

Community Planning Update	16th February 2016
Corporate Policy and Resources Committee	For Decision/Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Leader and Champion
Outcome	Establish key relationships with strategic partners to deliver our vision for this Council area
Lead Officer	Elizabeth Beattie
Cost: (If applicable)	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 As previously indicated, the Community Plan will be a long term plan (for 10 to 15 years), based on sound, robust evidence with a focus on improving social, economic and environmental well-being and contributing to sustainable development.
- 1.2 The Community Plan will be a strategic planning tool and it will be the key over-arching framework for partnerships and initiatives in the Council area and at local and neighbourhood levels. It is not seen as an additional or parallel process to structures already in place.
- 1.3 Developing and implementing the Community Plan will be a major undertaking and will involve partnership working at many different levels in this area. The aim will be to try and integrate wide ranging streams of public life, weaving these together and producing a statement outlining the future direction for the new Council area and how it will be achieved.

2.0 Community Planning Councillor Workshop

- 2.1 As part of the process a workshop was held for Councillors on 23rd January 2016 at which elected members were invited to give their views on a vision for the Causeway Coast and Glens area and to identify the key priorities that should be addressed within the area.
- 2.2 Mark Conway from Venturei gave a presentation which profiled the area on the basis of a wide ranging statistical analysis following which discussion took place on scoping a vision for the area and identifying key priorities.

2.3 On the basis of the feedback provided by elected members, the Councillors vision for the Causeway Coast and Glens area can be summarised as follows:

An area which:

- Makes full use of its many natural assets whilst cherishing them and allowing for development through locally appropriate planning controls.
- Is in the “Premiership of Tourism” in Northern Ireland with tourism being a vibrant part of a strong and mixed economy.
- Trains and educates its people well, has a healthy population and is an older person-friendly place.
- Enjoys a good infrastructure.

2.4 The Councillor’s strategic priorities for the Causeway Coast and Glens area can be summarised as follows:

- Infrastructural improvements in the areas of major roads, broadband, transport, urban regeneration and social housing.
- Rolling out community health and well-being programmes and opportunities.
- Growing and developing tourism in multi-layered ways.
- Growing and developing the area’s small and medium-sized businesses.
- Improving the skills base in the area.

3.0 Community Planning Strategic Partnership

3.1 The statutory community planning partners will be legally required to develop the community plan, deliver assigned tasks identified in the plan, monitor and review the plan and seek community participation in the community planning process.

3.2 Although the legislation formally designating the statutory partners in community planning has not yet gone through the Assembly, a number of organisations were previously identified as potential statutory partners.

3.3 These organisations were:

Police Service for NI
Tourism NI
NI Housing Executive
Education Authority for NI
Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Western Health and Social Care Trust
Health and Social Care Board
Public Health Agency
Fire and Rescue Service
Invest NI
Sport NI
Libraries NI

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)

- 3.4 In order to begin the process of trying to form a Community Planning Strategic Partnership representatives from these organisations have now been invited to participate in two Partnership meetings.
- 3.5 The first meeting held in November 2015 was an introductory session which gave those present an overview of community planning and the role of the Council and enabled consideration of a project plan for the development of the Community Plan.
- 3.6 The second meeting on 2nd February 2016 incorporated a workshop session similar in format to the Councillor workshop. Those present were invited to give their views on a vision for the area and the key priorities/themes for the Community Plan.
- 3.7 The Strategic Partnership workshop participants wanted to see a Causeway Coast and Glens area which:
- Made fuller use of its many assets to attract and retain high-value tourists
 - Used the University to help drive forward a higher-value and better-balanced economy
 - Protected (but doesn't fossilize) its natural assets
 - Was underpinned by strong and content communities, where older people are well-supported
 - Had a network of 'strong' towns.
- 3.8 The strategic priorities identified for the Causeway Coast and Glens area included:
- Improving accessibility, both by bringing more services to people and by improving transport options for them
 - Better sharing of information and joint-planning between statutory organisations
 - Full use being made of the voluntary sector and volunteers
 - Using the University as an engine to drive the area and help stimulate the growth of higher-paid jobs.
- 3.7 Discussion also took place at the meeting on:
- Governance structures for the Strategic Partnership
 - Extending membership of the Partnership to include organisations such as the Ulster University, local Colleges, representatives from local businesses, community and voluntary groups, etc.
 - Potential tools and techniques that could be used to engage effectively with the community.

- Establishing a routine for meetings of the Partnership (which was agreed as monthly on the first Wednesday of every month).

4.0 Councillor Involvement and Governance Issues

- 4.1 Development and delivery of the community plan will be a shared task between the statutory partners and Council and it is expected that Councillors will be represented on the Community Planning Strategic Partnership.
- 4.2 Councillors will have to decide how they want to be represented on the Partnership. Feedback from the Councillor workshop suggested that elected members were keen to be involved but ideas differed as to how this could be implemented. For example, one of the suggestions given was that the Chairs of Council's Committees could be involved.
- 4.3 Guidance would be welcomed by officers on how this Councillor involvement could be facilitated in order to enable Councillor representation at future meetings of the Strategic Partnership.

5.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee make recommendations to Council on how elected members could be represented at meetings of the Community Planning Strategic Partnership.