



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**



Department for
Communities

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Community Development Strategy

2023-2026

**SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES
AND ACTIONS**

Introduction

The Department for Communities (DfC) provides annual funding to District Councils through a Community Support Programme (CSP) *‘to strengthen local communities, increase community participation and promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups, community activity and local advice services’*.

The CSP funding is used for staff, grants, capacity building and generalist advice, and is matched by a Council contribution. Some of the funding from the Department of Communities is ringfenced for specific projects such as Generalist Advice provision or a Social Supermarket Support Programme.

Council developed a Community Development Strategy and Action Plan to guide this work for a 3 year period from 2020-2023. We have carried out a refresh of this Strategy to review how we have contributed towards achieving the outcomes and to make any updates to reflect the changing environment and guide how Council provides community development support during the 3 year period up to 2026. The annual Action Plan is reviewed and adapted annually. In the review we carried out structured interviews with community groups; we held reflection sessions for grant recipients and we reviewed the findings of the PeacePlus and Good Relations consultations.

Outcomes

The Community Development Strategy was developed using an Outcomes Based approach. This approach starts with the results we’d like to achieve and works backwards to consider the means to achieving these results. Outcomes are the change or conditions that we would like to achieve as a result of the strategy.

At a ‘whole population’ level ie. all the people living in Causeway Coast and Glens there are three broad outcomes for the sector that can’t be achieved by a single organisation or service working in isolation but rather take sustained and concerted action from many organisations and can only be delivered through effective partnership working across key stakeholders.

The 3 Outcomes for our 2023-26 Community Development Strategy are:

OUTCOME 1: Our Communities will be Resourced and Confident

OUTCOME 2: Our Communities will be Connected

OUTCOME 3: Our Communities will be Fair and Inclusive

Key Actions

A number of work streams and key actions have been identified to achieve the outcomes and contribute towards the delivery of Council's priorities.

Outcome 1: Resourced and Confident Communities

1.1 Developmental support to new and existing organisations and promotion of good practice

This will be achieved through one to one officer support tailored to the needs of individual organisations – governance, policies, community engagement, project development, signposting to Council services; as well as training and support for new groups setting up including a small seeding resource allocation for new groups to support with venue hire, insurance promotion and other set up costs.

1.2 Financial assistance towards core costs of community development organisations

This will be provided through the Community Development Support Grant Programme to support operating costs of groups and buildings, and in particular community organisations that are providing community centres and halls where there is no Council provision. We will continue to provide the grant on a 3 year term and consider options to increase the level of grant awarded over the next 3 years in light of significant increases in operating costs of community buildings, in particular utility costs.

1.3 Funding guidance and support to develop fundraising strategies

This will be provided through one to one funding clinics, training and funding fairs. Guidance will include annual programme planning and budgeting, gathering evidence of need, community engagement, project development, measuring impact, identifying funders and applying for funding and fundraising.

1.4 Promotion of Council community centres as hubs for connecting and participation to promote health and well-being

This will be carried out by working with Sport and Wellbeing Department to deliver on the vision of “shared, welcoming, accessible, fit for purpose community centres which provide a range of activities and services to address the needs of all sections of the community” and through engagement with communities in areas where Council centres are located and implementing recommendations from the Shared Spaces in CCG Community Centres Perception Study that was carried out through the Shared Space Initiatives undertaken through the Peace IV Action Plan funded by the European Union’s Regional Development Fund.

1.5 Promotion of good practice in community operated community centres

We will provide training for community groups operating community centres and in receipt of Community Development Support Grant to encourage good practice in all aspects of operating a community centre. A training programme will be adapted annually based on needs identified and could include aspects of governance, health & safety, energy efficiency, operations and monitoring, consultation and activity programming.

1.6 Promotion of volunteering and support for succession planning

We will develop a programme to support succession planning for volunteer committees and boards to review the make up and skills of their current board or committee and to consider how they recruit and support new members to ensure sustainability of their organisation and promote increased involvement of young people in community leadership.

We will continue to work with the 2 Volunteer Centres to promote good practice in volunteer involvement and celebrate the contribution of volunteering across the Borough. We will support the implementation of Council’s Volunteer Policy to open up volunteering opportunities within Council as well as employer supported volunteering opportunities for Council employees.

Outcome 2: Connected Communities

2.1 Communication and sharing of information and opportunities to support and promote the community and voluntary sector

We will do this by maintaining a central Register of Community & Voluntary Organisations in the Borough which will be available for access on Council's website in order to promote greater awareness of the sector. We will regularly share information and opportunities with the register through mailouts and a Community & Culture Service area newsletter.

2.2 Communities connecting and sharing good practice and learning

We will do this through regular information and good practice sharing and connecting events in area based clusters across the Borough which will rotate around different community venues. These provide an opportunity for organisations to share practice and learn from other and an opportunity for peer support for workers employed in the community and voluntary sector. These meetings continue to provide a very useful opportunity for engagement with Council services and other statutory and funding organisations.

2.3 Connecting Communities to Council and promoting good community engagement in Council

We will do this by providing opportunities for community groups to link with Council services such as environmental resources, licencing, energy efficiency etc by organising information sharing and connecting events. We will provide guidance and support to Council service areas to plan all stages of engagement and consultation with local communities in order to ensure appropriate, inclusive and effective approaches to community engagement within Council which recognise the diversity of communities in CCG. We will work with Corporate Services to increase awareness about Council committees and decision-making processes for the community and voluntary sector. We will work with Community Planning Officers in Council to support the Community Engagement Platform which is a mechanism for engagement between public service bodies and local community representatives to monitor services and influence decision making and a means for the collective voice of the community and voluntary sector to be expressed and heard in relation to Community Planning.

2.4 Addressing loneliness and promoting social connections

We will do this by providing support and financial resources to organisations for social connecting activities through the Social Connections Grant and collaboration with members in the Causeway Coast and Glens Loneliness Network. We want to promote and support opportunities for social connection through a range of community, cultural, leisure and sporting activities in community facilities across the borough for children and young people, older people, new arrivals, those with mental health issues, with a disability and anyone experiencing isolation.

2.5 Supporting community festivals and events

We will do this through the Community Festivals Grant programme (part funded by DfC) for community festivals that support community cohesion and participation. We will also partner with Council's Events Team to promote good practice in event management through the provision of training and provide developmental support to community festival organisers to share ideas, good practice and encourage peer support.

Outcome 3: Fair and Inclusive Communities

3.1 Provision of Generalist Advice Service

Generalist advice services provide valuable support and advice on issues like welfare benefits, housing, finance, consumer issues and employment issues. We will continue to commission a Generalist Advice service for the Borough to provide advice through face to face, telephone and online mediums in a number of locations across the district.

3.2 Area based approaches to tackling disadvantage and social and economic inequality through Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships

We will continue to facilitate and coordinate Neighbourhood Renewal projects in Coleraine and Limavady in association with the Department for Communities and will participate in planning and design of the succeeding People and Place Strategy and local delivery mechanism to ensure that the needs and circumstances of vulnerable and marginalised communities are understood by decision makers and service providers in CCG to ensure that the strategy best addresses disadvantage and social and economic inequality in the borough.

3.3 Co-ordination of Anti-poverty Stakeholder Group and delivery of Action Plan

We will continue to facilitate the Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group (APSSG) working in partnership with those organisations that are tackling poverty in the Borough in order to ensure a collaborative and co-ordinated approach between organisations working to support those most in need. We will support and help build the capacity of those organisations that support those most in need and work in partnership with others to tackle the causes of poverty. We will also promote better information, signposting and communication about support services.

3.4 Social Supermarket Support Programme

Social Supermarkets provide members who are struggling financially and meet certain criteria with the opportunity to shop in a reduced cost food shop for a set period of time alongside engaging in wraparound support including advice on debt, benefits, budgeting, healthy eating, housing, physical and mental health referral, and education, training and volunteering opportunities to enhance employability skills. Following positive evaluation of DfC's Social Supermarket Pilot Programme they have expanded funding to all Council areas. We will design and roll out a Social Supermarket Support Programme in association with existing service delivery organisations to offer a longer term and sustainable response to food insecurity across the borough.

3.5 Promotion of community participation, cohesion and active citizenship, including Participatory Budgeting

We will continue to connect with statutory and other agencies to promote collaborative approaches to promoting active citizenship and participation in community life. We will explore the potential to secure resources and link with other partners in collective programmes such as Participatory Budgeting to promote local decision making and active citizenship.

We will also facilitate area or community wide forums/ working groups/ meetings where common issues are raised by more than one group or where there are several groups operating in an area with the potential for duplication/ competition for resources. These forums and meetings will identify and facilitate future collaborative and joined up approaches.

3.6 Building capacity for advocacy and lobbying

Local communities need supported in building capacity to engage effectively with elected representatives, statutory and public sector agencies to ensure that their voice and concerns are heard. We will provide training around presentation skills and gathering evidence and support collaboration with like-minded groups and raise awareness of Council decision making structures.