Economics Foundation, they developed a subjective wellbeing framework focused on community and civic engagement, place, and the natural and built environment. To date, the framework has enabled them to learn about their community across key issues, such feelings of stress among citizens; feelings of belonging within a neighbourhood; and individual activity levels.

How Santa Monica understand what communities want and then how this is actioned has been challenging, and remains a work in progress. There is community scepticism about

if citizens are actually being heard and if things are really going to change. There is a high level of voting in Santa Monica, however, only around 5% feel that they can actually influence government. The City of Santa Monica need to bridge the aspirations of their work on wellbeing, and the reality of citizens' perceptions and experiences.

The framework was adapted for the City budget. It is still in the early stages, but has been embedded into the city budget for 18 months. Pilot projects with communities on the ground are helping to inform the framework. An example is the Fitbit project. The company donated 175 devices to the local community to encourage people to become more active and to share their data. The goal is to use this data to inform city decisions and improve healthy behaviours. Another project was the 'Awkward Family Photo' which encouraged communication and interaction between people who had lived in the same town for 10 years and yet never spoken to each other, by meeting up and having an awkward family photo taken.

The 'Wellbeing Micro Grant' is a project in which residents are asked what they would do within their communities with \$500. 21 Applications were received and eight were selected to fund projects such as a pop-up playgroup; a language school; and recycled games. These projects are in the early phases, but asking people what they want to see in their communities and then supporting them to deliver it has already proven to have real value.

There are concerns regarding wellbeing only being for selected groups of people. This is an ongoing area of work to improve, however, a number of actions are helping to address this misperception, such as multilingual booklets to help reach more people; trusted leaders to help engage with communities; holding events in different locations; running smaller groups or events; managing expectations; and being prepared to change and listen to the community. Spaces need to be created for these discussions and they need to be facilitated for people to understand wellbeing and what they can do for themselves to improve it. The way stories are told and understood is essential for the lived experience of the community to be placed at the centre of decision-making.

It was agreed that The Wellbeing Project is well-aligned to the objectives of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project.

### 3. Andrew Chunilall, Chief Executive Officer, Community Foundations of Canada



Andrew Chunilall, Chief Executive Officer of Community Foundations of Canada (CFC), explained that CFC is the national network for Canada's 191 community foundations. In a country as diverse and vast as Canada, it is critical to have strong infrastructure of local, place-based providers and foundations to respond to local specificities, contexts, and issues.

Canada's demographics are unique – 40% of the population is over 55 years old; the birth rate is 1.7%; and immigration levels have dropped. Life expectancy is 80 and increasing, which means that Canada is an old country in terms of population age but a young country itself, which results in problems. This has resulted in stress on healthcare and pension funds, with the younger generation paying higher taxes to support the older generation.

The profile of people immigrating to Canada has changed over the last 15 to 20 years. Those immigrating used to be from Western European countries, but now they are more likely to be from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The population is visually changing, the ideas and values of people arriving in Canada are vastly different, which can have a disruptive affect and can therefore impact on wellbeing.



Vital Signs is one of CFC's flagship programmes. It is an annual quality of life report that measures how communities are doing. Covering housing, the environment, the arts and gender equality, the reports offer invaluable insights into community wellbeing. This helps to guide community engagement; starts conversations with local leaders and partners; and generates public awareness of and attention to key issues. Data is used to inform policy decisions on wellbeing, but cultural aspects must also be considered.

Toronto Spotlight on Equality looks at the ways in which culture, systems institutions, behaviours and mind sets create barriers that prevent some residents from accessing opportunities. Attitude and values need to change but government can only go so far, institutions need to help with the change. For example, data does not reflect gender ideas – male and female views are not considered with the same weight, women tend

not to be heard in decision-making, yet this data is not found anywhere. There are gaps in equality which data does not capture.

Perception needs to be analysed alongside data. For example, crime rates are going down, however, if you ask citizens, they do not feel safe. Data does not reflect emotion or values. Canada is an extremely multi-cultural society and so policymakers must consider how to encourage a culturally intelligent society. Data does not drive the policy solution, there are limitations to data and its value. Citizens responding to surveys are biased by their beliefs and experiences, which requires careful attention.

Partnership working in the UK and understanding the effect on the community and what is valued is challenging. Within Community Planning there are no answers, values are bought along with community concerns.

## 4. Ginny Sassaman, Co-Founder, Gross National Happiness USA (GNHUSA)

Ginny Sassaman provided an overview of Gross National Happiness USA (GNHUSA) and its current programmes. The driving force behind GNHUSA is climate change and the belief that capitalist society is the biggest destroyer of the planet. GNHUSA believe that communities need to find a new roadmap to a happier future and the improved wellbeing of people and animals. The mission is to make happiness the new bottom line, collective wellbeing level including personal happiness is an essential component of this. It was recommended that everyone should read *Geographic Bliss* by Eric Weiner.

A data collection study carried out in Vermont in 2013 and 2017 showed that happiness levels have dropped in the United States. GNHUSA are currently hosting a 'Happiness Walk', interviewing individuals of all ages, genders, and locations along the way, and asking what matters most in life. The answers give GNHUSA cause for hope as most people want similar things from life – these have the potential to bring people together. The data from the first half of the walk is currently being analysed, with the data from the second half being analysed at the end of the walk.

Another project GNHUSA are working on is animal wellbeing, alongside the International Fund for Animal Welfare, completing ground breaking work on the inter-connection between animal and human wellbeing. Most people have a connection to animals and this is possibly an avenue to explore to encourage greater

individual wellbeing. The link between humans and animals can help to encourage people to think differently. An example of this is trying to help someone to stop smoking – explaining the effect the smoke can have on their pet can help make an individual change their behaviours. Surveys in the USA have found that 90% of people agree that they want animals in the world – it is one of the few issues on which there is such extensive agreement. Dogs have been used in prisons to encourage interaction, emotions, and develop kindness and to encourage children to read in early year intervention speech and language projects. However, measuring the impact of these projects is problematic.

Constant insistence on economic growth is not making people happy – suicide rates are increasing and life expectancy is decreasing. Data is telling us that people are less happy. Working in partnership with Happiness Alliance, GNHUSA held a roundtable with people from across the world to gain a global perspective and to try and find a way forward. Data is not sufficient, we need to be the change we want to see in the world. We need a spiritual and cultural change. Systems are collapsing and it is worldwide problem. A new pathway for the future and new systems are needed.

It was raised by the attendees that people do not often talk about happiness, however, the link between humans and animals was seen as a good connection. There is a lot of misconception on what happiness is, it needs to be communicated that it is about striving to live our best lives. The word 'happy' can make people uncomfortable, however, the language we use is important – the word 'happiness' reaches hearts and minds.



## 5. Becky Ofrane, Senior Program Manager, Measure of America



Becky Ofrane, Senior Program Manager at Measure of America, provided an overview of Measure of America's A Portrait of New York City project. Measure of America is an initiative of the Social Science Research Council, with fellowship projects worldwide. The work of Measure of America is mainly partnership-based, they seek opportunities to collect new data sources and explore how they can analyse it. New York has a wealth of data available, and online mapping and data tool DATA2GO, launched in 2015, is the backbone of their projects.

It is important to understand the conceptual framework of not only how the economy is doing, but also how people are doing. Three dimensions can be rigorously measured – life expectancy; access to knowledge; and living standards. Using these three measures does, however, omit a number of issues, such as community cohesion and the environment, which Measure of America are aware are important for wellbeing. In the New York metropolitan area, the wellbeing of communities, even those just six subway stops apart, varies significantly, with big differences in opportunities as a result. There is a 17 year gap in the life expectancy of residents between West Chester and South Newark, which are very similar communities. Life expectancy is affected by health issues – the small things affecting our health add up and then there is a significant impact on our life expectancy.

Measure of America only publish the data that they require. The project participants were advised to consider the audience consuming the data, making it visually effective, and breaking it down to the lowest level possible. DATA2GO New York, used by the New York police force and health agencies, is a friendly and welcoming interface which allows citizens to view their own data. DATA2GO New York is updated annually but publications are only produced when Measure of America are commissioned to do so.

Key issues to address are identifying data gaps; encouraging agencies and departments to share data; and demonstrating progress.

## 6. Facilitated discussion

Aideen McGinley facilitated a discussion between the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project participants.

There is a need to adjust the mindset in Northern Ireland from being stuck in a policy and political vacuum to having an opportunity and time to consider what policy shifts are required; for improved relationships between local authorities; and increased involvement by the community and voluntary sector. However, leadership is required to support the opportunity and to design the changes sought. Local authorities are functioning without a Northern Ireland Executive, strength must be taken from this and the momentum maintained. Public services need to be as responsive as possible, blockages in the system need to be identified and addressed.

There is a concern that Community Planning will be expected to take on board and deliver all public services. However, there are policy areas out-with the control of Community Planning, such as health and education. There is therefore a need to make time and space for discussions about what Community Planning is, and what it is for.





Financial and in kind resources and key. Currently, every local authority department is under-resourced and local government officers do not have time to do what is required of them. Partnership working is required for collective resourcing and integrating Community Planning into budgets. This requires facilitation among those who are active in Community Planning and those who have disengaged or who have not been engaged to date. Engagement with the private and voluntary sectors requires framing the discussion correctly. Community expectations must also be managed by communicating about the progress, and the restraints, of Community Planning, and therefore empowering communities with information. There could be a convening role for the Carnegie UK Trust in facilitating an opportunity for discussion between different sectors.

## 7. Next steps

The next steps were identified as re-connecting and meeting up regularly as a group to share learning, while not becoming burdensome; for Community Planning Partnerships to work smarter and communicate more openly about Community Planning; and to engage with CO3 to determine how they can help with Community Planning.

## 8. Reflection

Sir John Elvidge, Chair of the Carnegie UK Trust, reflected on the discussions. The clear message was that change is often a long-term ambition, but there are examples of what can be achieved with a focus on wellbeing. There are three stages of the journey: to accept wellbeing and happiness as a way of thinking; to develop a targeted effort to improve wellbeing; and to change the way things in which things happen. There is a need for clarity about where we are and where the effort needs to be targeted in order to reach the final stage and deliver change.

# Study Visit to Wales

21-22 March 2019

Facilitated by the Bevan Foundation

As part of the project, 10 delegates from these Partnerships, four members of the project Advisory Group and three representatives from the Carnegie UK Trust visited Wales on 21-22 March 2019. During the visit, delegates met a wide range of stakeholders in formal sessions as well as informal discussions over lunch and dinner. This paper provides an account of the key points to emerge during the visit.

## Session 1: Wellbeing in a Welsh context

This session aimed to introduce the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and to consider its impact on other organisations and outcomes on the ground.

### Speakers

- Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner
- Vanessa Young, Welsh NHS Confederation
- Neville Rookes, Welsh Local Government Association
- Valerie Billingham, Age Cymru
- Hefin David AM
- First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford AM

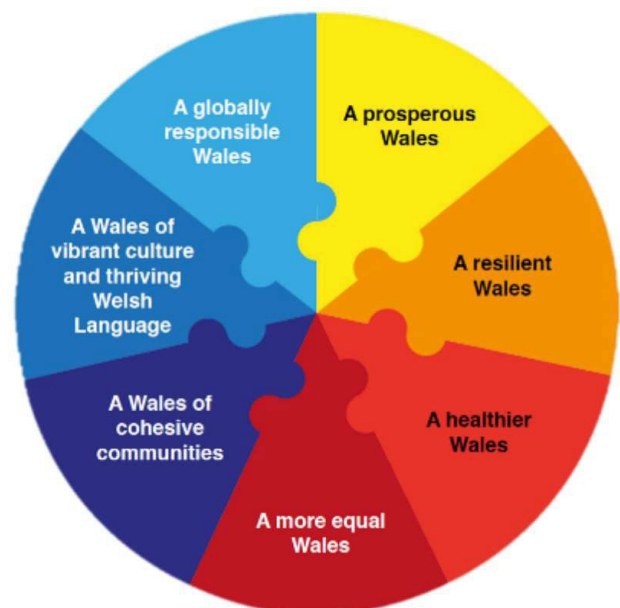
Sophie Howe opened her presentation with a quote from a UN spokesperson: 'We hope that what Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow. Action, more than words, is the hope for our current and future generations'.

She explained that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 had arisen from a 'national conversation', The Wales we Want. The

Act was passed by the National Assembly in 2015 and that 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.

There are seven wellbeing goals, which aim to increase:

- Prosperity
- Resilience
- Health
- Equality
- Cohesion
- Culture
- Global responsibility.





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These are to be achieved by 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 public bodies' 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.

Sophie 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.

Sophie said that at local level, bodies are required to work together through Public Service Boards, which must undertake a wellbeing assessment and prepare a wellbeing plan. Sophie explained that progress is monitored against a set of national indicators.

Underlying this approach is the need to link ideas and innovation with policy, legislation and finance, and also must win people's hearts and minds. She quoted Albert Einstein – 'we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them'.

Sophie pointed out that 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 her office had been able bring to bear on policy at a national level, such as her interventions on environmental permits and on the priorities of City Deals.







Sophie explained that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 does not always sit comfortably with existing policies, targets and other legislation. She gave the example of the proposed M4 relief road, and asked how that fits with the Welsh Government's plans to reduce carbon emissions, its financial sustainability and the Act. This case had also brought attention to the need to revise the tools used to appraise transport schemes and land use planning policy. In contrast, the commissioning of the new south Wales metro was based on Act's principles.

The independence of the Commissioner is underpinned by her right to launch a legal challenge via judicial review. She has not used the power yet but could do so in future.

Sophie noted that the Act required a huge cultural change in organisations. There were often 'frustrated champions' within organisations, who were given permission by the Act to challenge the system.

In response to questions, Sophie explained that the Act can act as a safety net against lowering of standards that might arise as a result of Brexit. She thought that the Act was unlikely to raise costs in the longer term if measured holistically, because of the emphasise on prevention. She considered that the relatively small size of Wales enabled a more innovative approach because networking was easier. On culture, there were examples of bodies introducing measures such as art galleries and art therapy in hospitals, and retaining land for use as orchards rather than selling it for development.



### Partner perspectives: health Vanessa Young, Welsh NHS Confederation

Vanessa focussed on the impact the Act was having on the NHS in Wales. There are seven Local Health Boards, which work with 22 local authorities which provide social care. In addition there are two National Park authorities, three police forces and numerous other bodies. This is not an easy landscape to navigate.

As well as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Welsh NHS and local authorities are covered by a parallel piece of legislation – the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This establishes a duty to provide seamless care and ensure the carer voice is heard, and creates seven regional partnership boards which plan health and social care provision.

Vanessa described the concept of prudent healthcare which underpins recent policy and legislation. Prudent healthcare involves the public and professional acting as equal partners to co-produce health care; providing care for those with the greatest health need first; to do only what is needed; to do no harm and to reduce inappropriate variation through evidence-based approaches.

The latest overarching policy statement – the National Plan for Health and Social Care – a Healthier Wales – states:

'There will be a whole system approach to health and social care, in which services are only one element of supporting people to have better health and wellbeing throughout their whole lives. It will be a 'wellness' system, which aims to support and anticipate health needs, to prevent illness, and to reduce the impact of poor health'.

This provides a 10 year time frame to shift from hospital based care and treatment to a system based on health, wellbeing and prevention. This will only be achieved if the NHS acts in partnership with other public sector and voluntary bodies within the overarching framework of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### Partner perspectives: local government Neville Rookes, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

Neville described the current structure of local government in Wales and the role of the Public Service Boards where local government, health and other bodies come together to share information, identify issues where cross organisation working is needed to tackle them and identify priorities for action.

He explained that local government in Wales was committed to rapid progress with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and because it was not enacted until 2016, WLGA ran an 'Early Adopter' programme to maintain momentum. Six local authorities participated, which rose to 11 plus a national park authority, thanks to 'peer to peer advocacy'.

Each participant had to demonstrate their commitment both politically and amongst the senior management team. WLGA developed a diagnostic tool with which local authorities could self-assess their preparedness for the Act. WLGA had found that the five ways of working are key to success. They can be used to support any process of change – not just wellbeing.

The experience of early adopters was invaluable when the Act was enacted, as local authorities could share their experiences with the other bodies covered by the Act. The existing local authority sustainable development co-ordinators network has also expanded to include other bodies, in effect becoming a practitioner network.



### **Partner perspectives: third sector Valerie Billingham, Age Cymru**

Valerie began by reminding delegates that Wales had the largest proportion of its population over retirement age in the UK. Ensuring social wellbeing of the population as a whole means ensuring older people have a good quality of life.

Valerie outlined how a variety of Age Cymru projects were supporting older people, ranging from arts activities to 'men's sheds' schemes. Although small in scale, she felt there was an important role for such schemes in improving individual and societal wellbeing.

Age Cymru engages in a wide range of partnership arrangements, including the Welsh Government's Third Sector Partnership Council. This is a long-standing arrangement that dates from the 1998 Government of Wales Act, which aims to make sure that the principles set out in the Third Sector Scheme are put into practice.

It also provides an opportunity for the sector to raise issues of interest or concern. At local level, Age Cymru contributes to many Public Service Boards either directly or via local voluntary sector councils.

### **Political Perspectives**

The delegation then attended lunch kindly hosted by Hefin David AM, and heard from the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford.

Over lunch, delegates had the opportunity to network with stakeholders from a wide variety of Welsh organisations including from the Big Lottery Fund, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Natural Resources Wales and the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, as well as with speakers from the formal sessions.

## Hefin David, AM for Caerphilly and Mark Drakeford AM, First Minister of Wales

Hefin David welcomed delegates and visitors, and explained the critical importance of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to the Assembly's business. He pointed to the new focus on the foundational economy as an example of how the Act was changing minds, policies and action. He also said that the Act was encouraging better collaboration between organisations. Mark Drakeford welcomed the delegates and visitors and spoke about the importance of Wales maintaining links with Scotland and Northern Ireland. The three countries had different forms of devolution but faced many similar challenges of poverty and inequality. In the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive in Stormont it was particularly important to maintain and build informal links between our countries.

In describing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Mark spoke of the need for us all to see ourselves as temporary custodians of our world with the

responsibility of ensuring that we hand it on to future generations in as healthy and viable a state as possible. There will be many individual steps along the way. Only that morning he had been involved in the launch of the Welsh Government's plan for a Low Carbon Wales.

Mark said while all seven wellbeing goals were important, he saw increasing equality as one of the most important of all. Austerity made increasing equality very difficult, but he and his government were determined to close the gap in prosperity and wellbeing. He mentioned the importance of a new approach to the economy in doing so.

He said there would be difficult decisions ahead, where a balance would have to be struck between present needs and keeping future options open for the next generations. It was hard to think of any area of our lives where the intentions of the Act would not apply and the Welsh Government now has a duty to apply it to all its activities. We may have been the first to legislate in 2015 but we recognise that we are still at the start of our journey here in Wales and are open to learning from others.



## Session 2: Partnership in perspective

This session aimed to explore the reality of partnership working in Wales, through the multiple structures established to promote collaboration and wellbeing.

### Speakers:

- Prof James Downe, Wales Centre for Public Policy
- Gareth Newell, Policy and Partnerships Manager, Cardiff Council
- Rt Hon Alun Michael, South Wales Policy and Crime Commissioner

### Partnership in perspective Professor James Downe, Director of Research at the Wales Centre for Public Policy

James provided an overview of partnership working. He reminded delegates that partnership could mean many different things, with different terms in use such as participatory governance. He described how partnership could now be seen as a continuum, from fully fragmented to co-operation, coordination, collaboration and integration.

Wales is currently at the collaboration stage, seeking to build consensus among stakeholders on a formal set of policies and actions. It is based on an inclusive approach involving different groups and sectors in the policy process with the aim of improving outcomes on 'wicked issues' where joined up working can deliver more change than working alone. He termed this 'collaborative advantage'.

Existing research points to some vital ingredients for successful collaboration. Starting conditions are important, with mutual respect and powersharing. An agreed vision and outcomes are essential, underpinned by good governance arrangements, protocols, structures and clarity of role. Informal factors, such as leadership, and understanding of winners and losers also matter.

Partnership working has a long history in Wales. Since the first statement on collaboration in local government there have been seven further reviews that affect structures, culminating in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Wales should be good at collaboration – we are a small country with close links between the local and the national but our collaboration has tended to be about sharing knowledge rather than costs – talking shops rather than one-stop shops!

In 2016 the Wales Centre for Public Policy identified success factors for collaboration:

- project management and leadership
- active engagement
- involvement of staff and service users
- clear project aims
- ambitious but realistic and measurable outcomes and
- 'soft steering' by the Government providing funding information and expertise.

Evidence shows that collaboration is only considered positively when it made sense for all partners. It does not necessarily save money, and it can be hard for some organisations to 'find willing partners to dance with'.

We need to learn lessons from the past (for example failed attempts to share back office functions) and concentrate on proper planning and governance that results in change on the ground. The big unanswered question for the Welsh Government is 'can you make collaboration compulsory?'



## Working together in Cardiff Gareth Newell, Cardiff Council

Gareth outlined the composition of Cardiff's Public Service Board (PSB), as set out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The PSB is chaired by the Leader of the Council, with the Chair of the Health Board and Police and Crime Commissioner as Vice Chairs and it is supported by the PSB Delivery Board chaired by the Council's Chief Executive.

The role of the PSB is to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of its area by working to achieve the wellbeing goals in accordance with sustainable development principles. It must prepare and publish a plan setting out its objectives and the steps it will take to meet them.

Cardiff's Plan is at the draft stage with publication due shortly. 'Cardiff – the liveable City' has been developed following a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of city life. It includes a 100 indicators, quantitative and qualitative data and identifies future trends. Cardiff's plan is aligned with the priorities in partner organisations plans and other statutory plans. The authority realised it could

deliver about half its manifesto pledges alone but that it needed to collaborate with others to solve the wicked issues. It therefore focusses on identified areas of 'collaborative advantage':

- Early Years and Families
- Child friendly city
- Tackling youth unemployment
- Air quality and active travel
- Community safety-night time economy, County lines and exploitation
- Into work services
- Homelessness and rough sleeping
- Assets – neighbourhood hubs.

Gareth went on to outline how PSB activity fitted in to the Council's corporate and service plans and scrutiny arrangements, as well as the electoral cycle. The Council itself has seven overarching policy and service themes. They are improving outcomes for adults, improving outcomes for children, inclusive growth, community safety, education development, strategic asset management, resilient growth and its Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for monitoring progress with these and the PSB's 'areas of collaborative advantage'.



The lessons Cardiff had learned were that political leadership is key, that the Plan must be based on evidence, that aligning policy and delivery is essential but not always easy, that Cardiff's PSB was built on the solid foundations of previous partnership working and that the timing, just before elections, meant that they were able to achieve cross-party support.

### **Rt Hon Alun Michael, South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner**

Alun Michael shared his experiences as a youth and community worker, a JP, a City Councillor before becoming a local MP and then serving in a variety of ministerial roles including Deputy Home Secretary, Minister for Police and Secretary of State for Wales, becoming First Minister in 1999. He was elected as the first Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales in 2012 when he identified his key priorities as being cooperation and partnership, violence reduction, early intervention and prompt positive action to prevent and reduce harm.



He explained that the role of Police and Crime Commissioner is fundamentally different to that of a police authority, as the emphasis is not on crime but prevention. As such, the Police and Crime Commissioner cannot work alone. This is not new in policing!

The 2019 – 2023 South Wales Police and Crime Plan takes the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as its starting point. Alun outlined his commitment to planning for the long-term wellbeing of future generations and taking a joined up approach to preventing problems, involving people and together breaking intergenerational cycles of harm.

For policing the challenge of austerity is multilayered and complex. This is why collaboration with other agencies is vital. Alun has a particular interest in the impact of adverse childhood experiences and the South Wales Police 'Early Action Together' programme is arousing international interest.

Delivery is a challenge with shrinking resources. The Police Grant from the Home Office has been cut by 31% in real terms and the number of police officers has gone down from 3,400 to 2,800 while demand continues to rise. That increase in demand often has little to do with crime per se but increasingly the police are seen as 'the agency of first resort' for many of society's ills.

There is a particular challenge for South Wales police, as it has a much larger footprint than local authorities. It is therefore involved in multiple PSBs, and in addition is involved in two regional partnership boards.

When partnership works, it enables useful connections to be made and collaboration can help to solve problems.

## Session 3: Are we making a difference?

This session aimed to explore how organisations in Wales are measuring outcomes.

### Speakers:

- Sue Leake, Welsh Government
- Dr Scott Orford, Cardiff University
- Tim Buckle, Wales Audit Office

### Using national wellbeing data locally Sue Leake, Welsh Government

Sue Leake introduced the National Indicators used by the Welsh Government to measure progress. She noted that the requirements of an indicator is specified in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and that the Act also requires Welsh Ministers to set milestones against which progress can be measured.

In considering which indicators should be selected, statisticians aimed to measure outcomes (rather than performance) over the longer term, have a limited number of coherent measures, and be those which resonated with the public. There was also the challenge of whether indicators should be subjective or objective. Of the indicators eventually selected, 46 are available at local authority level.

The Welsh Government publishes an annual report on progress, the latest being in September 2018, accompanied by a report on children's wellbeing As well as a full report, the data is presented in other formats including a Slideshare, data in StatsWales and Power BI, and an interactive tool.

The Welsh Government has in addition developed a range of research articles using regression analysis of National Survey for Wales data to analyse the key drivers behind various aspects of wellbeing. These have included





analysis of the factors linked with mental wellbeing, loneliness, material deprivation, job satisfaction, feeling safe in their local area, speaking Welsh, involvement in local decision making and sense of community.

These reports help local authorities and Public Service Boards to understand that most variation in wellbeing is related to non-spatial factors, so that they can focus on the groups of people who most need support and intervention.

Sue then explained Welsh Ministers' approach to setting milestones, on which the Welsh Government is currently consulting stakeholders and the public. Once they have agreed the indicators against which milestones will be set, they will work with public bodies and experts to consider the approach for each specific milestone.

She said that National Indicators may need to be amended to reflect the milestones, and that they may also need to change to cover any gaps identified, to reflect new priorities, for example, the findings of the Fair Work Commission, or to address data issues.

### **Understanding Welsh Places Dr Scott Orford, Cardiff University / Understanding Welsh Places project**

Scott Orford began by explaining that a significant number of people in Wales live in towns rather than in cities, yet smaller communities are overlooked by public policy. As a result, it is difficult to access data about towns to inform policy development and to evidence good practice.

The Understanding Welsh Places project aims to provide intelligence about individual towns and communities to anyone interested in their future. It is funded by the Carnegie UK Trust and Welsh Government, with support from the Institute of Welsh Affairs.

The first step in the project is to create a website to present useful data at local level, in a quick and easy format which can be used by specialists and non-specialists alike. The website will present some data for a total of 308 places with populations of more than 1,000 people, with more information available for 193 places with populations of more than 2,000 people.

The intention is to release three tiers of data:

- Tier 1 – Official statistics that are complete, comparable and coherent.
- Tier 2 – Other useful quantitative data that, while likely to be complete, comparable and coherent, does not come from an 'official' source.
- Tier 3 – Qualitative intelligence, user-generated information and data that is not necessarily available for every place/ town on the UWP website.

The first release of data will be Tier 1 information, with some Tier 2 output included where possible.

Scott explained that comparisons between places are popular. Rather than producing league tables, the project will generate a typology of places, based on characteristics such as housing tenure and health status.

The project will present data in user-friendly formats, including graphics, maps and charts, and will enable users to explore connections between different measures of wellbeing.

Scott then demonstrated how the Understanding Scottish Places website works, using examples from Dumfries.

There will be a soft launch of the website in summer 2019 with the official launch in autumn 2019. The project will work with partners to address data gaps and will develop examples of practical applications of the data to encourage use.



## Auditing Change Tim Buckle, Wales Audit Office

The Auditor General for Wales is required to examine public bodies covered by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, at least every five years. The bodies assessed on the extent to which they have acted in accordance with the Act in setting their wellbeing goals and taking steps to meet them. The Auditor General must present a report on his or her findings one year before elections to the National Assembly for Wales.

The requirement has raised a number of challenges, including developing methods to assess 'ways of working' which can be used across 44 very different bodies.

In feedback, stakeholders asked the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to approach their task in a different way, for example engaging with the public, focusing on behaviours rather than processes and working in partnership rather than measuring compliance.

The WAO has developed a somewhat different approach to auditing wellbeing as a result, focusing on how bodies work as well as what they do and aiming to provide support and early feedback to them. To do this the Auditor General has developed some 'examination principles' along with a suite of 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working.

Tim then outlined the 'positive indicators' for each of the five ways of working: taking a longterm view; focusing on prevention; taking an integrated approach; collaborating effectively; and involving people effectively.

For example, the indicators that would show that a body is fully applying the preventative way of working are:

1. The body seeks to understand the root causes of problems so that negative cycles and intergenerational challenges can be tackled.
2. The body sees challenges from a systemwide perspective, recognising and valuing the long-term benefits that they can deliver for people and places.
3. The body allocates resources to preventative action that is likely to contribute to better outcomes and use of resources over the longer term, even where this may limit the ability to meet some short-term needs.
4. There are decision-making and accountability arrangements that recognise the value of preventative action and accept short-term reductions in performance and resources in the pursuit of anticipated improvements in outcomes and use of resources.

Tim concluded by saying that auditing sustainable development and change is challenging. It raised issues of focus, boundaries, how to be holistic, keeping pace with 'what good looks like', and using different types and sources of evidence. The WAO is learning along with those it examines.

## Dinner with Welsh stakeholders

The 21 March concluded with an informal dinner with Welsh stakeholders.

After a welcome from Aideen McGinley (Carnegie UK Trust), Vivienne Sugar (Bevan Foundation), Gilbert Lee (Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Partnership), Councillor John Boyle (Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council and Alderman Arnold Hatch (Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council), delegates enjoyed a lively informal exchange of views and experiences. Some old friendships were renewed, and many more friendships made.

## Session 4: Embedding community engagement

Case study of Monmouthshire County Council

- Paul Matthews, Chief Executive
- Matthew Gatehouse
- Owen Wilce
- Abigail Barton
- Richard Drinkwater

### One Monmouthshire – Community Planning and Beyond

Monmouthshire County Council's approach to community wellbeing is distinctive.

#### Context

Paul Matthews set out the context in which Monmouthshire County Council works. The county has a population of 100,000 people, who live in a mix of small towns and villages. It is in

a strong strategic location, in easy commuting distance of Cardiff, Bristol and Birmingham. The county is mostly rural, with a long history as a border area and rich agriculture. It is classed as one of the most prosperous areas of Wales yet still faces challenges of poverty and inequality.

The authority provides education, social care, environmental and other services, with a budget of £1/4 billion a year and 3,500 FTE staff. It has 43 elected members, with a Conservative majority. Like all local authorities its budget is under pressure, but Monmouthshire has seen the largest reduction of all areas.

The vision of the authority is to create sustainable, resilient communities. In delivering this, its ambition is to foster independence by offering a 'hand-up not a hand-out'. It has four core priorities:

- Children doing well
- Nobody left behind
- Enterprise
- Locally accessible services.



The authority has integrated its vision into everything it does. It regards its staff and people in the area as assets and regards its expenditure as investment in the community. It has therefore sought to turn the conventional relationship between the local authority and the wider community on its head, with the authority's role being to activate the resources within the community rather than deliver services to a passive population.

### Wellbeing assessment

Matthew Gatehouse described how Monmouthshire Council has adopted a different approach to assessing wellbeing. Although they were aware of the standard data on the area, the authority felt that they gave only a partial picture. They wanted to find out what mattered to people, and therefore decided on a programme of active engagement with the community.

Over a period of 5-6 months they visited 80 different locations ranging from supermarket car parks to music festivals, swimming lessons and community centres as well as using social media. Facebook in particular was a key tool. The authority has used all kinds of other methods too, such as a cloud wall.

In total the authority engaged in 16,000 conversations over 5-6 months. They worked with their PSB partners also.

The engagement was designed to avoid picking up on 'surface' concerns such as pot holes or dog mess and instead identify deeper issues. The big concerns to emerge were house prices and public transport. The findings were summarised in an animation and fed back to local residents.

The engagement also revealed the very considerable social capital that exists in Monmouthshire. This indicated a major resource that the authority could draw upon. While the county has a social profile that is rather different to many areas, the authority feels that

everywhere has some social capital. It found that often those with the most to give were people who were angry about something.

In engaging with people, the authority has used emotional terms, talking about 'love', kindness and passion – terms that the community understand. It has also emphasised the need for trust between the authority and residents.

### Community Involvement

Owen Wilce and Abigail Barton explained the authority's approach to community involvement. The council decided to take engagement several steps further by involving people as 'volunteers'.

In total 1,757 people support the authority in some way. There is a wide range of roles, which can be seen via the council's volunteer digital platform.

Engaging people in this way is not without challenges. Volunteers will often be more honest than paid staff, and the authority has had to change its culture to support them. The authority now has a toolkit and trains every member of its paid staff in how to inspire others. They are now exploring how best to unlock local social capital further, feeling that they have merely scraped the surface of the potential contribution.

Key lessons are that what matters to people are their individual communities not 'Monmouthshire'; that training is really important; and that there are gaps in leadership in some sectors. They are still considering how best to engage with people who are skills rich but time poor.

## Future plans

The authority is continuing to engage extensively with the community, using a wide range of different techniques.

As a result, it is now looking at developing new priorities as it gains a deeper understanding of the community's concerns.

These are likely to be:

- Decarbonisation
- Dementia
- Diabetes.

These are not traditional local authority concerns but are rather the major challenges facing people in the area.

The PSB is working together to address these problems, with distinctions between public, private and third sector reducing.

The bigger questions are what should public services be doing in 2025 – what would a reasonable person expect of a local authority at that date? Monmouthshire is working with residents to be clearer about what the future might hold and its role ahead.

## Chepstow Community Hub Richard Drinkwater

Delegates then visited one of the authority's flagship community hubs, experiencing at first hand Monmouthshire's rural roads.

The Chepstow hub was previously the local library and was threatened with closure by the authority due to spending cuts. Following severe flooding in the area, it was clear that the library had a key role in the community.

The library became a hub, not only retaining its information and learning services but also providing access to a wide range of other services, including council services such as licensing and building control, as well as services provided by other organisations, such as Gwent Police and Citizen's Advice. While many centres co-locate services, Chepstow hub offers access via a single enquiry with frontline staff.

The latest development in Monmouthshire Council's community hubs is for the authority to take over the operation of local post offices facing closure. Plans to do so are well advanced in Usk, not far from Chepstow, and could be rolled out to other community hubs.

Delegates could see for themselves that the hub was well used by local people of all ages.





# First Peer to peer learning event

Thursday 8 November 2018

Stratagem, 121 Donegall Road, Belfast BT12 5JL

## Welcome and introductions

Aideen McGinley, Chair of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project Advisory Group, welcomed the representatives of the three participating Community Planning Partnerships of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Derry City and Strabane District Council; and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the members of the project Advisory Group in attendance, and the presenters and their colleagues to the first peer to peer learning event.

Aideen provided an overview of the International Seminar on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland and Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Stakeholder Engagement Day in New York, noting how taking the discussions outwith Northern Ireland to an international context was powerful. The Stakeholder Engagement Day identified international pockets of good practice in measuring progress towards and improving local wellbeing outcomes, and the presentations from the sessions will be shared with the participations to help facilitate global links.

Aideen provided an outline of the peer to peer learning event agenda and explained the rationale for a focus on data in Community Planning, as a common challenge across all Expression of Interest forms received from the Community Planning Partnerships and raised as an issue in the deep dive visits to all of the participants.

## Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland participants' reflections from New York study visit

Reflections on the International Seminar on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland and Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Stakeholder Engagement Day were invited from representatives of the project participants who attended the study visit, or had been briefed by colleagues who attended.

There was consensus from the participants as to the value of the International Seminar on Wellbeing in Northern Ireland in providing the current political context in Northern Ireland; showcasing wider perspectives outwith central and local government; identifying contacts for potential future collaboration; and hosting the 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.

The Stakeholder Engagement Day was considered to be extremely valuable. The presenters and their approach to developing,

implementing and monitoring local wellbeing frameworks were impressive and the participants were interested in maintaining relationships to assist with international policy learning. The impact of the study visit is already demonstrable in Community Planning Partners considering broader dimensions of wellbeing and concepts such as spirituality and kindness; in the sharing of information from the presentations among the wider Partnerships; and in the relationships being built between the project participants.

## The use of data and evidence in Community Planning

Aideen McGinley explained that the Carnegie UK Trust made connections with the Department for Communities and NIRSA in the early stages of the process of the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, as key partners in matching central and local government action on improving wellbeing and measuring progress towards this. Aideen advised attendees that the two presentations in the session would take place sequentially, followed by an opportunity for discussion.

### Nichola Creagh, Head of Community Planning, Department for Communities

Nichola Creagh, Head of Community Planning in the Department for Communities, provided an overview of the process of developing the Community Planning monitoring guidance, working in partnership with colleagues in local government to ensure that the link with the draft Programme for Government is explicit and monitoring a whole government approach to measuring progress towards outcomes. Nichola explained that the Department for Communities wishes to continue on this partnership, co-production basis, and has no desire to adopt an oversight role.

The monitoring guidance is designed to help Community Planning Partnerships to develop a statement of progress, which is due to be submitted in November 2019. The development of the guidance required that the technicalities of collecting and disseminating data be addressed by statisticians; issues be resolved in Community Planning partners' contributions to improving outcomes; and how all of the work being undertaken on Community Planning can be distilled. The guidance has now been finalised and has been submitted to SOLACE.

The premise of the statement of progress is 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 is beyond usual services and communications. The statement should highlight practical achievements which are understandable to citizens, and provide a lead in to discussions and engagement on the next steps for the Community Plan.

The Department for Communities advises that the Community Planning Partnerships collect data and report on what is necessary, meaningful, and manageable for the report cards. The Community Planning Partnerships were encouraged to consider how to make the best use of existing and open data sources in order to avoid duplication in data collection and reporting by other organisations and levels of government.

The necessity of partnership was emphasised, and it was acknowledged that in the absence of the Northern Ireland Executive there is a danger that Community Planning becomes a catch-all for all public services and place-based challenges, despite the limited resources available for it. The Department for Communities would welcome input from local government colleagues on how to control what activities are undertaken through Community Planning and how to manage expectations of what can be achieved.

## Tracy Power, Director of Analysis, Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA)

Tracy Power, Director of Analysis at the Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA), advised attendees that she would focus her presentation on the challenges the Community Planning Partnerships informed the Carnegie UK Trust that they are experiencing with data identification, collection, use, and presentation.

It was acknowledged that obtaining good quality monitoring data which demonstrates where change has occurred is challenging, however, NISRA is undertaking work to help address this as below.

### Need for more data at LGD level

There has been significant investment in the Labour Force Survey and Safe Community Survey which involved doubling their sample sizes. This investment related to the Programme for Government requirement for reduced sampling errors in the population indicators, however, the consequence will be the production of reliable, high quality statistics at LGD 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. The first results will be available in early 2019 and will be comparable between local authorities and across the EU. Eight of the 49 indicators at central government level are derived from the Labour Force Survey. The Safe Community Survey results will be available in late spring/early summer 2019.

There are also other sources of data which are published at LGD level, such as data around tourism, health provision, and deprivation. An invitation was extended to the Community Planning Partnerships to approach NISRA and explain where the perceived gaps in data are and explain the challenges that they are facing in identifying data sources. 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.

### How to present monitoring data

The challenge of how to present monitoring data is also faced at central government level, however, NISRA has started to think about data visualisation, using free software available, such as Infogram. The data and perception visuals of two of the outcomes in the draft Programme for Government were discussed. It was suggested that the 'indicators at a glance' approach could be one that the Community Planning Partnerships could aim for. The Department for Communities has an ambition for public visuals which show the progress made on indicators at a central government level, with the ability of users to drill down to data at a local government level. Statisticians working in local government are advocating for public access to data at an even lower level than this.

### Potential for data analysis and research

The Administrative Data Research Centre is currently in Phase II of ESRC investment and is operating on a continued partnership arrangement between NISRA, Queen's University Belfast, and Ulster University. £5 million of funding is being invested over a 30 month period, from October 2018 to March 2021. This free resource is available to all local authorities and the Centre can help local authorities to commission research on the Programme for Government outcomes by linking the council with a Northern Ireland Executive Department. For example, on the issue of low uptake of concessionary travel passes, the Centre can access and analyse data to show where those who do not take up the passes live and compare this with patterns of car ownership. NISRA can act as a broker in matching local authorities with a Northern Ireland Executive Department to obtain research, or to facilitate a partnership between all 11 local authorities and a Department. NISRA

wrote an open letter to SOLACE in July with an invitation to engage to this affect.

However, it should be noted that not all issues can be addressed with data. There is also no linking of data between Northern Ireland Executive Departments.

### **Taking OBA reporting to the next stage**

Local interventions require local statisticians on board to obtain the data necessary to populate the report cards. There is also a challenge for NISRA to communicate effectively with local authorities on what data is available and to tackle misperceptions. Local government colleagues were encouraged to engage with the 2021 Census Outputs Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland regarding what geographical units they would like data to relate to.

## **Discussion**

Aideen McGinley thanked both presenters for their contributions and congratulated Tracy on the progress made on the use of data in measuring progress towards outcomes since the work of the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring Wellbeing in Northern Ireland. Aideen then opened the discussion to all event attendees on what the Community Planning Partnerships need to know in order to demonstrate change.

A possible role for SOLACE was discussed in advocating for improved recognition that Community Planning is not solely the responsibility of local authorities and in ensuring that Chief Executives and elected members understand the role and value of data and evidence, and therefore statisticians in Community Planning, despite the resource required. While the Department for Communities advocates for statisticians at local government level, it recognises that this requires resources and the Department cannot dictate that Community Planning Partnerships resource this function. A proposal for a pool of statisticians has been submitted to SOLACE to help facilitate a strategic discussion about Northern Ireland's

ambitions for the use of data in policymaking. The premise for the proposal is that there would be a critical mass of statisticians which could fill gaps when local authorities were experiencing difficulties with capacity. However, there was uncertainty about whether this proposal would work well in practice, as when a local authority is allocated a statistician, it was predicted that their workload would increase rapidly, and NISRA itself has vacancies for statisticians it is unable to fill.

Learning and funding opportunities to support understanding of the importance of policymaking informed by data and evidence was discussed. The UN Sustainable Development Goals; Commonwealth Local Government Forum; NILGA; and opportunities to undertake study visits were discussed as potential opportunities for learning and support. NILGA will develop a guide for new Councillors following local government elections in May 2019, and Derek McCallan offered to include training and awareness of data, 'what works' style evidence, and evidence for scrutiny and accountability in this programme.

## **The use of data and evidence in local government**

### **Tom Symons, Acting Head of Government Innovation, Nesta**

Nesta has undertaken a combination of research and practice work on data at local government level, including case studies of leading practice in England; developing lessons on how local government has overcome challenges in their use of data; and running a programme on data analytics. A pilot on local authority use of data was undertaken in London, working initially with 11 boroughs on a single problem, followed by a second pilot in the North East of England. A third pilot is currently being developed. Nesta has then taken the learning from these activities and put this into frameworks and resources for others to use.



Nesta's approach to the use of data and evidence at local government level is to advocate that local government is clear on the problem that they are seeking to address, and what they would do differently if they had access to new or different data. Nesta believes that this helps to identify if data is the right vehicle for developing a policy solution. For example, a North East pilot sought to address alcohol harm, for which local government wanted to take a data-led approach. Nesta undertook analysis and mapped out the prevalence of alcohol harm in the local area, however, the local authority found that the analysis was not directed enough, or that they did not have access to the policy levers to influence decisions. It must be clear from the start what question you want to answer and what analysis is required in order that the data collection is framed correctly. Data is a set of figures or information, and not until it is analysed does it tell you anything, or become evidence.

Nesta has identified a number primary challenges in local authorities' effective use of data. The first is a lack of senior support. Resources are often not the solution to data problems, instead what is required is supportive leadership. The support of the ultimate decision-maker is required and a concerted effort must be made to communicate the value of data and evidence for policymaking to them. The second challenge is 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 sharing is as much of a cultural issue as it is a legal one. For example, in Manchester, there is an integrated sharing system for sensitive police, social care, housing and drug treatment data on a referral system. The data sharing is legal, proportionate, and in line with legislation. The local authority had to ensure that it had senior support to encourage agencies to take part and to prioritise it, which requires human resource. The third challenge is data quality. While this will always be an issue, it is easy to get side-tracked by thinking of it as an obstacle. Starting to work with existing data and looking at the analysis gives a tangible way of expressing what the quality problem is. There is a need to demonstrate the value of good quality

data and show those responsible the implications for the accuracy of their decision-making. It may still be appropriate to gather data on a policy issue which is outside of local government's remit in order to encourage another agency or level of government to do something differently. However, mapping of a problem which no-one takes ownership of is discouraged.

When asked about the tension between the long-term impact of a policy and the need for more immediate reporting on progress, an example was given of a real time system Nesta built for the Welsh Government on the impact of innovation policy. The system gathers data from unconventional sources, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, for real-time insights on the impact of a relatively long-term policy. This data gathering method can provide a rich picture of real-time policy changes.

Tom confirmed that he and the team of data scientists at Nesta would be pleased to contribute to the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project in the future. Aileen thanked Tom for his time, input into the event, and offer of assistance.

## Discussion

The need for Community Planning to be integrated into the existing resources and work plans of all of the Community Planning Partners and work plans was discussed. This requires capacity and skills development; awareness raising among local authority officers, elected members, Community Planning statutory partners who have not engaged to date or have become disengaged as the process has progressed, and non-statutory agencies such as Northern Ireland Executive Departments and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland; demand for and supply of good quality data; knowledge of Outcomes Based Accountability; and examples of good practice, such as the success experienced by the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. A change in mind sets and skills sets is required, however, the risk of Community Planning becoming politicised in the upcoming local government elections was acknowledged.

Models for data sharing currently operational within Northern Ireland, such as the CONCERN model and support hubs for those under the threshold for statutory intervention, were discussed as a way of shifting services to prevention, delivering coordinated services, and saving money.

## Participants' reflections on priorities for Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland partnership project

The Community Planning teams representing the project participants were asked to provide an overview of their priorities for their partnership with the Carnegie UK Trust on the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project. The respective priorities, based on the challenges they are experiencing in implementing their Community Plan, were provided as below.

### Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

The Community Planning Partnership proposed to work in partnership with the Carnegie UK Trust on community engagement and communications. The Partnership is seeking support on an aspirational community engagement framework based on robust standards to facilitate on-going engagement and partnership working with communities. The Partnership would like to coordinate their engagement with existing engagement mechanisms operated by the partners, such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; undertake specific projects with Section 75 groups; and explore participatory decision-making methods such as participatory budgeting and mini publics.

The Partnership also proposed to dedicate some of the resources to facilitate partnership working; shared leadership; ownership of outcomes; and explore internal communication structures within the partner organisations to report on and raise awareness of Community Planning.

### Derry City and Strabane District Council

The Community Planning Partnership proposed to allocate their resources to co-production and capacity building. The Partnership has drafted their Local Community Plans but need to develop a governance model, which will present other challenges.

The Partnership aspires to maintain the conversation on Community Planning within the general public and delivery agencies, and is seeking support to communicate data on inclusive growth and how Community Planning is impacting on groups who require support, such as those experiencing poor mental health. The Partnership believes that it must showcase its activity on issues key to wellbeing and the balance being undertaken between regional strategy and local policy delivery of the ground, to retain their audience.

### Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

The Community Planning Partnership proposed to work in partnership with the Carnegie UK Trust on community engagement and developing community infrastructure, from information sharing through to having a community sector representative on the Partnership. The Trust's financial resources could also be used to support the Locality Plan pilots developed for Old Warren and Ballybeen housing estates.

A training programme has been developed for Community Planning partners on strategic collaborating; programming, in which they will be encouraged to include Community Planning in strategic documents; risk management; and a refresher on Outcomes Based Accountability. The first Community Plan Action Plan was developed for the first 18 months to two years of the Plan, and a workshop planned for January 2019 will build on the successes to date.

# Second Peer-to-peer learning event on collective resourcing

Tuesday 10 December 2019, 09.30-13.30  
Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre

## Welcome and introductions

### **Aideen McGinley, Chair, Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project Advisory Group**

Aideen McGinley, Chair of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project Advisory Group, welcomed attendees to the peer-to-peer learning event on collective resourcing.

Aideen provided an overview of the Carnegie UK Trust's work designed to improve wellbeing in Northern Ireland, commencing in 2014 with the Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring What Matters in Northern Ireland. The work of the Roundtable influenced the development of the draft Programme for Government, and thereafter the Trust sought to continue its work within the new, complex political and policy landscape in Northern Ireland. The Trust considered the re-organisation of local government and the new powers of Community Planning bestowed at the local level to be opportunities to embed the work of Roundtable. As one of the few policy vehicles currently operational, the Trust considered supporting Community Planning as an opportunity to support democracy at the local level; community wellbeing; and the co-production of public services.

Aideen explained that the Trust is working directly with the Community Planning

Partnerships working in the local authority areas of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon; Derry City and Strabane; and Lisburn and Castlereagh, however, is committed to sharing best practice and learning across the eleven Community Planning Partnerships.

Aideen explained that the event was designed to share learning on how collective resourcing can be achieved in a cohesive way, and to celebrate the recent milestone of the publication of the Partnerships' first Statements of Progress.

## **International policy learning: The development of a wellbeing budget in New Zealand (video address)**

### **The Hon Grant Robertson New Zealand Minister of Finance, Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage**

The Hon Grant Robertson addressed the attendees via pre-recorded video conference. 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.

This year New Zealand delivered its first wellbeing budget which signalled a new approach and a significant change from traditional budgets, which focused 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, to 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; and
- 5) Creating opportunities for productive businesses and regions to achieve a sustainable and low emissions economy.

### The Living Standards Framework

The above 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 framing to the OECD framework, allowing international comparisons.

The 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 they do. Achieving genuine and enduring change requires the public sector to move towards a new way of thinking.

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: Tracking trends over time

Statistics New Zealand developed a new set of metrics called Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand. They provide an overarching source of measures for measuring New Zealand's wellbeing and provide a comprehensive sweep of over a hundred social, cultural, environmental and economic indicators.

There are challenges associated with wellbeing data sets, predominantly capturing what matters for everyone whilst keeping it to a manageable number of indicators. This was challenging given the diversity of the population in New Zealand.

Indicators take a long time to shift, creating a tension between seeking to take a long-term view and be more strategic, with the demands of a three-year political cycle. Delivering now whilst also considering future generations is a core challenge for any government.



## The reform of New Zealand's public finance system

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 intergenerational wellbeing of New Zealanders; time and focus on strategic management of public finances; and a system shifted to improve 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

Shifting a government's focus to wellbeing comes with challenges, as below:

- Changing how we think and work takes time;
- The need to continue building the public sector's capability;
- The need to apply new evidence bases and data;
- Enabling collaboration and partnership working across the public sector;
- Moving beyond silo working;
- The perception of a devaluing or watering down of fiscal policy; and
- Making trade-offs on a wide range of outcomes.

The Minister acknowledged that there are other international examples of countries taking a wellbeing approach to government. The OECD have encouraged countries to look beyond GDP as a measure of success; Wales published its first wellbeing report in 2017 and subsequent report in 2019; France have new indicators of wealth; and in Scotland wellbeing is being measured using the National Performance Framework.

## Learning from Scotland and Wales: working to outcomes

### Jennifer Wallace, Head of Policy, Carnegie UK Trust

Jennifer Wallace, Head of Policy at the Carnegie UK Trust, re-iterated the Trust's history in supporting wellbeing in Northern Ireland, and welcomed the work of the last five years as a great journey which the Trust has been pleased to be a part of.

Jennifer explained the three different definitions of wellbeing as personal wellbeing, living well; community wellbeing, living well locally; and societal wellbeing, living well together – the consideration of which brings issues such as the environment and inequalities to the fore. Jennifer discussed international and UK wellbeing initiatives and explained that while wellbeing is a global phenomenon, it has a particular local dimension in Northern Ireland. Wellbeing frameworks in place around the world all have a similar structure, in that they have a vision statement; outcomes; and indicators. The key argument in Jennifer's book, *Wellbeing and Devolution: Reframing the Role of Government in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, is that there has been a shift away from new public management to a new approach to governance which is manifesting in a set of processes for the development of central and local wellbeing being frameworks.

Jennifer outlined the journeys of Scotland and Wales in the development of wellbeing frameworks, and the challenges and lessons from each jurisdiction. In Wales there have been challenges around partnership working; pooling of budgets; the one-off nature of citizen engagement; a lack of dedicated funding to support the shift in the ways of working; a lack of curiosity about wellbeing data; and a lack of looking to the future, all of which the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales is seeking to address. In Scotland, challenges include alignment both between partners at

the local level and from the local to the central government level; tension between engaging the community and accountability; and a lack of focus on what is trying to be achieved. The lessons from these jurisdictions were outlined as the legislation not being fit for purpose in its first iteration; the need for funding from the centre to support a wellbeing approach; the need for leaders from the centre to ensure the approach remains on the agenda; the need for communities to be empowered; the need for support on pooling resources from audit bodies; the need for a single set of data and statistics which all partners use; and the need to recognise that a wellbeing approach requires a long-term culture shift of a programme of around ten to fifteen years to re-think public service delivery.

## A local inclusive economy in Northern Ireland

### Charlie Fisher, Programme Manager, Development Trusts Northern Ireland

Charlie Fisher, Programme Manager at Development Trusts Northern Ireland (DTNI), provided an overview of DTNI as an organisation and the focus of its work in Northern Ireland.

Charlie outlined the importance of a local inclusive economy to societal wellbeing, explaining the link between local economies and central government strategies. The features of a local inclusive economy were outlined as system changing; a revolution in grassroots enterprise; anchor institutions embedded in and working for the local economy; enabling and empathic local leadership; true corporate social responsibility; assets owned by and working for the community; co-produced local economic development; true devolution and a new social contract; finance that serves people and place; and a more effective set of measurements of a successful economy.

DNTI's Time to Build an Inclusive Local Economy: A Charter for Change outlines four pillars for action as below:

- Developing finance to support local economies;
- Advancing community power;
- Commissioning and procuring for social value; and
- Building local community wealth.

The challenges and recommendations for the pillars for action were discussed.

A proposal for a Community Rights Act for Northern Ireland was outlined, as comprising the below:

- The Right to Own – ownership provides community organisations with a physical basis for sustainability;
- The Right to Bid – nominating a building as an asset of community value gives communities time to raise the funds to bid for the asset on the open market;
- The Right to Challenge – communities could challenge the provision of services where they can be shown to be improved; and
- The Right to Participate – getting involved in the decisions that affect the shape of the place people live.

Charlie concluded that Northern Ireland is on a journey of how it better manages what is owned by the public, for the public, and that there is a need to strategically work on the relationship between the right to own, bid, challenge and participate.

## Sharing good practice from the Statements of Progress

### Nichola Creagh, Head of Community Planning, the Department for Communities and Karen Smyth, Head of Policy, NILGA

Nichola Creagh, Head of Community Planning at the Department for Communities, introduced the session as an opportunity to showcase the successes contained within the respective Community Planning Partnerships' Statements of Progress. Nichola welcomed the opportunity for the representatives from across the Partnerships to discuss what had been achieved since the introduction of Community Planning; what has changed on the ground in communities; and what the Partnerships will do differently in the next phase of Community Planning.

Karen Smyth, Head of Policy at the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), commended the great work outlined in the Statements of Progress. Community Planning was heralded as a vehicle for improving wellbeing outcomes, and the Partnerships were considered to have made a great start in the current difficult political and policy climate. Karen invited a representative from each Partnership in attendance, in alphabetical order, to provide a brief presentation on one achievement or action from their Statement of Progress of which the Partnership is proud.

### Clare Adair, Antrim and Newtownabbey

The presentation from the Community Planning Partnership working in Antrim and Newtownabbey focused on Outcome 1 from the Community Plan: *Our citizens enjoy good health and wellbeing*. The Partnership's Outcome Delivery Plan focused on the following actions within the first two years:

- The launch of the Take 5 framework developed for primary school age children, workplace health initiatives, and used in communities by groups and individuals;
- The Community Growing Programme which aimed to improve access to and provision of play and recreational facilities across the borough. Allotments were installed in two district electoral areas (DEAs) to encourage community engagement with healthy eating, and the programme is continuing with the support of local community groups.

The Council's leisure strategy is also being developed with partner organisations to remove the barriers for citizens using play or recreational facilities.

Community Planning has united partner organisations within Antrim and Newtownabbey to focus on making the borough age friendly. To date, the Partnership has:

- Co-ordinated with Dementia NI to hold a 'real lives' event to share stories of people living with dementia and to showcase the support available.
- Celebrated positive ageing month in October across the borough. In the Borough Life magazine, events which encourage older people to get involved with their local community were advertised, for example, taking an exercise class, joining a walking group, attending a film screening or art class.

- Applied to become members of the World Health Organisation Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities, to connect the community worldwide and increase the visibility of their age friendly work.
- Launched its Loneliness Network which is focused on reducing social isolation and loneliness within the borough. This network will act to better connect people with each other and with services operating in their area.

As next steps, an age friendly steering group is currently being organised; the Partnership is applying to the Communities and the UK Age Friendly network; and is mapping activities and services for older people across the borough to make Antrim and Newtownabbey age friendly.

### Patricia Mackey, Ards and North Down

Representing Ards and North Down Community Planning Partnership, Patricia Mackey, Community Planning Manager, explained that the Partnership's greatest successes to date have resulted from people connecting with one and other, especially those who had not come into contact with each other prior to the introduction of Community Planning. An example was provided of the development of a 12 week social prescribing programme by Peninsula Healthy Living and National Trust, following connections made at Community Planning meetings.

Patricia focused on the action of Ards and North Down being welcome to everyone, of all abilities and needs, and provided the following examples of actions taken to date:

- The development of an accessible beach at Groomsport, a partnership project between Sport NI, Ards and North Down Borough Council, and the Mae Murray Foundation.
- Off road mobility scooters work being undertaken by the National Trust to increase all ability access to their trails network.
- Virtual Reality tours of Bangor Aurora, a partnership project between Sport NI and Mencap facilitated by a third sector Community Planning Forum meeting.

To date, ensuring that Ards and North Down is welcoming to everyone has focused on Section 75 groups. However, the Partnership is now seeking to take their work further, by considering, for example, skills development and opportunities for entrepreneurs; attracting tourism; and business infrastructure.

### Jennie Dunlop, Armagh Banbridge and Craigavon

Jennie Dunlop, Community Planning Manager at Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, outlined the development of a Community Engagement Strategy for the Community Planning Partnership, supported by the Carnegie UK Trust and developed by Community Places, as an action the Partnership is proud of. The strategy was approved by the Partnership in June 2019, and is currently in its implementation phase.

The strategy is designed to:

- Enhance the Partnership's community engagement through agreed standards, defined roles and clear actions; and
- Maximise opportunities for citizens to be more involved and have a meaningful say in decisions which affect their lives.

The strategy is predicated on there being a spectrum of public participation, from informing to consulting; involving; collaborating; and empowering. The strategy has also adopted the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement. The challenges that were identified in community engagement are impact, clearly



linking community engagement to policy and decision-making; inclusion and diversity; and the quality of dialogue and deliberation.

Further to the development of the strategy, actions which have or are being undertaken include the development of a 'how to' guide for community engagement; sharing good practice; and participatory budgeting and mini-publics.

### Kevin Heaney, Belfast City Council

In Belfast, Community Planning has been used as the policy vehicle to take action on avoidable winter deaths in the city. While the issue was previously considered in silos, Community Planning provided the opportunity to get the relevant stakeholders in one room and be proactive to consider a 'whole home' service. The stakeholders sought to:

- Identify people who are vulnerable to the risk factors associated with avoidable winter deaths;
- Develop and maintain a referral pathway, for a single point of contact;
- Ensure people who are 'at risk' receive the services and support they need;
- Raise awareness of support via a multi-agency winter communication plan;
- Mobilise local community and social assets to support identification, referral and support; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of new approach.

To date, the stakeholders have:

- Engaged with partners, through an Outcomes Based Accountability workshop, to better understand the current context/drivers;
- Identified 'at risk' population groups, through data review, identification, and intelligence, to inform activity for 2019/2020;
- Developed an integrated referral pathway and appointed a single point of contact;

- Developed common screening and assessment tools and relevant training resources;
- Secured partner commitment to mobilise frontline staff to support the screening and referral process; and
- Created a Community Fund with seed resources from partners.

This has led to the development of a two-layered model which is both city-wide and focuses where of greatest vulnerability.

The challenges and opportunities of the approach were identified, as below:

- Establishing a simplified identification, referral and assessment process;
- Securing resource commitment to support delivery in the immediate 2019/20 winter period;
- Support services' capacity for potential referrals;
- Medium to long-term sustainability, for future cold weather periods;
- The opportunity to test a multi-agency, integrated approach to delivery outcomes; and
- Integrating geospatial data from partners into a shared layered map to target joint action.

## Louise Pollock, Causeway Coast and Glens

Louise Pollock, Economic Development Officer at Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, provided an overview of the Alchemy Business Support Programme, designed to support a local thriving economy.

Alchemy supports economic growth through engaging; collaborating; mentoring; signposting and hosting workshops. Since March 2018, the Alchemy Business Support Programme has engaged 530 people; signposted 301 to support; mentored 213; collaborated with 12; and hosted 14 workshops.

Louise provided an example of the support provided to Coastal Care, with the contributions provided by Alchemy; Invest NI; and the Labour Relations Agency respectively, and the outcomes secured as a result.

## Rachael Craig, Derry and Strabane

Strategic Business Manager at Derry City and Strabane District Council, Rachael Craig, reported on the outcomes achieved by the local Community Crisis Intervention Service. In a bid to improve challenging mental health outcomes in Derry City and Strabane, the Western Health and Social Care Trust; Health and Social Care Board/Public Health Authority; Derry City and Strabane District Council; Ulster University; and Foyle Search and Rescue came together to develop a 24-hour crisis response service. In the first six months of the service, there were 141 interventions, generating approximately £230,000 in savings to the health service.

Rachael also briefly addressed the development of Derry City and Strabane District Council's Green Infrastructure Plan, the first to be developed in Northern Ireland. A key action within the Plan is to create a Natural Capital Account, which is being developed with support from the Carnegie UK Trust through the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project. Indicative findings from the Natural Capital Account are that green and blue spaces provide around £49 million per year in mental wellbeing value to the district.

## Oonagh Donnelly and team, Fermanagh and Omagh

An overview of the actions taken towards Outcome 2: *Older people lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives*, and Action 2.1: *Establish an Age Friendly District*, of the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan were provided. The indicators, baselines, latest data and trends for Outcome 2 were explained, and the activities of the South West Age Partnership to achieve the outcome were outlined. It was determined that the activities to support older people to lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives would not have happened without the Community Planning Partnership and its approach, which levered funding.

In the development of an Age Friendly District, asking the performance measure questions of 'where are we now?' and 'is anyone any better off?' provides a set of criteria for any provider of services for older people. The next steps for activities to achieve the outcome were considered to be new actions; improved performance measures; and the use of data and evidence to inform decision-making.

## Mabel Scullion, Lisburn and Castlereagh

Mabel Scullion, Early Intervention Lisburn Manager at Help Kids Talk, provided an overview of the local project designed to improve speech, language and communication among children. The project involves cross-sectoral partnerships between statutory, voluntary and community agencies to improve outcomes for children, young people, and families. Action to improve speech and language among young people was considered important due to it being an indicator of educational achievement; behaviour; mental health; employability; criminality; and the cycle of disadvantage.

The project is aligned to Community Planning and the draft Programme for Government by undertaking a preventative approach. The difference Community Planning has made to the project was considered to be as below:

- It has provided a platform to progress the project;
- It has helped to establish a steering group of 26 members of community, voluntary, statutory and private partners, such as Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the Public Health Agency/Health and Social Care Board, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Surestart, libraries, schools, and churches;
- It has facilitated a co-ordinated and consistent approach by a partnership of key stakeholders;
- It has allowed a public health campaign, with 12 key, simple messages disseminated monthly; and
- It has provided training opportunities.

## Catherine Black, Mid and East Antrim

The presentation from Mid and East Antrim Community Planning Partnership focused on the Partnership's efforts to tackle poverty. A symposium was held to collect views on how partners could work together, and tackling deprivation, debt and poverty were agreed as central to improving outcomes. A central portal was developed to signpost to services and gather information in one place, and it was agreed to tackle illegal money lending at a strategic level.

Catharine provided an example of a uniform exchange project as part of the effort to tackle poverty and deprivation. Research found that the average cost of children returning to school is £250, and as such, a drop off point for pre-loved clothing was designated to help with costs. While the impact of the project is difficult to measure, it has helped 145 families; 208 children; and involved 600 items of clothing, which has resulted in a saving of £7,000. A partnership has now been established with a private company to assist with branded school clothes; warm clothes; and PE kits and equipment.

## David Patterson, Newry, Mourne and Down

David Patterson from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council outlined how the Partnership is embedding Participatory Budgeting in Community Planning. In the Mournes District Electoral Area (DEA) in 2018, 12 groups were engaged with the opportunity for Participatory Budgeting. Nine groups pitched their project ideas which benefitted one or more priority area of rural isolation; mental health and emotional wellbeing; and improving the area. More than 70 residents voted, and six groups were awarded funding totalling £3,000 for their projects. Two unsuccessful groups applied for another Participatory Budgeting pilot, Youth Leading Change.



Youth Leading Change involved engagement with 24 youth groups from across the district; 21 project ideas submitted on how to benefit youth in the area; and over 5,000 votes being cast. The awards event was attended by 100 young people, and 15 groups were awarded funding totalling £7,500. The Partnership is now working with PB Works! on a Participatory Budgeting for Youth European shared learning project.

In 2019, Participatory Budgeting in Downpatrick DEA involved an evening event featuring 17 groups pitching their ideas for funding, and over 170 people attending to vote. Additional funding was leveraged from the Partnership partners and the Police and Community Safety Partnership to support projects with the theme of building community connections. £9,360 was awarded to 13 groups. An evaluation of the process found that 77% of those involved agreed that the process helped them feel more involved in decision-making in their area, and 96% thought this method of financial assistance would be useful in the future and for larger pots of funding.

A market stall model was used in Newry DEA in 2019, on a Saturday morning. 17 groups pitched their ideas to the over 300 people in attendance. Additional funding was leveraged from the Partnership partners and the Police and Community Safety Partnership to support projects with the theme of building community connections. £9,750 was awarded to 13 groups. Of those in attendance, 94% agreed that the process helped them to feel more involved in decision-making in their area, and 100% thought this method of financial assistance would be useful in the future and for bigger sums of funding.

The next steps are to roll Participatory Budgeting out in further DEAs in 2020, and the potential to extend the mechanism to other grant processes. Other Partnerships will also be encouraged to pilot Participatory Budgeting and examine the potential to mainstream the methodology.

## Panel discussion: responding to good practice

- Nichola Creagh, Head of Community Planning, Department for Communities
- Caroline Gillan, Head of Programme for Government and Northern Ireland Civil Service of t Karen Smyth, Head of Policy, NILGA
- Jennifer Wallace, Head of Policy, Carnegie UK Trust

Caroline Gillan, Head of Programme for Government and Northern Ireland Civil Service of the Future Division, highlighted the culture change in the ways of working required, as well as producing the Statement of Progress documents. Caroline reflected that local government is further ahead on the journey of a number of key processes, such as community engagement and the use of data, than their colleagues in central government.

Jennifer Wallace welcomed the detail provided by the Partnerships as new energy and new insights for achieving collective resourcing, early intervention, and prevention. Jennifer reflected that in understanding the impact of Community Planning, stories of change and qualitative evidence are as important as data.

Karen Smyth commended the quality and breadth of the examples provided by the Partnership representatives. Karen offered that the leadership of local authorities is important, and encouraged attendees to seek forgiveness, rather than permission, and to be bold. Elected members need to be made aware of the impact of Community Planning and how they can support the process. Karen sought input on how NILGA can assist, for example, by seeking to improve legislation; support community wealth building; reviewing policy; and improving policy learning between councils and government departments.

Nichola Creagh reflected on the importance of collaboration in all of the examples cited; on harnessing individual energies for the collective good; culture change; and moving outwith areas of expertise and comfort zones. Nichola confirmed that the pooling of resources, ideas, and people will be something that the Department for Communities will look at over the next few years.

Discussion points were raised from attendees as below:

- The development of a regional measure of wellbeing for young people by the Public Health Agency, involving the Departments of Justice; Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs; and Communities. The Public Health Agency was encouraged to critically examine what data is being collected, so as not to add additional burden on to schools.
- The Civic Innovation Programme by Community Foundation Northern Ireland

and its support for public engagement and decision-making projects.

- The need to involve young people and facilitate them to share their own ideas, as mechanisms such as Community Planning are developing plans for their adulthood.
- The statutory link between Community Planning and spatial planning which can ensure a more resilient future for communities, and more age and child friendly environments.

Nichola closed the session by announcing the development of a new working group designed to support the next steps in Community Planning. The working group will develop a practical implementation plan for support, focusing on four areas of leadership; communications; data and engagement. The aim is for this support to help progress Community Planning over the long-term with practical issues such as pooling of budgets and participation by The Executive Office.

# Third Peer-to-peer learning webinar on working with communities post COVID-19

Held via Zoom

Thursday 10 September 2020, 10:30am-12.00pm

## Welcome

### **Aideen McGinley, Chair, Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project Advisory Group**

Aideen welcomed the participants to the peer-to-peer learning webinar, and thanked them for their attendance at a challenging and unprecedented time.

Aideen reflected that the webinar was a crucial milestone for the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project, and provided an opportunity to share learning not just between the three Community Planning Partnerships participating directly in the project, but also the wider Community Planning network. It was explained that the webinar was an opportunity to learn for the future, whilst also looking back at what has been learnt so far over the duration of the project, and to add value to the final project report which will be published in spring next year.

Aideen introduced Suzanne Lodge, Deputy Director (Communities and the Environment) at Lancaster City Council. Aideen explained that the Trust is currently engaging with Suzanne on the response of Lancaster City Council to the

COVID-19 pandemic, as one of many across the UK, through its COVID and Communities project. Aideen expressed her hopes that the experience of Suzanne and colleagues in Lancaster could provide valuable learning, as an example of partnership working between a Council and the local community in England.

## **Building trust between the local authority and community**

### **Suzanne Lodge, Deputy Director (Communities and the Environment), Lancaster City Council**

Suzanne thanked Aideen and the Carnegie UK Trust for the opportunity to present at the webinar. She explained that her presentation would reflect her own experiences and learning, and would give an overview of what appears to be working well for Lancaster City Council in working with the local community.

Suzanne provided a brief background of the Communities and the Environment Directorate, the frontline services provided by Lancaster City Council, and the demography and political

make-up of Lancaster, as context for her presentation. Suzanne then gave an overview of her work as a member of the Poverty Truth Commission, which began two years prior to the onset of the pandemic. With a strapline of *'nothing about us, without us, is for us'*, the work of the Commission is person-centred, inclusive, and based on how the local authority can best support individuals' needs. This process of being prepared to let go of power has changed the nature of the relationship between the local authority and the community, and set the context for the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Suzanne reflected that building trust is about kindness, vulnerability and being human. She explained that life experience is to be valued – people should not be included in shaping services on this basis in a tokenistic way. Staff at the Council are encouraged to do the right thing to support people and their individual needs, which is also the human thing to do.

Suzanne explained that Lancaster City Council had three strands to its response to the pandemic – supporting vulnerable people; supporting the business community; and maintaining critical services. Suzanne led the strand of work supporting vulnerable people. The local authority supported the local food bank financially, provided staff to support its operation, and provide premises. The community hub was open seven days a week, and the Council took an early, proactive approach in getting the message out to residents about where they could access support. The Leader of the Council wrote to every resident with information on sources of support; the local authority seconded staff to work in the community hub; and the Council supported a local church to develop a volunteer coordination app. The Council also created a GIS map of local services and support; supported a COVID urgent response fund; and contacted as many vulnerable residents as possible, undertaking 28,000 welfare visits and calls by mid-June. These actions were supported by relentless social media content to publicise the help available, which received fantastic feedback from those in the community.

Suzanne reflected that there was strong political leadership in the response to the pandemic, with Cabinet members organising virtual weekly meetings with the third sector from outset, which were well-attended. The meetings acted as a source of support, an opportunity for intelligence gathering, and a forum for information sharing. They were informal, open and inclusive. Attendees included representatives of other public sector organisations, such as the NHS, fire, police and education services; universities; faith groups; parish councils; residents groups; and charities. The meetings became a building block for the coordinated volunteer scheme and a platform for 'community conversations' in which members of the public could join in open conversations and form peer support groups. An example was provided of several residents with lived experience of homelessness forming a peer support group, 'Let's Befriends'. The peer support group was involved in the design process, outcomes, and awarding of a contract to provide support to those experiencing homelessness. The local authority is also hosting a series of conversations led by different agencies on a range of topics, such as community power and resilience, wellbeing in the district, and climate emergency, as it seeks to engage with residents in the development of the Council's ambitions and plan for 2030.

Aideen thanked Suzanne for sharing her experiences and asked Suzanne questions posted by attendees in the webinar chat function in response to her presentation. Replying to a question on which groups the Council found hardest to engage with, Suzanne reflected that there were challenges in establishing a dialogue with the gypsy traveller community. While the local authority was able to reach them with offers of support, there was no uptake from the community. When asked about financial assistance from the UK Government and strategic partners, Suzanne advised that the support provided by the local authority was paid for out of its reserves, which they were fortunate to have.

Aideen thanked Suzanne for her responses, and introduced Katharine Wheeler as the next speaker, to reflect on the role of culture and the arts in community-led regeneration.



## The Stove Story

### Katharine Wheeler, Visual Artist, The Stove, Dumfries

Katharine thanked Aideen and the Carnegie UK Trust for the opportunity to present on the work of [The Stove Network](#) in Dumfries. Katharine provided a brief background on The Stove, explaining that it is an independent, values-based and community-led organisation interested in the role of the arts in encouraging collaboration, building relationships, and involving the community in shaping the future of the town. The Stove has two roles, it is a career development hub and vehicle for community-led planning. It is a place at which creative place-making; community learning, development and planning; and career development come together to deliver community projects. The Stove provides a space for local groups to come together, to celebrate the community, and to involve it in the development of the town. The door is always open for ideas and they seek to reach as many groups within the community as possible. The team also try to feed in to the national conversation about Scotland's places, by demonstrating meaningful change and impact at the local level as a result of their projects.

Katharine reflected that as with many market towns across the UK, Dumfries has struggled with an over-reliance on large retail and a lack of local agency, investment and collaboration. The town centre had a number of empty units, a lack of spaces to support local businesses, and no affordable accommodation. When The Stove came together, they wanted to answer the question 'what is the purpose of a rural market town in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?' By placing artists on the high street, they sought to be used as a tool within the community to support problem solving and develop strategies to address the town's challenges. The Stove's regeneration strategy is to grow collaborative partnerships, events and wider activities. To deliver this change, The Stove has built trust with the community through

a monthly programme of events and by taking forward ideas from the community, while not over-promising on projects which cannot be delivered.

The Stove was described as an engine for ideas, such as the [Midsteeple Quarter](#) project, to grow. Midsteeple Quarter is a Community Benefit Society which has been set up to enable local people to help shape a prosperous, compassionate and vibrant Dumfries town centre for the future. The aim of the Midsteeple Quarter is to take ownership of a group of disused buildings on the high street in Dumfries, refurbish them and steward them for the community, as an affordable enterprise space at street level and good quality flats for rent on the floors above. Over a period of five years the Midsteeple Quarter project grew, involving many different groups of people and using creative practice to test ideas. [Embers](#), another project developed within The Stove Network, examines the role of creativity in effective place-making to inspire change and grow local activity and projects which are designed to improve community wellbeing.

Aideen thanked Katharine for sharing the experiences of The Stove Network in supporting creative community-led regeneration, and reflected on the power of the arts in bringing people together. Questions were invited for Katharine following her presentation. In response to a question on the impact of COVID-19 on The Stove, Katharine commented that the biggest impact has been on the loss of the space for people to come together, and the isolation that some, particularly freelancers, have felt as a result. The Stove has therefore focused on staying connected with these people.

Aideen thanked Katharine again and introduced Karen Smyth, Head of Policy and Governance at NILGA, as the next speaker, who gave an overview of the relationship between local authorities and communities in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 crisis.

## The relationship between local authorities and communities in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Karen Smyth, Head of Policy and Governance, NILGA**

Karen thanked Aideen and the Carnegie UK Trust for the opportunity to present at the webinar on NILGA's research on how the councils in Northern Ireland have been working in partnership with their local communities since March 2020.

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. The councils and communities had to be flexible, 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 as 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 to, for example, support community organisations, community resilience, and sports hardship funds.

New roles were developed, such as to deliver food, fuel and cleaning materials, collect prescriptions, and reduce loneliness and isolation. The Department for Communities, Health Trusts and community response teams from the community and voluntary sector

were supported by council staff, by building on existing collaborative relationships. The robust Community Planning structures have therefore been tested since March, however, they 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.

Karen explained that alternative service delivery methods were also developed. For example, 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 supported the distribution of food, prescriptions and arts supplies; coordinated volunteering efforts; and conducted campaigns designed to support 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 part of the civic leadership of councils was also to build relationships and to recognise when people went above and beyond the call of duty, and to encourage others to do so.

Karen reflected on the learning from lockdown. Karen believes that the response to the pandemic has demonstrated that Northern Ireland has strong, flexible and responsive councils and communities, and that elected members and council officers are ready and willing to 'muck in'. Good coordination is vital to avoid duplication and confusion, in this regard the pre-existing Community Planning structures were immensely helpful, and enabled councils to act quickly. Volunteer Now and NICVA were critically important in helping to address the overwhelming volume of offers of help and volunteering. Finally, councils now appreciate the need to improve Northern Ireland's digital connectivity, and how a crisis can be used by some as an opportunity.

Looking to the future, Karen reflected that councils will have to manage increased expectations on diminishing resources. It is also likely that Northern Ireland will experience increased and continuing deprivation, poverty and isolation, and that councils will have to rethink the community services it provides. The current change to working patterns and locations may also become permanent for many, necessarily leading to a change in development plans and a change in council income. Karen also believes that there is a need to build on the growth of social capital that has emerged during the crisis – in the more connected communities, new relationships and build-up of trust – and on economic wellbeing and recovery.

Aideen thanked Karen for sharing NILGA's research findings, and added that there was much to reflect on in the council and communities' work in the last six months. Aideen advised participants that for the following session they would be allocated into break out rooms, to reflect on the presentations and to continue the discussion in smaller groups.

## Break out room discussions

The participants were divided into 10 break out rooms to discuss the opportunities and challenges of working with communities post-pandemic. Attendees were asked to collate their reflections onto two Google Jamboards during the break out rooms, which will be used by the Trust to inform the findings and recommendations of the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project.

## Reflections from discussions

### Aideen McGinley, Chair, Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project Advisory Group

The Jamboards were shared to show comments made by participants from across all of the break out rooms. Aideen reviewed the participants' comments on the challenges of working with communities in the recovery, and reflected that bureaucracy and the space and time to proactively build on the two-way trust between councils and communities featured heavily. Being prepared to let go of power; mental health challenges; and being able to share knowledge were also self-reported challenges. However, Aideen reflected that the demonstrable strength and adaptability of the community and voluntary sector; the kindness displayed during the pandemic; and the trust and relationships established also presented opportunities to improve citizens' wellbeing in the recovery. There is a need to build on the relationships between central and local government, and ensure that resources are delivered down to the local level to enable community groups to deliver well.

# Partner Event – Co-production Symposium

Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Oxford Island  
20 September 2019

## Introduction

The Carnegie UK Trust's Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project provides support to enable Community Planning Partnerships to implement a local wellbeing outcomes approach. A core element of the Trust's support focuses on co-production, and the Trust commissioned Community Places to deliver a support package for the three Community Planning Partnerships participating in the project and to share learning and resources with all eleven Partnerships.

## Symposium aims

As part of the support package, Community Places organised and facilitated a symposium open to all Community Planning partners. The event was hosted by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Community Planning Partnership and held in the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre at Oxford Island on 20 September 2019. Participants at the symposium represented Local Government, the public sector and the third sector.

The symposium objectives were:

- To present the Carnegie UK Trust funded coproduction support programme;
- To provide opportunities for participants to identify the types of support and resources needed for co-production and to share their experiences;

- To present for discussion co-production principles and good practice from other jurisdictions; and
- To explore how learning from the support programme can best be captured and shared.

## Structure and inputs

The symposium which was facilitated by Community Places staff team members Dr Louise O'Kane (Planning and Engagement Officer) and Colm Bradley (Director) and by Professor Brendan Murtagh of Queens University Belfast. The programme included inputs on co-production principles and practice from other jurisdictions by Dr Claire Bynner of the University of Glasgow and Susan Paxton of the Scottish Community Development Centre.

The participants were facilitated in considering the inputs on good practice issues and in discussing materials on definitions and principles of coproduction prepared by Community Places. This report sets out the findings of the issues explored during these discussions and the implications for moving a progressive wellbeing approach forward across Northern Ireland.



## The context of co-production

It is important to acknowledge that there are examples, research evidence, and technical support on co-production, including practices within Northern Ireland. There are especially innovative models in Scotland backed by legislation, dedicated capacity building organisations, and a tradition of Community Planning based on co-production ideas.

## Learning from Scotland

Dr Claire Bynner from the University of Glasgow drew on extensive research on the Scottish context and highlighted the issues for moving coproduction into Community Planning in Northern Ireland.

- The Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011) set the strategic context for the reform of public policy and in particular, put the user at the heart of service provision. Such highlevel, politically backed, and cross-agency support emphasised the empowerment of communities and individuals in the design and delivery of the services they use.
- This was facilitated by technical assistance and capacity building via, for example, What Works Scotland to support a process of learning, reflection and improvement based on the experiences of the wider public.
- Legislation, especially through the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, strengthened the legitimacy of coproduction with politicians as well as civil servants and communities.
- Co-production stimulated innovative place based approaches with new initiatives such as Children's Neighbourhoods, which emphasised the need to reach beyond predictable consultees in designing services for the most vulnerable.

## The co-production perspective

Susan Paxton from the Scottish Community Development Centre examined the challenges from the Co-production Network perspective and the implications for good practice in Northern Ireland.

- Commitment and leadership are essential in any successful co-production process. The Scottish experience underscores the time it takes to create meaningful participation and the need for patience in developing and implementing effective approaches.
- Power sharing involves a significant cultural shift and a change in mind-set, especially among those with power (which might be political, legal, financial resources) as a basis for meaningful co-production.
- Part of the answer involves skills, knowledge and learning from best practice. The Scottish experience placed a particular emphasis on facilitation skills, participatory practices and brokering relationships between organisations and staff.
- There is a need to see communities as assets with experience, resources and capacities to articulate what they need and to partner with other agencies in delivering change. Creative structures and methods such as citizen juries, community councils and workshops have variously supported more effective forms of co-production. There are also meaningful initiatives such as the Glasgow Decides small grants fund that used a participatory budgeting approach. Four place-based and one themed on disabilities involved the creation of citizens panels to co-produce the participatory budgeting process.

## Not everything works

Scottish practice is still evolving and despite significant progress, there are obstacles in embedding co-production across the political and administrative system:

- There remains, for example, a predominance of usual participants where consultation processes tend to be dominated by NGOs and community organisations from a narrow range of established groups.
- Problems also remain about the lack of influence and the need to create more significant relationships between communities, politicians and public officials in co-design processes.
- Related to this, the legitimacy of coproduction processes is a concern for some elected representatives, especially at a local authority level. Cultures of decisionmaking are well ingrained, which makes it difficult to bring in new ways of working that involve a shift in control to communities and service users.
- The impact of co-production on resource allocation and effecting a meaningful shift in spending to service users, in response to their defined needs, is also mixed. Initiatives such as participatory budgeting have introduced new thinking into the ways in which communities can determine local budgets.

### Sources of information and support

<p><b>Resources and practice from Scotland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Community Development Centre</li> <li>• Improvement Service Scotland web resources</li> <li>• What Works Scotland (publications, guidance, best practice)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Planning in Northern Ireland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Community Planning teams internal to the Council (NI)</li> <li>• Other local authorities in Northern Ireland</li> <li>• Community or economic development teams within the Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Health and Social Care organisations (NI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Health (NI) Co-production Guide</li> <li>• HSST Community Development Team/manager</li> <li>• Intermediaries such as the Public Health Agency (NI) and Patient Client Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community and Voluntary Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Development Health Network</li> <li>• UK bodies such as New Economics Foundation</li> <li>• Other CVS organisations and individuals including Community Places</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interpersonal and informal networks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal organisational advice from experienced individual</li> <li>• Ask the service user or representative groups</li> <li>• Colleagues in other statutory agencies experienced in engagement practices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Online resources and searches</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carnegie UK Trust newsletter and website</li> <li>• General online search (on co-production and engagement methods)</li> <li>• Online library access (such as universities)</li> </ul>

The information contained within this table was identified by symposium participants.

## Strengthening skills and knowledge

Materials on definitions of co-production and principles from Northern Ireland and other jurisdictions were considered by participants. In feedback from these discussions, participants said they were drawn to the Welsh and Scottish definitions and principles with some suggesting that a plainer English definition could be found.

The use of Mentimeter, an online voting system, revealed that the symposium contributed to specific areas of learning:

- First, there was a clearer understanding of the principles of co-production and the experience of Scotland was valued in exploring the practical challenges and opportunities of co-production, in particular within place-based approaches.
- The signposting to other resources and more specialist advice was also welcomed, especially given the needs of different participants across central and local government, agencies, NGOs and community groups. The idea of a wholesaler service matching the needs of users with appropriate sources of information was highlighted across the feedback sessions.
- There was also a recognition of the clarity of terms used, the emphasis on accessible concepts and definitions and deepening the understanding of co-production in service delivery.
- A number of local authorities welcomed the concept as a framework for deepening their engagement and empowerment processes especially as Community Planning evolves.
- The mix of methods presented also gave respondents an insight into how coproduction is operationalised in practice and the need for this type of methodological guidance is a recurring theme in the learning from the pilot.

## Learning gained by participants

The symposium was designed to facilitate learning from each other as well as from experiences in Scotland. Participants shared and discussed details of their own examples of processes and projects, which broadly fit with the definitions and principles presented. Examples considered included:

- Participatory budgeting pilots encouraged a distinctive approach to resource allocation across sectors, with new schemes and initiatives being adopted by housing associations, local authorities and community anchor organisations.
- Western Health Trust Pathfinder Project (in Fermanagh/Omagh) is based on an extensive programme of community engagement to better align and deliver services to the needs of a changing (and especially ageing) population.
- NI Business Start-up Programme (at Council level) shows how a targeted approach on economic development involved social enterprise intermediaries, council resources and emerging enterprises in a coordinated, locally based investment programme.
- The Disability Action Plan (linked to the Fermanagh/Omagh Community Plan) stressed monitoring and feedback to user groups to enable disabled people to assess the extent and quality of changes in services.
- The Senior Forum in Belfast and locally based older people's networks have helped to develop age friendly policies and facilities.
- The development of Community Plans is seen as a significant opportunity to extend co-production practices to strengthen user involvement in evaluating current policies and in developing the next generation of Plans.

## Applying the learning

The symposium explored how co-production might be best taken forward, especially in the context of Community Planning. There was a recognition that there needs to be a clear policy framework, describing the principles and scope of co-production and how it can be applied to Community Planning. Technical assistance and best practice resources were valued but it was acknowledged that time and political commitment are essential for effective roll-out within local government.

## Priorities for co-production in Northern Ireland

Priorities	Key Themes
The enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear and agreed policy framework</li> <li>A legislative framework for co-production across government</li> <li>More effective advocacy and selling the concept</li> </ul>
Technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toolkits to support practice</li> <li>A quick-guide resources accessible to users involved in the process</li> <li>Engaged support throughout the process</li> </ul>
Time and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time and patience to plan for and deliver coproduction</li> <li>Leadership at a strategic and operational level</li> <li>Trust and mutual commitment to effect a cultural change</li> </ul>
Best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience and examples from other places</li> <li>Sharing practice within communities to strengthen practice</li> <li>Achieving buy-in from actors</li> </ul>

The symposium was especially useful when the importance of co-production to Community Planning is considered. The feedback below shows that participants emphasised the value of co-production in building trust; brokerage and leadership; and political buy-in. These soft skills are critical in effecting a culture of power sharing and reciprocation, but respondents also highlighted the need for legislative change to encourage co-production and resources to guide practice. The potential of digital methods to widen participation is important to access hard to reach groups and areas.



## The role of co-production in Community Planning

### Building trust

Trust, time, permission and legitimacy could strengthen Community Plans via co-production

### Sharing knowledge

Needs an open approach to sharing evidence, research and data, on which decisions are based

### Leadership

Strong and patient leadership is needed by key people to effect a cultural change in engagement

### A brokerage role

Difficult conversations (identify differences) can be confronted in a safe and productive space

### Widening participation

Targeting hard to reach groups and areas in co-produced working groups and Community Plans

### Political buy-in

Politicians' commitment throughout the process and involves working with participatory processes

### Digital engagement

More innovative ways of extending participation to groups who have access challenges

### Resources

Enabling communities to exercise greater control over resource planning and allocation decisions

### Legislative support

Helping to develop a community rights guarantee within Community Planning in Northern Ireland

## Implementing the learning

Participants identified a variety of ways in which they will use the learning gained. These ranged from applying a co-production approach to new projects; to reviewing a Community Plan; and from sharing knowledge with colleagues and partners; to informing and shaping community engagement strategies and practice. During small group discussions participants identified the types of support needed to apply co-production and the changes required for further growth. These include:

- Learning events, sharing good practice and tools.
- Access to good external facilitation and advice.
- A common framework for co-production.
- A toolkit or accessible 'how to' guide.
- Resources especially financial and time to deliver an effective co-production process.
- Training on implementation.
- Developing better understanding of approach by elected representatives and Community Planning partners.
- Trust building.
- 'Safe spaces' for discussing difficult issues.
- Support for developing more local examples.
- Methods for widening local voices (beyond the 'usual suspects').

In terms of changes needed to support a coproduction approach, participants felt that we need legislation (similar to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015); a culture change by elected representatives and within Community Planning partner organisations; and endorsement by Departments and the respective Ministers.

## Discussion themes

- There is a significant gap in technical assistance, especially to operationalise co-production in practice with participants placing an emphasis on accessible, straightforward and problem-centred guidance.
- Here, it was recognised that there were excellent resources, toolkits and best practice case studies across the UK, but that a community of practice, that links into local, as well as expertise across the devolved regions, was needed.
- It was recognised that co-production faces particular barriers, but also opportunities, in Northern Ireland. Whilst it was acknowledged that co-production could enable 'difficult conversations' (over identity, resource allocation and segregated communities) it should not deflect from the commitment to a more participative approach especially within Community Planning.
- A number of contributors emphasised the need to effect a cultural change in thinking about engagement rather than just focus on techniques and toolkits. Co-production means sharing power in resource allocation, 'blurring the boundaries' and surrendering control over decision making.

- Linked to this was the need to better understand the different legitimacies that stakeholders bring into co-production processes. Politicians are elected, public officials have statutory responsibilities (and constraints), the private sector holds necessary resources and the community (in a broad sense) are often most affected by user-orientated decisions and services. How these various positions are reconciled, the risk and uncertainty involved and specific methods for genuinely coproducing services underscore the need for practice-based support in Northern Ireland.
- There was also a discussion about what co-production is for. Some felt that there was a danger that co-production would be seen as a concept in its own right rather than as a means for achieving more inclusive policy outcomes. Here, a number of advocates felt that it should be more clearly tied to wellbeing, child poverty or spatial deprivation, especially within the context of Community Planning.

## Conclusions

In summary, the event had a significant impact on understanding the principles, methodologies and operation of co-production. This was the first good practice sharing and learning event for Community Planning partners. There is clearly an appetite for more, especially among those responsible for Community Planning and the shared learning within the group but in particular from practice in Scotland was valued. Participants recognised the importance of coproduction, learnt much from the symposium and want to know more and to have ready access to advice, facilitation, guidance and good practice. They indicated that there are examples of coproduction within the region and that these may provide valuable learning for others. They also would welcome a common framework for applying co-production to further wellbeing through Community Planning.

# Support for Community Planning Partnerships' Statements of Progress: Examples of visual communication of data

## Introduction

The Carnegie UK Trust has developed a strong reputation as an advocate for wellbeing frameworks which allow governments to measure social progress for citizens in a meaningful way since the establishment of the first Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring What Matters in Scotland in 2010.

In 2012, the Trust published case studies of how governments and civil society organisations measure wellbeing in France, the USA, and Canada. Key policy learning from this research includes that to engage people with wellbeing, it is vital that the presentation of data is user friendly. In Canada and Virginia, this has been a core part of their engagement strategy to broaden the base of support for wellbeing. Applied internationally, it recommended that policymakers and practitioners should make the results engaging for a wide audience by drawing simple stories from complex datasets. Disseminating messages through the mainstream media is also a critical means of reaching a wider audience.

The use, presentation and communication of data was identified as a challenge by all of the Community Planning Partnerships in Northern

Ireland in their Expressions of Interest to participate in the Trust's Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project. Data was also the theme of the first peer-to-peer learning event hosted between the project participants Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Derry City and Strabane District Council; and Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Two strands of work emerged from this event – funding a workshop with elected members on the value of data and evidence for Community Planning, and a hackathon on the presentation and communication of data in the Partnerships' upcoming Statements of Progress, which outline the progress made on delivering the Community Plans to date.

The Trust is now offering direct support to the project participants in the development of their Statements of Progress, and further to our findings on the presentation and communication of data, has identified the following tools and delivery mechanisms which the Partnerships may wish to consider. Examples of each method have been identified below to support the Partnerships in their discussions on the format appropriate for communicating with their communities. We have identified both innovations in the tools utilised to report on progress in improving wellbeing, and on how these messages may be delivered.



## Tools

### Reports

A visual and engaging report of progress across all outcomes and indicators is a common tool used for all levels of reporting, as below:

Name	Description	Level of reporting	Link
Scotland's Wellbeing – Delivering the National Outcomes	The aim of this report is to bring together existing evidence and analysis on a number of key issues, trends and features of Scotland's performance, which the evidence suggests are important to consider when making decisions on policy, services and spending.	National	<a href="https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/scotlands-wellbeing-delivering-national-outcomes">https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/scotlands-wellbeing-delivering-national-outcomes</a>
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Annual Report 2020	Reports on performance measures for the impact of the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.	National	<a href="https://futuregenerations2020.wales/english">https://futuregenerations2020.wales/english</a>
Mott Haven and Melrose Community Health Profile	This report provides an overview of the health of the residents in Mott Haven and Melrose community, presenting data on a range of indicators.	Locality	<a href="https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-bx1.pdf">https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2018chp-bx1.pdf</a>
Cwm Taf Public Service Board Annual Report 2018-19	Reports on progress on the delivery of the Cwm Taf Public Service Board Wellbeing Plan from May 2018.	Locality	<a href="http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=286&amp;mid=613&amp;fileid=478">http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=286&amp;mid=613&amp;fileid=478</a>
OneNYC 2018 Progress Report	Progress report on the delivery of the OneNYC Plan.	Locality (city)	<a href="https://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OneNYC-Progress-Report-2018.pdf">https://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OneNYC-Progress-Report-2018.pdf</a>

## Websites

Governments and organisations measuring progress towards wellbeing outcomes may invest in an interactive website which allows users to understand progress by individual outcome or indicator. Some examples from across the UK and internationally are as below:

Name	Description	Link
Scotland's National Performance Framework	A dashboard of the data the Scottish Government holds on the national indicators of the National Performance Framework. To use this dashboard, users can select a national outcome. Once selected, users can select from a list of national indicators that help measure progress towards the national outcome. With a national indicator selected, users can explore the data held for the national indicator on an interactive chart and table. Users can download the charts and the tables produced.	<a href="https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/measuring-progress">https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/measuring-progress</a>
ONS Measures of National Well-being Dashboard	The dashboard provides a visual overview of the data in the dashboard and can be explored by the areas of life (domains) or by the direction of change . It supports the Measuring National Well-being programme which provides a more detailed look at wellbeing in the UK.	<a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-OLi-25">https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuresofnationalwellbeingdashboard/2018-OLi-25</a>
OECD Better Life Index	This Index allows users to compare wellbeing across countries, based on 11 topics the OECD has identified as essential, in the areas of material living conditions and quality of life.	<a href="http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/">http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/</a>
OECD How's Life in Your Region?	This interactive site allows users to measure wellbeing in their region and compare it with L.i02 other OECD regions based on eleven topics central to quality of life.	<a href="https://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org/">https://www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org/</a>
New Zealand Living Standards Framework Dashboard	The New Zealand Treasury developed the Living Standards Framework Dashboard, a practical set of meaningful current and future wellbeing indicators, to inform its policy advice.	<a href="https://lsfdashboard.treasury.govt.nz/wellbeing/">https://lsfdashboard.treasury.govt.nz/wellbeing/</a>

Name	Description	Link
The Co-op Wellbeing Index	The index gives an insight into what is important to people in a local community. From the quality of education, housing affordability, and public transport – to the amount of green space and the number of community centres. The research identified nine areas that matter for community wellbeing. These areas are grouped into people, places and relationships.	<a href="https://communitywellbeing.coop.co.uk/">https://communitywellbeing.coop.co.uk/</a>
Sainsbury's Living Well Index	Users can take the Living Well quiz; track different life stage groups and see what influences are impacting their wellbeing; and access the national average of the Living Well Index.	<a href="https://www.about.sainsburys.co.uk/about-us/live-well-for-less/living-wellindex">https://www.about.sainsburys.co.uk/about-us/live-well-for-less/living-wellindex</a>
Happy City Thriving Places Index	The Thriving Places Index framework measures the local conditions for wellbeing, and whether those conditions are being delivered fairly and sustainably. It consists of a broad set of indicators grouped into three headline domains, from datasets produced by established national data agencies such as the Office for National Statistics, Public Health England and the Index of Multiple Deprivation.	<a href="http://www.thrivingplacesindex.org/">http://www.thrivingplacesindex.org/</a>
Dorset Statistics – Health and Wellbeing Dashboard	A website of interactive dashboards covering a wide range of wellbeing domains for Dorset.	<a href="https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/Dashboards">https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/Dashboards</a>

## Illustrations

A visual representation mapping progress made against the national outcomes as a tool for engaging citizens, as below:

Name	Description	Link
Scottish Government National Performance Framework Big Picture Illustration	An illustration of themes relating to the national outcomes of the National Performance Framework.	<a href="https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/Illustratedoutcomes%20new.pdf">https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/Illustratedoutcomes%20new.pdf</a>

## Videos

Animation or live action videos outlining overall progress or progress on a specific outcome or indicator are increasingly used for communicating with citizens, as below:

Name	Description	Link
Wellbeing 365, City of Santa Monica	A series of videos on different domains of wellbeing, with information on related opportunities and services.	<a href="https://santamonica wellbeing.org/">https://santamonica wellbeing.org/</a>
State of Health in London Animation	An animation from Public Health England on the health profile of London, including wellbeing indicators such as school readiness, childhood obesity and transport.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdLU7bEbTHA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdLU7bEbTHA</a>
8 Millennium Development Goals: What We Met And Missed	A visual representation of progress towards and outstanding actions required in the effort to achieve the Millennium Goals by 2015.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5giOGjj5X8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5giOGjj5X8</a>
Millennium Development Goals – progress in human wellbeing	This animation explores the Millennium Development Goals and changes in human wellbeing over the past 20 years. It also introduces the Sustainable Development Goals.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWBMDi2_Skw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWBMDi2_Skw</a>
Why do we measure wealth instead of wellbeing? Introducing the Thriving Places Index	This video introduces the Thriving Places Index by Happy City UK.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssweiFuujtW">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssweiFuujtW</a>
Ards and North Down Borough Council: The Big Plan	This animation provides an overview of Ards and North Down's Community Plan.	<a href="https://whitenoisestudios.com/work/ards-north-down-borough-council-the-big-plan">https://whitenoisestudios.com/work/ards-north-down-borough-council-the-big-plan</a>
Arts and Business NI: Creative Together	An animation explaining the benefits of collaboration between arts organisations and businesses in Northern Ireland.	<a href="https://whitenoisestudios.com/work/arts-business-creative-together">https://whitenoisestudios.com/work/arts-business-creative-together</a>
Translink: Belfast Hub project	A video designed to raise awareness of the Belfast Hub project.	<a href="https://whitenoisestudios.com/work/translink-belfast-hub">https://whitenoisestudios.com/work/translink-belfast-hub</a>
Scottish Government National Performance Framework	A video outlining the key components of the Scottish National Performance Framework.	<a href="https://twitter.com/scotgov/status/116316365353Li711808?s=20">https://twitter.com/scotgov/status/116316365353Li711808?s=20</a>

## Infographics

An infographic, outlining key information relating to the progress made, is often designed to accompany more substantial or technical reports of progress, and shared on platforms such as social media for communicating visually with citizens. Examples of infographics which communicate key data are as below:

The following websites or software packages may prove useful for producing infographics and other data visualisations:

Name	Description	Link
Canva	Infographic design software – free version available	<a href="https://www.canva.com/">https://www.canva.com/</a>
Biteable	Short video design software – free version available	<a href="https://biteable.com/">https://biteable.com/</a>
Visme	Infographic design software – free version available	<a href="https://www.visme.co">https://www.visme.co</a>

## Podcasts

In recent years, governments, their representatives and intermediaries have increasingly developed or hosted podcasts on public services which have been used to analyse or report on public policy, as below:

Name	Description	Link
Government Digital Service Podcast	The Government Digital Service podcast looks at innovation and digital transformation across the public sector.	<a href="https://governmentdigitalservice.podbean.com/">https://governmentdigitalservice.podbean.com/</a>
GovLove	A podcast about the people, policies and profession of local government.	<a href="https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/govlove">https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/govlove</a>
Local Government Information Unit	A fortnightly podcast on issues related to local government.	<a href="https://lgiu.org/news_types/podcast/">https://lgiu.org/news_types/podcast/</a>
One Team Gov	A podcast featuring conversations with people innovating in government and the public sector. Connecting passionate public sector reformists from around the world with inspirational content.	<a href="https://www.oneteamgov.uk/podcast">https://www.oneteamgov.uk/podcast</a>
Local Gov Life	A podcast with a mix of stories, insights, and advice from local government leaders.	<a href="https://player.fm/series/2317365">https://player.fm/series/2317365</a>
Talking Local Government	A podcast about, for, and by anyone working in or interested in UK local government and associated public services.	<a href="https://player.fm/series/talking-local-government">https://player.fm/series/talking-local-government</a>





## Webinars

Representatives of those working to deliver outcomes can hold a webinar and relay the story of how progress has been made, and ongoing challenges, as below:

Name	Description	Link
Arizona: Live Webinar on Native Hawaiian Health and Wellbeing – Progress & Recommendations	A webinar from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health designed to summarise progress made since 1985 in improving the Native Hawaiian health, and to discuss the recommendations and strategies to improve Native Hawaiian health and wellbeing.	<a href="https://www.aspph.org/event/arizona-live-webinar-on-native-hawaiian-health-wellbeing-progress-recommendations/">https://www.aspph.org/event/arizona-live-webinar-on-native-hawaiian-health-wellbeing-progress-recommendations/</a>
Introduction to The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	A webinar explaining why the Act was developed, the role it plays in ensuring the sustainable development of Wales, and how the third sector can contribute to its delivery.	<a href="https://wcva.adobeconnect.com/_a1155017186/ppuw-1pv1sdai/?proto=true">https://wcva.adobeconnect.com/_a1155017186/ppuw-1pv1sdai/?proto=true</a>
Network of Wellbeing	The Network of Wellbeing runs regular free webinars to explore how wellbeing outcomes can be improved.	<a href="https://networkofwellbeing.org/webinars/">https://networkofwellbeing.org/webinars/</a>
Evaluation Support Scotland	Getting ready to report – a webinar outlining the things to consider when reporting on outcomes.	<a href="https://evaluation-supportscotland.org.uk/resources/getting-ready-to-report-webinar/">https://evaluation-supportscotland.org.uk/resources/getting-ready-to-report-webinar/</a>

## Support Guides

A number of support guides are available on reporting on progress or impact, as below:

Name	Description	Link
Evaluation Support Scotland – Report Writing	This guide looks at how you can report on the impact of work.	<a href="https://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/ess-support-guide-3-3-report-writing/">https://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/resources/ess-support-guide-3-3-report-writing/</a>
Evaluation Support Scotland – Writing case studies	This guide shows how case studies can help to bring work alive.	<a href="http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/supportguide3.2casestudiesjulog.pdf">http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/supportguide3.2casestudiesjulog.pdf</a>

## Delivery mechanisms

In addition to the tools identified above, communicating effectively with citizens on the progress made on improving wellbeing outcomes should involve taking the message to citizens where they are physically, or where they access information. Examples of delivery mechanisms are as below:

### Local newspapers

Paying for a supplement in the local newspaper or engaging with a local journalist to outline the progress made will reach citizens as part of how they routinely consume news and information.

### Attending community groups

Investing staff capacity in attending and presenting to community groups and community meetings, such as Community Council meetings; sports clubs; church groups; youth groups; and parent and toddler groups, will increase direct engagement with the findings. These can be in addition to dedicated events held by staff to deliver the findings and update citizens, and can be supported by visual PowerPoint presentations.

### Posters

Poster presentations at local authority and partners' offices can update citizens while engaging in wider public services.

### Social media

A dedicated social media account tweeting content related to the outcomes, indicators and progress made can reach citizens digitally. Examples of Twitter accounts currently operating to promote wellbeing frameworks include the account of Scotland's National Performance Framework @ScotGovOutcomes and the Office of Civic Wellbeing at the City of Santa Monica, @CityofWellbeing.

The use of a dedicated hashtag for the framework will allow social media content related to the framework to be collated, and the use of hashtags related to the local geographical area will increase engagement with the content by local Twitter users.

# Representation of Community and Voluntary Sector in Community Planning

A Resource Paper by Community Places

## Introduction

The Carnegie UK Trust's Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project provides support to enable Community Planning Partnerships to implement a local wellbeing outcomes approach. A core element of the Trust's support focuses on co-production, and the Trust commissioned Community Places to deliver a support package for the three Community Planning Partnerships.

## Purpose of the paper

This paper was prepared by Community Places as a resource for all who are interested in or responsible for how Community and Voluntary groups (the CVS) can be represented in Community Planning Partnership structures. It outlines a range of models which are used across the five jurisdictions of the UK and Ireland. Work on the paper was prompted by needs and issues articulated within the Community Planning environment in Northern Ireland during the first year (2019) of the co-production support package. It was completed during the COVID crisis lockdown period and presented to an online workshop of Community Planning partners in August 2020 – five months into the crisis.

Community Planning Partners' Workshop  
The online workshop on 25 August 2020 involved partners from across the Community Planning spectrum and the whole region. It began with a short presentation of the findings of the report (which had been circulated in advance). This was followed by three inputs from participants on their experience of CVS representation in Community Planning. Participants then shared and discussed their learning from community-based responses to the pandemic and how communities and Community Planning partners can strengthen relationships.

## 2. CVS Models in Northern Ireland

### Antrim and Newtownabbey

Seven DEA Place Shaping Fora were established in 2016. Each Forum is chaired by a local Councillor, and facilitated by a senior council officer and is to include representation from locally based organisations. The role of the Fora includes consulting with the community and identifying projects for council funding. Each Forum will identify priorities for their DEA and through discussion will make recommendations which will be referred to the Community Planning Partnership for action. Their fit within the wider structure is shown below.

### Ards and North Down

A Third Sector Community Planning Forum was established in December 2017 as the mechanism for sectoral involvement in the Strategic Big Plan Community Planning Partnership Board (represented by its Chairperson) and its Big Plan Priority Workstreams (see diagram below). The Forum meets three times per year and its members are involved in implementation of some aspects of the Community Plan Delivery Plans.

### Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon

A Community and Voluntary Sector CVS Panel was established in 2018 with the following roles:

- to ensure the Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise sectors are represented on the Community Planning Partnership.
- to promote ongoing community engagement.
- to articulate a voice for the sectors.
- to support the development of cross-sectoral relationships and partnership working.

Membership of the Panel is open to one person per organisation and there are currently approximately

65 members. The Panel has two delegates on the Community Planning Strategic Partnership and others on the Thematic Action Planning Teams. The Panel recently undertook a survey of the sector on emergency food and other support provided during lockdown in the borough to inform the Partnership's Covid-19 recovery plans.

### Belfast

In July 2019 the City Council began public consultation on a possible model for the representation of groups from the community, voluntary and social enterprise sectors. In January 2020, groups were invited to submit nominations for membership of a Sectoral Advisory Panel. Fifteen of those nominated were selected and the Panel membership was announced in July 2020. The selection criteria included sectoral balance with a view to including representatives from a broad range of interest groups working on different issues. Section 75 categories were also taken into account. The Panel have agreed their delegates to the Community Planning Partnership structures and the Panel Chairperson will report to the Partnership.

### Causeway Coast and Glens

In September 2018 the Community Planning Partnership issued an open invitation to all groups in the area to join a new Community Engagement Platform – the first time to convene a borough wide grouping of this kind in the new Council area. In March 2019 the Platform nominated its two Co-Chairs as representatives to the Partnership Board. 'Speed Networking and Sharing' events were organised by the Platform in January and June 2019 to enable all groups to meet each other and the Community Planning Partners. In September 2019 the Platform meeting focused on community development support for groups, and more recently in January 2020 an event was held to allow groups to meet and interact with a wider range of statutory agencies including government department representatives.



## Derry and Strabane

Eight Local Community Growth Partnership Boards have been formally established – one in each of the Council's 7 DEAs and one in Strabane Town. In Derry City and Strabane, the Boards were formed by building on and extending the area and membership of the five existing Neighbourhood Partnership Boards to include sector representatives, Councillors and statutory representatives. The membership of each of the three rural Boards is composed of up to ten community group representatives (two per ward) plus Councillors and statutory representatives. The eight Local Partnership Boards oversee the delivery of the Local Area Growth Plans (which are aligned to the Strategic Growth Plan for the whole council area). The community group representatives were identified through an independent open call nomination and selection process in September 2018. The Chairs of the eight Local Boards sit on the Strategic Growth Partnership Board and are also involved in the thematic Outcome Delivery Groups for the implementation of the Strategic Growth Plan. The North West Community Network is also represented on the Strategic Growth Partnership.

## Fermanagh and Omagh

A nomination and election by postal ballot process was used to establish a Community and Voluntary Sector Forum in 2016. All CVS groups were entitled to nominate and to vote during the election process. The Forum nominates representatives to the Community Planning Board and its three Theme Groups. There are 20 members of the Forum and its Terms of Reference includes co-designing an annual CVS Convention to discuss progress on the Community Plan.

## Lisburn and Castlereagh

The Community Planning Partnership is committed to developing a mechanism which would see the community and voluntary sector represented in Partnership structures. The Partnership has begun the process of identifying community sector representatives from each DEA. It is considering a number of options which will be discussed and agreed with the CVS over the next months.

## Mid and East Antrim

A Community Panel was initiated in 2016. It drew largely on existing community networks including: the four Ballymena Community Clusters; the two Rural Community Networks; the Carrickfergus Community Forum; and the Larne Community Development Project. Delegates from these organisations form the Panel which is designed to represent the community voice and provides 12 community representatives and six elected members the opportunity to input into all parts of the Community Planning Partnership structure. They supplement the work of local community activity in relation to Community Planning objectives.

## Mid-Ulster

The first meeting of the Mid-Ulster Community Panel was in March 2017. The Panel consists of ten people elected by postal ballot by community and voluntary groups in the area (with all groups entitled to nominate and to vote). The Panel nominates two to each of the five Community Planning Thematic Action Groups and one to the Partnership Board. The Panel and Council organise a Community Planning Convention annually. It is open to all groups and focuses on progress made on delivering the Plan.

## Newry, Mourne and Down

Newry, Mourne and Down Council introduced a DEA Forum model during 2016. The DEA Fora membership is comprised of Councillors (who chair each Forum) and community sector representatives. Statutory organisation representatives can be called to Forum meetings to discuss specific local issues. The sector's representatives were identified through a nomination and selection process overseen by Sector Matters. Nominations had to be supported by an umbrella/network of groups. Each DEA Forum has an Action Plan and dedicated Council DEA Co-ordinator. The Strategic Stakeholders' Forum (SSF) is an independent body composed of the larger voluntary organisations who work across a number of communities and areas and were invited to participate. It is represented on the Community Planning Partnership Board by its two Co-Chairs and on Thematic Groups by nominees appointed by the Forum.

## 3. CVS Engagement in Scotland

At both the national and local government levels there is a spectrum of processes and opportunities for community engagement in Scotland. In the context of formal CVS representation in Community Planning at local government level, there are two mechanisms which are commonly used:

- Local community representation in the development and delivery of local Community Plans; and
- Involvement of the CVS in the governance structures for council-wide strategic Community Plans.

In 2008 a Third Sector Interface (TSI) model was initiated with the aim of providing a clear and focused process for CVS participation in governance structures. In each council area a TSI structure was established – with 10 of the 32 being partnerships of existing organisations. The role of each TSI is to support and develop the capacity of community and voluntary groups to participate in and influence Community Planning.

## Dundee TSI

In Dundee the TSI facilitates a Third Sector Forum. The Forum is facilitated by Dundee Third Sector Interface – connecting the wider Third Sector in Dundee to the Community Planning Partnership.

The Forum aims to:

- provide a coherent, collective voice for the Third Sector and strengthen engagement between the Third Sector and Community Planning Partners.
- increase the Third Sector's input in key areas of public policy in the city and impact on the delivery of public services.
- increase awareness of the impact which the work of the Third Sector has on the people of Dundee.

Membership of the Forum is open to all community and voluntary groups with workshops and conferences being held to discuss Community Planning issues. A TSI representative is a member of the Community Planning Partnership Board and the TSI facilitates the participation of the appropriate CVS organisations in other elements of the Partnership structure. These organisations will usually be involved in other TSI supported forums (Health and Wellbeing; Age Sector; Youth; Mental Health etc).

## North Ayrshire TSI

The TSI is a partnership between the Ayrshire Community Trust and Arran Community and Voluntary Service. The TSI:

- supports voluntary organisations, both local and national, who deliver services at a local level.
- supports volunteers and promotes volunteering.
- supports and helps develop social enterprise.
- is the connection between the Community Planning Partnership and the Third Sector and facilitates communication and understanding between the two.

The TSI is represented on the Community Planning Partnership Board.

Six Locality Partnerships (together covering the whole of North Ayrshire) are responsible for identifying and addressing local priorities. In addition to the TSI representation, the Chair of the local Community Council is also on the Locality Partnership. These Councils are established by law across Scotland and are elected by public vote.

## East Ayrshire TSI

The TSI in East Ayrshire is a partnership of the Council for Voluntary Organisations (CVO) and the Volunteer Centre. Its staff represent the CVS on a number of partnerships including Community Planning. The TSI also supports and facilitates the Third Sector Forum which is the key structure for collaboration within the sector and for communication with local government and public sector bodies. Membership of the Forum is open to all community and voluntary groups and its aims are to:

- Provide a coherent, collective voice for the Third Sector and strengthen engagement between the Third Sector and Community Planning Partners;
- Create a place and structure for strategic dialogue with Third Sector agencies and other partners in East Ayrshire;
- Increase the Third Sector's input in key areas of public policy in East Ayrshire and impact on the delivery of public services; and
- Identify and highlight support needs of Third Sector organisations to the Third Sector Interface East Ayrshire in order to ensure effective and appropriate support and representation.

The involvement of communities across East Ayrshire is underpinned strategically by 'A Framework for Community Engagement' and the 'Charter for Involvement'.

## 4. CVS Engagement in Republic of Ireland

Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were established by the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 following a Government commissioned report on Citizen Engagement with Local Government. The main role of PPNs is to facilitate participation and representation of community groups in the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors on decisionmaking bodies including Local Community Development Committees and Strategic Policy Committees. They have been established in each of the 31 local authorities (city and county councils) in Ireland and operate under a number of administrative structures, with 19 hosted by the Local Authority and the rest either hosted by another community organisation or operating as new independent bodies.

The Local Government Act requires that all local authority committees on which communities are represented must source those community representatives through the PPN. The procedure followed is:

- The PPN convenes a meeting for the purpose of appointing the required representative(s) and invites all groups which are a member of the PPN.
- Those who turn up to the meeting appoint a representative from amongst those at the meeting. The groups who attend the meeting become the Linkage Group for that representative, who reports back to them and keeps them in touch with news from the body they have been appointed to.

Funding for PPNs is provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Local Authorities. In 2018 the Department provided the bulk of the core funding for PPNs (typically 50,000 euros) with most also receiving funding (typically 30,000 euros) from their own local authority to support their work (though up to 70,000 euros in one case). In some cases,

Local Authorities have made membership of the PPN an eligibility requirement for groups accessing grants.

By the end of 2018 over 14,800 community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations were members of a PPN, with over 900 PPN representatives elected to 370 committees on issues such as strategic policy, local community development, joint policing etc.

Local authorities and PPNs work together collaboratively to support communities and build the capacity of member organisations to engage meaningfully on issues that concern them. PPNs also have a role in the development and education of their member groups, sharing information, promoting best practice and facilitating networking. Building real engagement at local level is seen as a developmental process that requires intensive work and investment. In recognition of their key role, PPNs received an increase in resources in 2018 to fund the post of Support Worker.

Each PPN is in the process of developing a Vision for Community Wellbeing which will set out the PPN priorities under the following themes:

### Monaghan PPN

The Monaghan PPN is a good example of the PPNs in practice ([www.ppnmonaghan.ie](http://www.ppnmonaghan.ie)). Its membership is open to all community and voluntary groups with an address in Co Monaghan which meet the following criteria:

- in operation for at least 6 months;
- have a set of rules, usually a Constitution, which lays out the purpose of the group and how it will carry out its business;
- have a Chair; and
- meet a minimum of once a year.

A 'Secretariat' is formed by the membership and functions as a Board. The 12 members are drawn from each of the local authority districts,

the three sectoral colleges (community, social inclusion and environmental) and thematic networks (for youth, older people, disability, community safety, arts). The Secretariat manages staff and over sees operations and activities. It reports to the 'Full Plenary' which meets four times per year and is open to all members.

It is the ultimate decision-making body for determining priorities and identifying and discussing issues.

## 5. CVS Representation in England

There is no strategic framework for CVS representation and community engagement across England. The Health Service enables engagement in improving services, while the Localism Act 2011 introduced a new 'neighbourhood planning' process. It provides a mechanism for approved community organisations to develop plans which can shape the spatial development of their areas. It does not establish a right for the community and voluntary sector to participate in or contribute to the decision making of local authorities. However, some local authorities have established processes and mechanisms for CVS representation in strategic services planning.

### Manchester

The Voluntary Sector Assembly provides a forum for community leaders across Manchester to come together to understand and address the challenges facing the communities in the city. This involves a range of approaches including working at a strategic level with public sector agencies, building relationships with other sectors, lobbying, and collaboration between organisations. The Assembly seeks:

- To bring together leaders in local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations to debate local social and economic issues facing the city.
- To maintain an overview of the development of the local sector.
- To champion the contribution of the CVS sector to Manchester in meeting the needs of diverse local communities.
- To increase recognition of the sector's contribution to the local economy in delivering employment, training, volunteering and many other opportunities.
- To stimulate partnership working between organisations and with other sectors.
- To support and encourage leaders and leadership within the sector.

The Assembly is supported by MACC (Manchester Alliance for Community Care [www.macc.org.uk](http://www.macc.org.uk)) which hosts and facilitates the quarterly meetings through its Policy and Influence Team. Representatives of the Assembly (who in some cases are MACC staff) represent the CVS on over 20 strategic partnerships to influence local policy and decisions, raise issues of concern, promote the impact of the work of the voluntary, community and faith sector in Manchester, and to gather information to share with sector colleagues. In 2013 MACC successfully bid for a single tender issued by the Council for the provision of support, representation, engagement, policy and capacity building for the CVS in the city.



## Newcastle

Newcastle Council facilitates community engagement through two primary mechanisms: Community Reference Groups (CRGs) and a Community Panel.

The CRGs are considered an important part of the Council's community engagement framework. CRGs are established as reference groups for specific projects to help the Council gain information from, and share information with, the community.

The Council describes CRGs as an effective way to involve key stakeholders and the community in specific projects or activities and as providing opportunities to align service delivery and operations with the needs and expectations of the community.

The CRGs broadly aim to:

- Provide a forum for members to discuss issues of community interest;
- Draw on local knowledge and enhance community voice in decision-making processes and outcomes; and
- Build community understanding of the Council's core business functions and specific projects and activities.

The CRGs can include local community and voluntary groups. However, there is no ongoing formal process for CVS representation.

The Community panel is promoted as 'Newcastle Voice' and described as the City of Newcastle's community reference panel. It's one of the tools the Council uses to engage with the community to better understand issues and opinions on a variety of topics to help inform decision-making. Over 2,500 community members (which includes members of the public) have signed up to Newcastle Voice to provide feedback regarding projects, events and initiatives in Newcastle.

Members are invited to have their say on policies, programmes and projects through:

- Online tools;
- Surveys;
- Community workshops, information sessions or focus groups; and
- Quick polls.

## Bristol

Voscur is the support and development agency for Bristol's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE [www.voscur.org](http://www.voscur.org)). It works to support VCSE organisations to increase their impact (capacity building) and to inform and help design effective services (influencing and VCSE participation).

Within the health services sector Voscur supports a network of Advocates who attend key strategic health sector bodies in a voluntary capacity. It also facilitates 'Voscur Sector Leaders' with a view to ensuring that the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector is involved in strategic and operational decision making on a broad range of issues. Voscur Sector Leader roles are voluntary – they are appointed as representatives based on the specific expertise and experience that they bring to the role.

## 6. CVS Representation in Wales

At a national level the Welsh Government and CVS formally interact through the framework of the Third Sector Scheme (introduced by the 2006 Government of Wales Act) which sets out how the Government and the voluntary sector should communicate and work together. The aims of the Scheme are to achieve:

- Stronger, more resilient, communities – the way most people make a voluntary contribution to the vibrancy and regeneration of their communities, provide care and help build people's confidence and skills; and the opportunities the Third Sector creates for employment and local enterprise.
- Better policy – the knowledge and expertise the Third Sector offers through its front-line experience to help shape policies, procedures and services.
- Better public services – the innovative and transforming role the Third Sector can play in making public services reach more people and become more sensitive to their needs.

The Scheme commits the Welsh Government to:

- maintain arrangements for meaningful engagement and consultation with the Third Sector;
- maintain arrangements for supporting communities and volunteers; and
- maintain arrangements for supporting structures.

In practice this includes biannual meetings between Government and the Third Sector Partnership Council and between sector representatives and each Government Minister – also biannually. (The Council is composed of 25 people from networks within the sector who are elected every two years). The Scheme also requires each Minister to set a Departmental scheme for supporting and promoting relevant voluntary organisations. A key element is core

funding for a Voluntary Council in each of the 19 Counties Core through Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW). This support is focused around four key pillars of activity: volunteering; good governance, sustainable funding, and engagement and influencing with public service partners (see Gwent and Powys examples).

The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015) is unique to Wales and requires its public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequality and climate change. Guidance flowing from the Act emphasises the value of community engagement and underlines the 10 Engagement Principles endorsed by the Government in 2011.

The Act established seven Wellbeing Goals which all public sector bodies are required to help deliver:

In each local authority area Wellbeing Plans have been developed and are being implemented by Public Service Partnership Boards (PSBs). The County Voluntary Councils are an integral part of the PSB governance.

Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) has over 700 member groups and is the County Voluntary Council for the area ([www.pavo.org.uk/](http://www.pavo.org.uk/)). Like the other Voluntary Councils, it is responsible for supporting, developing and promoting the community infrastructure across the Powys area and for facilitating CVS representation on a number of partnership structures – including the Wellbeing Public Services Partnership Board (PSB). It does this by inviting nominations from the sector and setting up an independent panel for assessing and selecting representatives against pre-determined criteria. To encourage nominations PAVO will hold meetings with relevant organisations and networks to promote the role and opportunity. PAVO continues to support the representatives in their roles and responsibilities throughout the agreed time a representative is on a partnership.

In Newport there are two CVS representatives on the 16 person PSB – one from the Newport Third Sector Partnership and one from the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO). A core feature of the governance structure is a Community Engagement Group which is responsible for co-ordinating and promoting community engagement across all partners. The membership of the group includes three representatives of GAVO which is the County Voluntary Council covering Newport and three other PSB areas. Membership of GAVO is open to all community and voluntary organisations in the Gwent ([www.gavo.org.uk/](http://www.gavo.org.uk/)).

## 8. Learning from the Workshop

The participants in the workshop were from across the region and represented all sectors. Following a presentation focused on the CVS representation models the participants were asked to indicate which model they are most drawn to.

The majority of participants were drawn to the 'Open Call' model, followed closely by 'CVS Network'; 'Task Group Workshops' and the 'Hybrid' model. Interestingly, both the 'Directly Elected' and 'Selection By Independent Body' received much less support.

In the lead-in to group discussions and to ground the workshop in operational experiences of CVS representation, four people were invited to input their reflections:

Kim Weir is a Community Planning Officer with Fermanagh and Omagh Council – a position she has held since Councils first became responsible for facilitating Community Planning. Kim explained that a CVS Forum of 20 members was established by an election process by postal ballot with all CVS groups entitled to nominate candidates and vote. The Forum represents the sector within the Community Planning governance structures – thus underlining

recognition of the sector. Benefits of the Forum include: improved communications and information sharing; better co-ordination where previously there may have been competition or a lack of trust; more collective working within the sector (particularly during the COVID crisis); and better relationships between council officers and many CVS organisations. Ongoing challenges include building mutual trust and, as priorities evolve and change, finding ways of ensuring CVS representation reflects this change. The election process for Forum membership strengthened sector representation but the process by itself may arguably now be too rigid for an evolving process. One of the sector's strengths is its flexibility and responsiveness which might be better facilitated through the 'open call' model presented in the report.

Nicholas McCrickard Manager with the County Down Rural Community Network which works across Newry, Mourne and Down (NMD) and Ards and North Down. Reflecting on the Network's experience in NMD Nicholas referred to the two forms of CVS representation outlined in the report and how these facilitated CVS participation in the Community Planning structures at District Electoral Area (DEA), Board and thematic sub-group levels. These structures for CVS representation were able to quickly mobilise responses to the COVID crisis with huge involvement of volunteers across the Council area. Working in partnership with the Council and other Community Planning statutory bodies, DEA teams and a strategic council-wide 'Community Hub' were set up to co-ordinate responses. These structures remain in place to ensure any response services needed over the coming months can be quickly organised. New relationships have been formed and old ones improved within the CVS and it has been shown that barriers to cooperation within and between sectors can be overcome when needs must. The CVS has and is emerging stronger and more cohesive and is now making the case for a more equal place at the Community Planning 'table' (and more involvement for the private sector).

Chris Leech and Donna Stewart are both members of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon CVS Panel. Chris chairs the Craigavon Food Bank and Donna works with the Craigavon and Banbridge Volunteer Bureau. They spoke about the community responses to COVID and the results of a community survey undertaken to capture these (see Appendix ii). Co-operation within the CVS was strengthened and mobilised a large voluntary effort to deliver on peoples' doorsteps. They stressed that this experience has evidenced needs in communities which must now inform Community Planning. It has also shown that decisions taken at a regional level really need input by the CVS and that there is a disconnect between these regional decisionmaking processes and delivery of support on the ground. Community Planning in the ABC area is re-prioritising – informed by this bottom-up experience and information and this needs to also happen at a regional level. Partnership working with the Council and Health Trust was very effective as was the CVS Panel and all those who volunteered across the whole area. Going forward there is room to strengthen the sharing of resources, skills and knowledge.

## Key Learning from Break-out Discussions

Participants were allocated to seven smaller breakout rooms and asked to discuss:

*'Reflecting on what you have learned in the past few months, please identify three lessons for how communities and Community Planning partners can strengthen relationships'*

Lessons commonly cited during feedback included:

- The CVS in particular and Community Planning partners have better information on needs in local communities and this must inform priorities going forward.
- Greater recognition of the CVS and its abilities and capability is very welcome but needs to be lasting.
- The CVS should be afforded more meaningful and equal opportunities to participate in Community Planning and decision-making at a regional level.
- The CVS needs sustainable, core support to enable it to realise its full potential.
- In some cases, there may be value in assessing whether the model used for CVS representation supports the flexibility and responsiveness of the CVS and will nurture the newly realised energy in local communities.
- The COVID crisis has highlighted the urgent need to provide access to good broadband for people and communities in need (especially in rural areas).
- The crisis has demonstrated that Councils and other statutory bodies can collaborate with the CVS and take decisions quickly – this trust and responsiveness needs to endure beyond the crisis.

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