



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Research Paper

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Community Planning

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The following paper is in response to a request from the Environment Committee in relation to community planning and examples. It looks at the different definitions afforded to the term of community planning throughout England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and gives an overview of the legislative framework in these areas. Examples of community planning in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland are explored, and where information is available, it gives the outcomes of the process and findings from any reviews conducted both at a local and national scale.

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Background

Community planning is a relatively new concept for Northern Ireland introduced through the Review of Public Administration. It is to be legislated for under the Local Government (Re-organisation) Bill, the final piece of legislation that ties up the Local Government aspects of RPA.

While community planning is in its infancy in NI, it has been implemented in other regions such as Scotland, England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland, by varying degrees over the past 10 years. It is due to this that the definition of community planning tends to vary slightly from region to region making it difficult to identify a common meaning to the term.

The model for community planning recommended for Northern Ireland is based on the Scottish model,¹ and for this reason a strong place to start is the definition given by Scotland. In Audit Scotland's Report "Community Planning: An Initial Review", community planning is defined as,

"the process through which public sector organisations work together and with local communities and the voluntary sector, to identify and solve local problems, improve services and share resources".

However, in terms of a definition from a Northern Ireland perspective, back in 2008 the Minister of Environment at the time, Mrs Arlene Foster, laid out the components of community planning in a statement to the Assembly. These included:

- an effective, statute-based Community Planning process led and facilitated by the new councils;
- a clear statutory requirement on all other public bodies including policing, health and education bodies to participate in and support the Community Planning process;
- a clear duty placed on councils to engage with local communities to produce a community plan.

The following table, from Community Places, gives examples of how community planning has been described both in Northern Ireland and other regions where it is in operation. The examples are taken from strategic views on community planning to local definitions.

¹ Department of the Environment Community Planning Subgroup Recommendation one, to the Taskforce, June 2006 [online] available from: http://www.flga.org.uk/uploads/docs/lgrt_cp_recommendations_to_the_taskforce.pdf

What is Community Planning?

Community Places highlights that the definitions are taken from a range of sources which include Government Legislation, Council Community Plans/Strategies and Local Community Plans

	Scotland	England and Wales	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Strategic View	<p>Community Planning is a process whereby the public services in the area of a Local Authority are planned and provided after consultation and (ongoing) co-operation among all public bodies and with community bodies.</p> <p>Local Government Act 2003</p>	<p>Public bodies need to identify and understand the needs and aspirations of their citizens and the communities that they serve, and then plan to meet those in the most responsive, accountable and effective way.</p> <p>At the local level, this means local authorities and other partners working closely to shape the medium- and long-term development of their areas while actively engaging with citizens and communities as a vital part of that process. A process known as Community Planning.</p> <p>'Local Vision' - Statutory Guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government</p>	<p>A County/City Development Board operates under the aegis of each County or City Council.</p> <p>The Boards bring together all players locally – the public sector agencies, the social partners, local government and local development – to seek common cause in developing their counties and cities, in planning for the future with better co-operation and co-ordination and to operate in a more integrated way.</p> <p>Department of Environment and Local Government</p>	<p>The aim of Community Planning is to make sure that people and communities are genuinely engaged in decisions made about the public services which affect them.</p> <p>Allied to this is a commitment/duty by all those who deliver services in the council area to work together to provide co-ordinated, high-quality outcomes people rightly expect.</p> <p>The drive for Community Planning should be seen in the context of the process to create more responsive and effective public services for citizens.</p> <p>Review of Public Administration</p>
Council View	<p>Community Planning is the process through which the connections between national priorities decided by the Scottish Executive and those at Highland, local and neighbourhood levels are improved. It is about making sure that people and</p>	<p>Community Planning is a way of giving local people the opportunity to create a shared vision for their area and identify priorities for action which are agreed by a wide range of people, organisations and</p>	<p>The Louth County Development Board brings together various strands involved in local government, local development, the state agencies at local level and the social partners which includes the community and voluntary sector. The</p>	<p>The proposed Community Planning process will provide a framework for making public services responsive to, and organised around, the needs of communities. The two main aims of Community Planning</p>

	Scotland	England and Wales	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
	<p>communities in the Highlands are genuinely engaged in making decisions on public services which affect them. It requires a commitment from organisations in the Highlands to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.</p> <p>The Highlands Council</p>	<p>groups.</p> <p>Devon County Council</p>	<p>broad functions of the Board are to: draw up a comprehensive County Strategy on social, economic and cultural development; identify gaps and duplication in local service delivery; nurture constructive co-operation and active participation by all members of the Board based on a partnership approach; oversee the implementation of the Strategy.</p> <p>Louth County Development Board</p>	<p>can be described as: making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions made on public services which affect them; allied to a commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services.</p> <p>Northern Ireland Local Government Association</p>
Local View	<p>Community Planning is a way of working that brings together organisations and the communities they serve to improve the quality and range of services for local people.</p> <p>Wigtown Area Community Plan</p>	<p>Community Planning is about working across organisational and geographic boundaries to use resources more effectively and to ensure that communities are able to influence decision-making.</p> <p>Llanelli Community Network</p>	<p>The local strategy addresses the economic, social and physical development of Dunmanway and its hinterland and sets out a framework of objectives and actions for the next ten to fifteen years, with a view to making the area a better place to live, learn, work, visit and do business.</p> <p>Dunmanway Integrated Development Strategy, Cork</p>	<p>Community Planning is the opportunity for communities and individuals to have a say in the way they are governed, in the decisions that affect their lives and the way public money is spent.</p> <p>'Putting the Community into Community Planning' – Sustainable Northern Ireland Project</p>

Legislative Summary

Northern Ireland

To fully appreciate the potential for Community Planning in Northern Ireland it may be useful to get an insight into the decisions being made under the Review of Public Administration in relation the Reform of Local Government.

The reform proposals impact on every aspect of local government operation such as the structures for efficient, fair and transparent decision-making, the sharing of power and responsibility, the standards by which councils and councillors operate, how improvement in the delivery of council services can be achieved, and how councils can act as the focal point for improving the outcomes for citizens in their area through community planning.

Community Planning is being legislated for under the final piece of reform legislation known as Local Government (Re-organisation) Bill to be introduced to the Assembly before the summer. According to the Department's Consultation document (2010) it is proposed that councils should have a requirement placed on them to lead and facilitate community planning. This involves:

- councils consulting and co-operating with all service providing bodies in the district, the community, and individuals to plan for public service provision;
- Councils being required to publish community plans for their districts, and review these as necessary;
- Councils having responsibility for determining representation on structures they establish;
- Establishment of a statutory Link in the between development plans and community plans;
- Publication of guidance on scope of the duties of all those involved, including the role of departments underpinned by the Partnership Panel²;
- Guidance on publication of plans to give broad direction on prioritisation etc.
- Enabling Community Planning Partnership to become a body corporate³

² This advisory panel would formalise the relationships between the Executive and district councils and provide a forum for the collective consideration of strategic issues.

³ In Scotland CPPs are tasked with preparing community plans. While Community Planning Partnerships have not been specifically defined in the Consultation, the Department has agreed to this provision suggesting that CPPs may become part of the process in time.

England

In England the change was made to neighbourhood planning in 2011 under the Localism Act. The Localism Act 2011 introduced new powers for people to make neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood planning orders, with reduced interference from central government. These new powers are in addition to existing opportunities for community involvement, which are already part of the planning system.

Communities are able to proceed with local development without the need for a planning application. The neighbourhood decides what a plan contains and identifies the specific site or broad location, the form, size, type and design of new development. It must be in conformity with national planning policies and the strategic policies in the Council's LDF Core Strategy. The plan goes through an independent check, and should it pass it is put to a local referendum; the local planning authority must adopt it if it gets 50% approval.⁴

Scotland

In Scotland, community planning falls under the Local Government in Scotland Act (2003). Section 15 of the Act places a duty on local authorities to initiate and facilitate Community Planning in their respective areas.

Section 16 places a statutory duty requiring NHS Boards, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Joint Police Boards and Chief Constables, Joint Fire Boards, the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority (SPTA) and the local authority to participate in the Community Planning process.

Community Planning Partnerships

Community Planning Partnerships (CPP) are central to the community planning process; coordinating initiatives within their locality and acting as principal connection between national and local priorities and policies. CPP's are a statutory body within each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas and are a central feature of the reform of local governance introduced by the Local Government Act. CPP's are intended to ensure that local authorities, other local public agencies, the voluntary, community and private sectors develop a shared vision for their area and work in partnership to implement this.⁵

All councils have established a CPP to lead and manage community planning in their area. CPPs are not statutory committees of a council, or public bodies in their own right. They do not directly employ staff or deliver public services. Under Section 19 of the Act, it is possible for the CPP to establish the partnership as a legally distinct

⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05838>

⁵ Sinclair, S. (2008) "Dilemmas of Community Planning: Lessons From Scotland" Public Policy and Administration vol. 23(4) pp. 373-390

corporate body. According to Audit Scotland some CPPs have considered this option but, to date, none has taken it forward.

The structure of CPPs and the areas they cover vary considerably, depending on the size and geography of the council area, the local economy, local political priorities, and socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, and relative wealth.⁶

Statement of Ambition

In 2011 the Christie Commission report on the future of public services highlighted the need for a new, more radical, collaborative culture throughout Scotland's public service. It called for a much stronger emphasis on tackling the deep-rooted, persistent social problems in communities across the country to enable public bodies to respond effectively to financial challenges.⁷

The Scottish Government's response to the Christie Commission included a commitment to review community planning. That review led to the publication of a Statement of Ambition for community planning which stated that effective community planning arrangements will be at the core of public service reform.

CPPs will drive the pace of service integration, increase the focus on prevention and continuously improve public service delivery to achieve better outcomes for communities. The Statement of Ambition also emphasises the need for all partners to have collective accountability for delivering services. This includes being accountable for their own contribution to local planning.⁸

Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill

On 6 June the Scottish Government launched an initial public consultation on its proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, for which a draft Bill is hoped to be consulted on summer 2013. Although no final decision has been taken, the Bill is seen as a possible vehicle for the proposed changes to the statutory duties on community planning that emerged from the review. The proposed Bill covers a wide range of issues, such as:

- strengthen community participation
- unlock enterprising community development; and
- renew our communities.

The consultation paper proposes:

- the possible extension of a community right to buy to urban Scotland;

⁶ Audit Scotland (March 2013) *Community Planning in Aberdeen*. Available at <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/media/article.php?id=230>

⁷ The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, Christie Commission, June 2011. Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Review/publicservicescommission>

⁸ Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements: *Statement of Ambition*, Scottish Government and COSLA, March 2012. Available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/PublicServiceReform/CP/communityplanningreview>

- giving local people a greater say in local budget decisions;
- giving communities a right to challenge local public service delivery if it is not meeting their needs;
- giving local authorities greater powers to deal with empty homes and buildings;
- allotments legislation should be amended to better support communities taking forward grow-your-own projects; and
- exploring how existing legislation can be better used to allow Local Authority and RSL tenants to manage their housing.⁹

Good Practice

In 2006 Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) and Sustainable NI made suggestions for good practice in Community Planning¹⁰. These were taken from lessons learned from the Castlereagh Visioning Community Project, and included:

1) Engaging with the Community:

- holding public meetings involving community residents and representatives from statutory voluntary and public sectors.
- Using community events to involve residents in the visioning/planning process e.g. visual displays and inviting comments at Community Fun Days etc. to encourage people who may not normally attend public meetings.
- Access all media
- Show the practical benefits gained from community planning and recognise and promote community achievements.

2) Developing and sustaining two-way communication and information sharing:

The community needs to be aware of the process that is required to achieve their aims so that agreed plans can be progressed. It is suggested that both positive and negative feedback on the process should be available to the community so that they can get a picture of what is realistically achievable and within what timeframe.

3) Ensuring the process is inclusive

Open up the opportunity to engage and become involved in the process across the community. Community Planning facilitators should have the ability to seek out and accommodate differing opinions. The NIEL and Sustainable NI document referred to an example from a Youth Outreach Worker in the Castlereagh Project,

⁹ Scottish Parliament, Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/cer>

¹⁰ NIEL, Sustainable NI (2006), *Putting the Community in Community Planning: Making new governance structures responsive and relevant to communities – Lessons from the Castlereagh Community Visioning Project*. Available at <http://www.sustainableni.org/our-activities/community-planning/index.php>

“The project to paint the murals on two prominent walls in Ballybeen (replacing old murals, having previously sought agreement from those who had put up the paramilitary style murals) initially involved two groups of young people. They met with the artist to discuss the designs, prior to the first week in July when we began to paint the murals. Other young people came along and watched. We invited them to pick up a paintbrush and join in – which they did.”¹¹

4) Providing support to the community

Through providing one or two people known to the community who can work with volunteers and others between formal meetings, and are available to explain any parts of the process or aspect of information which community representatives are uncertain or worried about. NIEL and Sustainable NI demonstrated this through the following example from a Castlereagh Borough Council Community Worker stated,

“We had both worked with the community in Cregagh before, and knew the people and personalities involved. During the Visioning process we were able to explain some of the process in more detail and also acted as ‘middle-men’ between those working to develop the vision and the community, for example ensuring that they did not over-burden volunteers.”¹²

5) Involving people of different ages, gender, backgrounds and cultures

This has been suggested by targeting smaller audiences of particular characteristics rather than aiming to attract large numbers of people to a single event so as to provide a wide range of perspectives from the entire community.

6) Ensuring that the local community takes responsibility for the overall process and has ownership of the action plan

While consultants or a statutory/public sector organisation may have taken the initial lead in the community planning process and take responsibility for certain activities, according to NIEL and Sustainable NI, successful community planning happens when the community takes charge. According to a community representative from the Castlereagh Project,

“When we first met with the facilitators we had an open discussion about what the process would involve. Rather than jumping into a prefabricated consultation process we developed our own ideas about what we wanted to achieve and how to go about achieving this.”¹³

¹¹ Ibid (p.8)

¹² Ibid (p.9)

¹³ Ibid (p.9)

7) Working with the community to develop a realistic vision

NIEL and Sustainable NI suggested,

“Realistic plans rather than a wish-list can be achieved through keeping people informed, raising awareness about the agencies and organisations who need to be approached to move an issue forward, explaining the processes involved, and discussing the constraints”¹⁴

Examples of Community Planning

Northern Ireland

Local Community Plans - Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project

Community Places have facilitated a number of local community plans over the past few years through its *Supporting Communities in Community Planning Project*. Community audit and engagement methods have included: household surveys (also using online technology); community workshops; public discussions; focus groups; etc. Community Places informed that where possible these have been modelled on what community planning will be like post 2015 – that is with councillors and council officials directly involved along with community group representatives and officials from statutory/public agencies in developing, agreeing and implementing the plan.

An example of this project includes the rural village of Bushmills for which Community Places provided the following information:

Bushmills

A large number of community groups have been established in the Bushmills area including residents' organisations, youth groups, church groups and cultural organisations, providing a range of services and activities for the local community. With so many groups in the area, a Village Forum was established to provide a more co-ordinated approach to addressing the needs of the local community.

In July 2009, Community Places was invited to meet with the Village Forum and officers from Moyle District Council and Supporting Communities NI to explore the opportunities to develop a Local Community Plan for the Village. The Bushmills Village Community Plan was launched in June 2010.

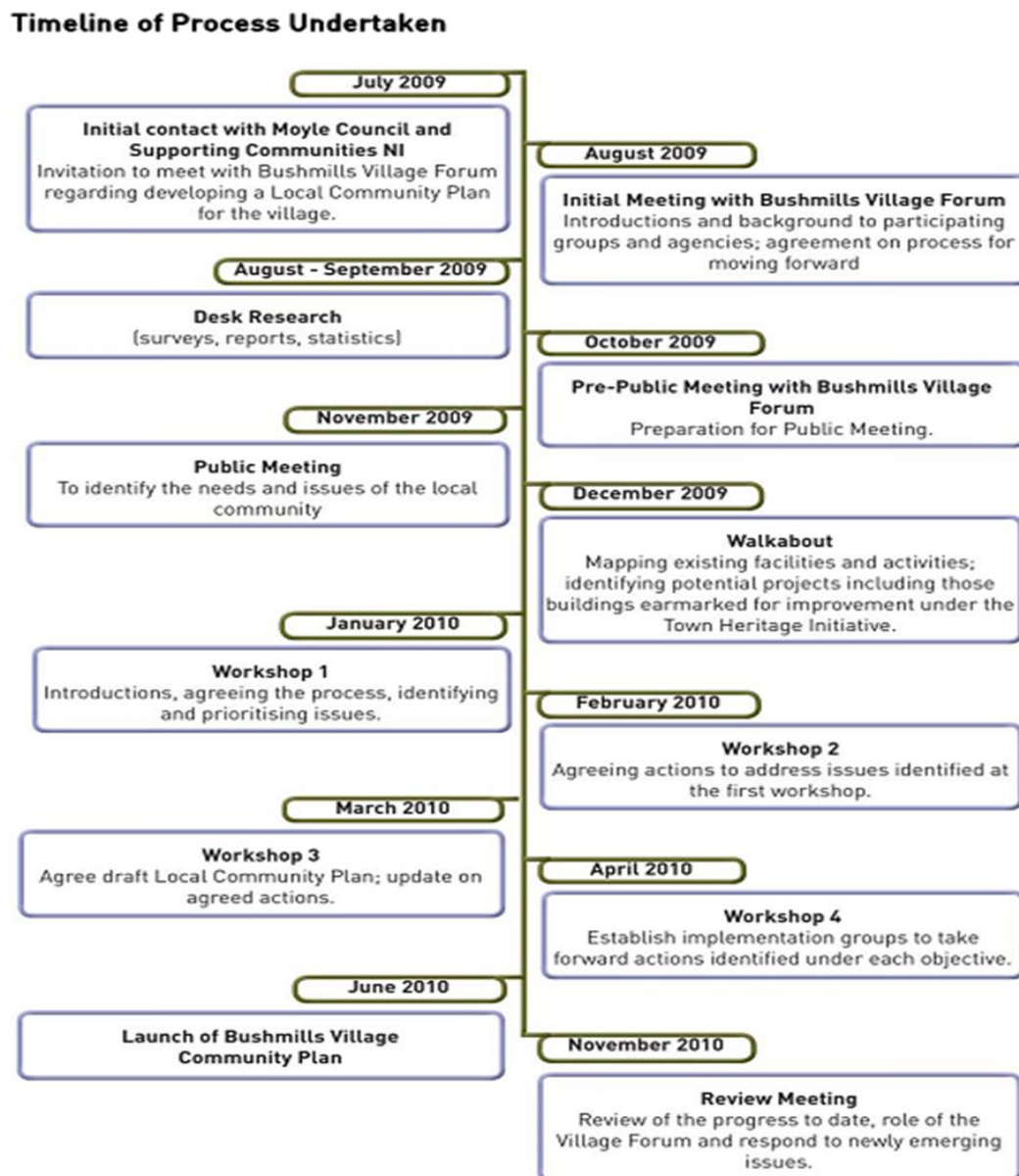
¹⁴ Ibid (p.9)

Groups/organisations involved:

Bushmills Community Association, Bushmills Distillery, Bushmills Peace Group, Bushmills Presbyterian Church, Bushmills Residents' and Environmental Forum, Bushmills Royal British Legion, Bushmills Trust, Bushmills Ulster Scots Heritage, Church of Ireland, Dalriada Sure Start, Dunluce Presbyterian Church, Moyle District Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Planning Service, PSNI, Supporting Communities NI, and Town Heritage Initiative Partnership.

Process

The following diagram illustrates the timeline of the process used.



Source: Community Places (2013)¹⁵

¹⁵ Community Places (2013), *Supporting Communities in Community Planning: Developing Local Community Plans for Bushmills and Braniet*

Outcomes and Achievements

Agreed Outcomes	Achievements
To increase co-ordination between the Council, agencies and the community	The publication of a village newspaper - The Bush Telegraph, has been hugely successful in keeping the community informed of events and activities in the area. It is published on a quarterly basis with contributions from many of the local groups. The establishment of a website and Facebook page have become invaluable tools in communicating with the wider community, and in encouraging feedback from the local community on a range of topical issues.
To improve the village's environment, facilities and quality of life to make it a more attractive place to live, work in and visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental improvements include: seating area at Hamill Terrace, clean-up of Millennium Park and additional planting schemes throughout the village. - The 'Brighter Bushmills' Project was to improve the overall façade of derelict properties in the village by placing art and photographic work in 17 buildings, to encourage visitors to stop and enjoy Bushmills and to improve the look and feel of the village for residents, workers and visitors alike – this project has been a huge success. - BT Building Art Project: The removal of the unsightly fence at the BT building has finally been achieved. A project is now underway with a group of young people to create artwork for the wall of the BT building. The art project, guided by artist Ross Wilson, will have an overall theme relating to communications to tie in with the 'Alphabet Angel'. - The Village Forum is currently working on establishing a Heritage Trail within the village and surrounding area.
To promote wider understanding and enjoyment of the culture and heritage of the village	Salmon and Whiskey Festival: The inaugural festival was organised to showcase two of Bushmills' best loved products Salmon and Whiskey. The event, celebrating the local culture, heritage and produce attracted thousands of people to the village and will become a regular feature in the Bushmills calendar.

Source: Community Places (2013)¹⁶

Village Plans

The following examples were also provided by Community Places showing the development of Village Plans using the community planning process for Cushendun/Knocknacarry:

Cushendun/Knocknacarry

The Village Plan for Cushendall and Knocknacarry was developed over a number of months and published in August 2011. Local residents in the area were given the opportunity to put forward their views about how they would like their village to develop over the next five years. The process was assisted by Cushendun and District Development Association with Moyle District Council, and was facilitated by Community Places.¹⁷

Both villages were described as relatively isolated, with nearby towns such as Ballycastle and Ballymena 12 and 20 miles away respectively. They are both located within an AONB, in fact due to it being a conservation area, most of Cushendun has

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ Community Places (2011) Cushendun and Knocknacarry Village Plan available at <http://www.communityplaces.info/publications/community-plans>

been owned and maintained by the National Trust since 1954. With this in mind the development of the Village Plan was seen as an opportunity to give residents a say in the vision for their village.

Funding

Funding came from the NE Rural Development Programme Village Renewal Measure which was part funded under Axis 3 and 4 of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Moyle District Council contributed 25% of the cost of the project.

The process

- The key steps included:
- Briefing Meetings
- Village Walk Around
- Contact Key Groups and Organisations
- Desktop Analysis
- Publicity and Promotion
- Community Consultation
- Develop the Plan
- Finalise the Plan

A range of consultation methods were used to gather views from groups, individuals and businesses in the area.

Groups consulted were:

- Boat Club
- Cushendun Building Preservation Trust
- Cushendun and District Development Association (CDDA)
- Cushendun Environment Group
- Folk Group Choir
- Glens Angling Club
- Glens of Antrim Historical Society
- Robert Emmet's GAC
- Shane's Park Residents' Association
- St Patrick's Church Choir
- University of the Third Age (U3A)
- Youth Club

Findings

The consultation gave residents the opportunity to highlight areas that needed attention and needed to be included in the Village Plan. From these agreed actions were developed. The table below lists some of the issues raised and the actions agreed to be taken.¹⁸

Issue	Action/Next Step
Signage directing traffic from Causeway Costal Route through Cushendun Traffic following the Causeway Costal Route road signs currently bypasses Cushendun	Lobby NITB and Roads Service on this issue
Electronic Tourist Information Point (with accessible toilet)	Consider applying to Rural Development Programme for funding for a costed technical feasibility study. Explore the potential for the National Trust to maintain this facility.
Improved Community Venue/Meeting Space	Discuss the possibility of a local community group making an application to the Big Lottery Fund's Energy Efficient Venues Programme for an energy audit of the hall and some initial works.

For more examples visit Community Places:

<http://www.communityplaces.info/publications/community-plans>

England

The following examples were suggested by communityplanning.net which provides information on 'how-to- do- it' best practice.¹⁹

Aylesham Master Plan, Kent

According to *communityplanning.net* this is one of the most successful comprehensive examples of producing a Masterplan for a substantial urban extension with the full and creative involvement of key stakeholders including local residents.

One of the key issues facing the area was the lack of housing provision where only 1,760 homes built housing 4,200 residents. The village has been in decline since the closing of the local Snowdown Colliery in 1986. However the village was recognised as a strategic opportunity in Kent County Council Structure Plan 1996 and Dover District Local Plan 2002. Consequently a Partnership was formed by regeneration

¹⁸ For more information see Cushendun Village Plan <http://www.communityplaces.info/publications/community-plans>

¹⁹ More information available at <http://www.communityplanning.net/abouttcp/aboutthissite.php>

agencies and local authorities with a view to seizing initiative and creating something of quality.²⁰

Process used and timeline

The process began in 2002 with the adoption of the local plan and the establishment of a Master Planning Team. The final Masterplan was adopted in July 2004. The process used was the 'Enquiry by Design' method based on a series of workshops with all stakeholders, masterplanning team and local residents. For full details on the process and timeline see Annex 1.

Funding for the masterplanning process and consultation was by the English Partnership, SEEDA and Dover District Council; other partners provided staff resources while development was to be funded by the private sector.

Outcomes

According to *communityplanning.net* success was seen in terms of:

- the use of the Enquiry by Design method to engage stakeholders and facilitate creative collaborative working;
- good partnership working and project management;
- creative and robust public consultation process;
- Very considerable public support for the end results.
- Good documentation of the process throughout.
- Relatively rapid but not rushed timescale.
- Good communication and use of IT.

However it was felt there was a loss of momentum after the consultation process.

A Forward Planning Manager for Dover District Council commented that:

*'The Enquiry by Design process changed the way that some local people viewed the village and the issues. It brought forward proposals that are not in the Local Plan. This made for contentious but better proposals.'*²¹

For more examples see case studies at [communityplanning.net](http://www.communityplanning.net)

²⁰ Aylesham Case study <http://www.communityplanning.net/casestudies/casestudy001.php>

²¹ Communityplanning.net (2006) Casestudy 001Aylesham Masterplan. Available at <http://www.communityplanning.net/casestudies/casestudy001.php>

Scotland

The following examples give a mixed view on the impacts of community planning in Scotland. While the Audit Scotland's review of community planning in Aberdeen points out positive impacts, it appears to be much more negative in general in comparison to the example taken from the Scottish Government on the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area.

Aberdeen Audit

Aberdeen, North Ayrshire, and the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) agreed to participate in three early audits to help the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland test the CPP audit framework. For the first time, these audits focused on the impact and effectiveness of individual CPPs, rather than community planning as a national process.²²

The overall aim of the audit was to assess the effectiveness of community planning in making a difference to local communities. The audit of Aberdeen's CPP was carried out in September 2012, by a team from Audit Scotland.

According to the report, community planning has been established for almost a decade in Aberdeen. Over this period, partnership working between different parts of the public sector has steadily developed. Despite this, the report states that there is little evidence to show that community planning has had a major impact on people living in Aberdeen. The report highlights that there are significant differences between the least and most deprived communities in aspects such as health, crime and education levels gaps.²³

However the report mentions the following points in terms of positive outcomes:

Increased partnership working

In 2003, The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA) was established, consisting of Aberdeen Council and its local public and private sector partners, as the key group for improving outcomes for local people. TACA developed a series of community plans, setting out long-term plans for developing the local economy, reducing inequalities within the city, and improving health, education and community safety.²⁴

A Community Health Partnership has been established, designed to strengthen the links between health and social care services. In addition, other groups were established to address particular areas of concern, such as the Aberdeen Drugs and Alcohol Partnership and the Integrated Children's Services Partnership. However,

²² Audit Scotland (March 2013) *Community Planning in Aberdeen*. Available at <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/media/article.php?id=230>

²³ Ibid (p.8)

²⁴ Ibid (p.8)

according to the report there is little evidence to show that this increased partnership working had any significant impact in tackling the sharp inequalities within Aberdeen.²⁵

By 2011, there was a growing awareness by Aberdeen Council and its partners that they needed to make significant changes in their approach to community planning. Following an external review, TACA was replaced by the Community Planning Alliance (CPA). CPA has also started to put a greater emphasis on preventative work and has implemented a series of reforms. It has piloted a new whole-systems approach, which aims to shift partner resources from dealing with social problems to preventing them. There are two pilot projects, in education and community safety.²⁶

However, Audit Scotland feels there is still a need for:

- Agreeing a clear set of shared priorities that focus on what is important for Aberdeen, rather than try to meet every aspiration.
- Ensuring that shared community planning priorities are embedded in the strategies and resourcing plans of partner organisations.
- Developing a joint resourcing framework, underpinned by a better understanding of costs and service impact, and using this to shift resources towards preventative work which can generate long-term savings or improved outcomes.
- Establishing a strong focus on outcomes that will allow it to monitor the impact it is having on individuals and communities within Aberdeen and to hold partners to account for their performance.²⁷

Community Planning in the East Ayrshire Coalfield Area

The following case study is an example highlighted by the Scottish Government as demonstrating community empowerment. It demonstrates the power of communities working together through a federation.

East Ayrshire has a rich coal mining history, which left behind a legacy of unemployment, isolation and a falling population. The Coalfield Communities Federation is a community-led charity, set up ten years ago to bring communities together, help put them back on their feet and give them a better future and “to give local people a stronger voice in planning their future”.

The Federation sits on the Community Planning Partnership board and plays a key role in the planning and delivery of the local Community Planning Forum. This allows them to influence the planning and decision-making of community planning partners.

How it operates

²⁵ Ibid (p.8)

²⁶ Ibid (p.8)

²⁷ Ibid (p.9)

The Federation is responsible for its own projects and employs its own staff. Each community brings forward local issues on the annual development day where priorities are discussed and agreed. The action plan which is the outcome of the day is circulated to community councils and represents the agreed work programme for the Federation.

Once an interest is agreed, relevant experts and professionals are invited to take part in discussions to turn ideas into practical projects. According to the Federation this approach has worked well.

Funding for the general running of the Federation and employment of staff comes from the Fairer Scotland Fund through the Community Planning Partnership (to 2010). Funds and how they are used are subject to quarterly monitoring and annual review. Other sources include Big Lottery funding and the European LEADER fund.

Actions

- Transport access

In an area of isolated villages, poor public transport emerged as an important issue. The Federation's flagship project was Coalfield Community Transport which operates a fleet of yellow buses across the coalfield area. The aim was to reduce the isolation of groups and individuals by offering cheap and convenient transport e.g. bringing children to nurseries, run shopping trips and excursions for senior citizens, taking people to church etc.

Also run a 'wheels to work' initiative which gives scooters to people without transport to their work or education.

- Community newspaper
- Schools arts programmes
- Environmental improvements in villages
- Working on compiling a schedule of derelict buildings to bring back into use

Achievements

- Joined up working - one of the impacts of the projects has been the shift in focus away from problems of individual communities towards shared solutions and thinking.
- Inclusive working – developed a new way of sharing information and new methods of community involvement which are inclusive and action oriented bringing benefits to all communities, not just those with biggest problems or loudest voices.
- The process has been seen to be effective that it has been adopted in the northern part of East Ayrshire also.²⁸

²⁸ For more information see

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/BuiltEnvironment/regeneration/engage/empowerment/casestudies/communityplanning>

For more examples see case studies on the Scottish Government website:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/empowerment/casestudies>

Reviews of Community Planning

The following section gives a brief overview of reviews on community planning. These reviews consider the impacts of community planning at a national scale, whereas the Aberdeen Audit example in the previous section gives a review at local level.

England	Scotland
<p>An OFMDFM analysis on Community Planning in Operation within the UK and Ireland found in general that experiences were 'positive', however in real times it is hard to demonstrate hard outcomes such as efficiency savings through shared budgets in terms of both added value and impact.²⁹</p> <p>A number of reports for Communities and Local Government evaluated community strategies in 2006 and 2008, and found the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That strategies are becoming more coherent and that most focus on the principal themes of health, crime and community safety, employment and the local economy, the environment and housing and homelessness³⁰. • Many community strategies fell back on making a link between evidence and actions. For example, in an assessment of 50 community strategies, nine provided no account in any way of evidence being used: it was unclear how strategic priorities and interventions had been derived³¹ • mismatch between Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets³² and community strategies³³. 	<p>According to Audit Scotland's national report Community planning: an initial review, 2006, found that there had been some progress with community planning, but that important issues needed to be dealt with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complexity of community planning structures and different accountabilities could be a barrier to effective working. • Performance management and monitoring processes were not well developed. • Community engagement could be more sustained and systematic. • CPPs should be clearer about the resources required to achieve their outcomes.³⁴ <p>Audit Scotland's 2011 national report, The role of community planning partnerships in economic development, found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPPs had supported local economic developments • the introduction of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) had improved how CPPs monitor and report progress • However, it also found that many of the problems identified in 2006 persisted.³⁵

²⁹ Blake Stevenson Ltd and Stratagem (2005) "Case Analyses for RPA on Community Planning in Operation within the UK and Ireland" OFMDFM: Belfast

³⁰ Percy-Smith, Janie (2008) *Formative evaluation of community strategies: detailed assessment of community strategies*. Department for Communities and Local Government

³¹ Peter Wells (Community and Local Government) 2006, *Formative Evaluation of Community Strategies The Use of Evidence in Community Strategies*

³² LAAs are a contract between central and local government and major local delivery partners to deliver the needs of local people. More information can be found at the Planning Advisory Service <http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelId=12384>

³³ Monro et al (2008) *Process evaluation of plan rationalisation: formative evaluation of community strategies - issue paper no 11. The relationship between community strategies and Local Area Agreements*. Department for Communities and Local Government

³⁴ Community planning: an initial review, Audit Scotland, 2006.

³⁵ The role of community planning partnerships in economic development, Audit Scotland, 2011.

Annex 1: Aylesham Master Plan Process and Timeline

Process

Year	Month	Activity	Parties involved	
2002	Jan	Local plan adopted	Identifies Aylesham as a strategic location for expansion.	DDC
2002	Feb			
2002	Mar	Development partnership established	Authorities plus development agencies and academic institution	SEEDA, EP, DDC, KKC, ACDP, APC, PF
2002	Apr			
2002	May			
2002	Jun	Masterplanning team appointed	Professionals consultants.	EDWA, Donaldsons, AB&A
2002/2003	Jul	Background briefing prepared	Setting out context and constraints	Masterplanning team with the partnership
	Aug			
	Sep			
	Oct			
	Nov			
	Dec			
	Jan			
	Feb			

2003	Mar	Enquiry by Design workshop 1	25th March Day 1: Scene setting 1. Briefing - Aylesham context 2. Briefing - placemaking 3. Q & A session 4. Walking tours 5. Group discussion 6. Open evening	All stakeholders, masterplanning team and local residents
		Enquiry by Design workshop 1	26th March Day 2: Exploring Issues 1. Brainstorming and visioning 2. Constraints and Opportunities briefing 3. Group workshops and reporting back	All stakeholders, masterplanning team and local residents
		Enquiry by Design workshop 1	27th March Day 3: Initial design concepts 1. Team working 2. Discussions with key stakeholders 3. Partnership briefing	All stakeholders, masterplanning team and local residents
		Enquiry by Design workshop 1	28th March The emerging Masterplan 1. Producing drawings 2. open evening – presentation, Q & A	All stakeholders, masterplanning team and local residents
2003	Apr			
	May			

2003	Jun	Workshop with stakeholders	Financial and delivery assessment, refining the masterplan, preferred strategic framework	Key stakeholders and masterplan team
2003	Jul	Enquiry by Design workshop 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation of process 2. Open discussion 3. Group workshops on key themes 4. Presentation on design codes 5. Group workshop on design code aspects 6. Open evening with exhibition (50) 	All stakeholders, masterplanning team and local residents (50 people)
2003	Aug			
2003	Sep	Draft Masterplan presentation at public meetings	On outstanding issues. Mark out location of housing around open space	Masterplanning team, partnerships and local residents
2003	Oct			
	Nov			
	Dec			
2004	Jan			
2004	Feb	Independent public consultation team appointed		NWA, Urbananda, Accent
2004	Mar	Public consultation on Draft Masterplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft masterplan circulated to every household with summary questionnaire • Staffed exhibition • Face-to-face interviews • Statutory consultees 	Public consultation team with partnership and masterplanning team
	April			
2004	May	Masterplan revised		Masterplanning team for partnership
	Jun			
2004	Jul	Consideration of Masterplan by authorities	Identifies Aylesham as a strategic location for expansion.	DDC
		Formal adoption of Masterplan as SPG	Identifies Aylesham as a strategic location for expansion.	DDC

Source: Communityplanning.net (2006) Case study 001 Aylesham Masterplan.³⁶

³⁶ Available at <http://www.communityplanning.net/casestudies/casestudy001.php>