

Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

To: Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date: 17 November 2015

**Community Planning in the Causeway Coast and
Glens Borough Council Area**

**For decision and
approval**

Linkage to Corporate Plan	
Strategic Priority	Leader and Champion
Objective	Civic Leadership
Lead Officer	Elizabeth Beattie
Cost: (If applicable)	To be determined

1.0 Background – What is Community Planning?

1.1 The formal definition of community planning proposed by the Department of the Environment is:

“A process led by Councils in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared vision for their area, a long term vision which relates to all aspects of community life and which also involves working together to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people’s lives.”

1.2 The benefits envisaged from introducing a process of community planning are to:

- Develop better integrated local services
- Deliver solutions without duplication
- Generate more effective collaboration across the public sector
- Better use of public resources
- Higher standards of public services
- A willingness to innovate and learn from others.

2.0 What is the Community Plan?

2.1 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.

- 2.2 The Community Plan will be a strategic planning tool and the recommendation from the DoE is that the community plan should use an outcomes based approach.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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 a 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.
- 2.5 The Community Planning process should achieve:
- A rigorous analysis of existing conditions in the Council area;
 - An integrated view of the social, economic and environmental needs of the area;
 - A long term, ambitious vision for the future;
 - A clear focus on ways to achieve the long term vision incorporated in an Action Plan;
 - A set of outcomes which can be monitored and measured.
- 2.6 The emphasis will be on identifying broad priorities and themes but more localised issues can be addressed through relevant themed or local area based strategies that will sit within the framework of community planning.
- 2.7 The Community Plan will be closely allied to the new Local Development Plan with the Development Plan providing a spatial strategy to underpin the Community Plan.

3.0 What is Council's Role?

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility laid down in Part 10 (sections 66 to 78) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 to lead community planning in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area. The Council is required to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in community planning for its area.
- 3.2 The Council will be the lead partner in a Community Planning Partnership and will put in place a process where it works with a range of partner organisations and agencies to develop and implement a shared vision for the Council area.
- 3.3 The Council will be responsible for:
- Facilitating and managing the community planning process
 - Ensuring the commitments in the Council's Equality Scheme are applied to the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the community plan.
 - Work collaboratively with the community planning partnership to reach consensus on the content of the community plan.

- Work with the community planning partnership to monitor and review the plan and put in place systems to report to the public on progress.
- Ensure that community involvement is an integral part of the community planning process.

4.0 Duty on Community Planning Partners

4.1 The organisations and agencies that are statutorily required to participate in the Community Planning Partnership will be established by legislation. This legislation is yet to be agreed by the Assembly but these bodies may include:

- Tourism NI
- NI Housing Executive
- Police Service of NI
- Education Authority NI
- Local Health and Social Care Trusts
- Health and Social Care Board
- Public Health Agency
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Invest NI
- Sports NI
- Libraries NI
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)

4.2 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.

4.3 Development and delivery of the community plan will be a shared task between the statutory partners and Council. Those attending meetings of the Community Planning Strategic Partnership on behalf of these organisations will be expected to be able to speak authoritatively for their organisations and commit them to courses of action.

5.0 Duty on Government Departments

5.1 Government Departments are unlikely to be designated as statutory community planning partners. Instead they will be required under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, *“when exercising any function which might affect community planning, to promote and encourage community planning and have regard to any implications of a community plan for the exercise of a department’s functions.”*

5.2 A generic engagement protocol which clearly establishes the relationship between central and local government on community planning is to be developed by the Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland (subject to approval by the Executive).

5.3 It is possible that Government Departments which directly deliver services locally may be invited to participate in community planning at the local level but it is for

each Department to consider the implications of this in consultation with the Council.

6.0 Support Partners

- 6.1 The Community Planning Partnership may consider it important to include a wide range of other organisations in the Council area in the community planning process or strategic partnership structure. These support partners could include community and voluntary organisations or networks and representatives from the private business sector.
- 6.2 Support partners would be involved on a voluntary basis and should agree in advance their role and the extent to which they will participate in the community planning process.

7.0 The Community Planning Strategic Partnership

- 7.1 It is up to each Council to decide on the appropriate governance structure for community planning in its area. This will probably involve the establishment of a strategic partnership with membership involving Councillors, Council Officers, the statutory community planning partners and other key community stakeholders or support partners.

8.0 What Do We Need to Do?

- 8.1 **Appendix 1** outlines a draft project plan for the process which covers the following main aspects of the community planning process:

Evidence Gathering and Learning – creation of a baseline of the existing conditions in the Council area and a process for on-going review and updating of this information. This will provide the evidence base against which decisions can be made and progress monitored.

Consultation, Engagement and Communication – seek the views of the community, encourage them to express their views and take their views into account in the community planning process.

Governance – developing the processes and identifying the structures necessary to support community planning such as the establishment of a Community Planning Partnership Board.

Developing the Plan - Identify key issues that will inform the long-term vision for this area and identify and agree the key outcomes needed for the CC&G area. This will also include identifying key tasks necessary to deliver and achieve the vision through the development of an action plan to support the Community Plan.

Accountability and Performance - agree performance monitoring arrangements and reporting mechanisms against delivery of the community plan.

9.0 Update for Councillors on Community Planning/Consultation Opportunity

Councillors may find it useful to receive an update on the Council's approach to Community Planning and also use this as an opportunity to give their views on the future strategic priorities for the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Plan. If so, a workshop can be arranged in January and suggestions as to the location and the form this could take are welcome.

10.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Council the approval of the draft project plan for implementation of Community Planning in the Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council area, as set out in **Appendix 1**.