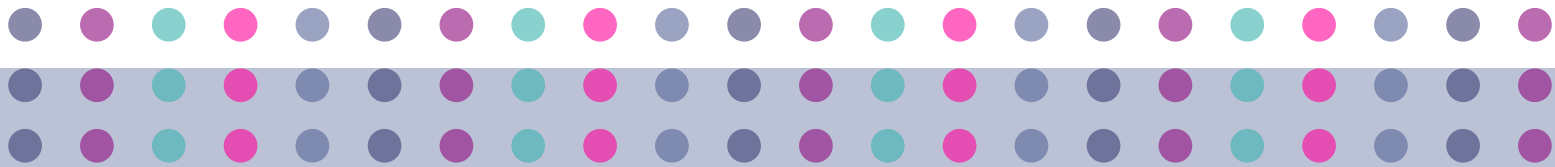
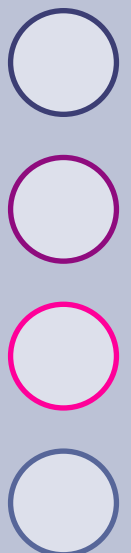


COMMUNITY PLANNING TOOLKIT



WORKING TOGETHER



Developed by Community Places through the support of the BIG Lottery Fund
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www.communityplanningtoolkit.org



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction | 03 |
| 2. The Value of Partnership working | 03 |
| 3. The real Politics of Partnership Working | 06 |
| 4. Influencing Partnership Working and Agenda's | 07 |
| 5. Helping Partnerships Work Better | 09 |
| 6. Protocols for Partnership Working | 11 |
| 7. Community Partnership Assessment | 16 |

1. Introduction

This section of the Toolkit focuses on how the CVS (Community and Voluntary Sectors) can work with and influence other sectors in effective ways. It looks at working within Community Planning structures and the wider context; building supportive alliances; and advocacy and lobbying for change.

As part of its preparatory work on setting up new councils the Department of the Environment will issue guidance on Community Planning and engagement arrangements. The Department has indicated that this guidance will allow for flexibility within each of the new council areas. www.planningni.gov.uk/common_policy_lg_consultation.htm

It is likely the development of new partnership structures for Community Planning will offer opportunities and challenges for existing structures and lead to realignments and/or mergers. This may also be an opportunity for organisations within the CVS to develop new ways of relating to and influencing other sectors.

In some parts of the region (including those where the three Pilot Projects supported by the Big Lottery Fund operated) community and voluntary sector organisations have begun to consider how to prepare for and influence

the introduction of Community Planning. One example is the strategy for working together developed by three community development support networks operating across the proposed new council area covering the existing Ards and North Down Councils **R1**. As the date for the setting up of new councils gets closer preparatory work will need to include building new relationships with councils and councillors and engaging in dialogue with them on many of the issues addressed in this section of the Toolkit. In doing this community and voluntary organisations will be able to draw on their extensive experience of partnership working: within and across local communities; on issues of good relations, equality and inclusion; and at local council level and beyond. This will enable them to ensure that fundamental principles of partnership, equality, fairness and inclusion are threaded throughout all Community Planning structures and processes.

2. The Value of Partnership Working

There is a considerable evidence base on the reasons why partnership working is needed to address issues of exclusion, area-based disadvantage and development opportunities, especially but not exclusively from the perspective of the community and voluntary sectors. For example:

- It ensures the involvement of residents and excluded groups at different stages and on different issues in the Community Planning process;
- It enables community and voluntary organisations to highlight the contribution and assets they can bring to implementing solutions;
- it can provide a framework for more joined-up approaches to addressing issues of equality, disadvantage and exclusion;
- it makes for better accounting for the impact of Community Planning processes, especially where they involved substantial public sector investment;

- It enables sensible co-ordination, integration and alignment of policies and programmes to make better use of resources; and
- Partnerships are democratically powerful by aiming to create a broadly based stakeholder consensus about the local authority area and how it should be developed.

Without getting too technical about it, partnership working allows integration to happen in more planned and sensible ways and synergies to be created whereby the multiplier effects of bringing policies and resources together has greater impact than when these activities are carried out on their own. In the Scottish model of Community Planning and elsewhere they use the term **collaborative gain** to explain this. If the effort is only one way perspectives will not be challenged and partners see no need to change but where there is mutual effort, new ideas, solutions and innovative planning can be brought to bear on stubborn problems and investment opportunities.

The Fife Community Planning Partnership **R2** identifies five benefits of sectors working together. These are presented below with some amendments.

Diagram 1: Fife Partnership Benefits of Working Together **R2** p.7-8.



Why Work in Partnership in Fife?

In the wider context of Community Planning, effective partnership working should enhance levels of openness and engagement among partners. It should also maximise the contribution that each partner can make to the quality of service delivering and to the wellbeing of communities in Fife.

Greater Impact

- Increased benefits for people, businesses or communities served
- Increased reach to disadvantaged populations and excluded groups
- Greater critical mass: ability to reach and deliver beyond the capabilities of any one partner

More Efficient

- Pool resources and facilities
- Share the costs of common functions

More Resources

- Attract public funding where an initiative requires partnership bids and evidence of partners' ability to deliver joint projects
- Strengthened negotiating power with Government

New and Better Ways

- Innovation: new more effective ways of doing things and using resources
- New perspectives and challenging views within the partnership
- Improved intelligence about needs, opportunities and assets

Spread Risks

- Complementary strengths, resources, perspectives
- Greater flexibility within a team approach

3. The Real Politics of Partnership Working

Partnership working is clearly challenging and some stakeholders and individuals may have little incentive to partner or work in shared or co-operative ways. There is a power imbalance especially where public sector stakeholders hold the resources that the community and voluntary sectors cannot match or where private business interests might be critical to the delivery of a key project. This creates a number of relationship tensions that are often at the heart of poor partnership performance.

The reality is that the statutory sector participants work by a set of rules and procedures that are set strategically and they operate organisationally in a vertical direction. It is legislation, Departmental policy, specialist expertise, and the audit rules in place and reporting (as well as performance) systems that work against horizontal working. The devolution of some key functions and responsibilities to the local authority level will help but will not solve the problems of what some see as a silo culture. We place a lot of emphasis in this Toolkit on developing approaches that attempt to make integration work better and to identify the 'asks' that the sector will make particularly through binding outcome agreements. See **Toolkit Alignment Theme** as the driver for plan making in each local authority.

Our studies have also highlighted a tension, which is not always negative, between representative and participative forms of democracy - in short between the politician and the Community and Voluntary Sectors (CVS). More often than not the expectations and objectives of both are the same but it is likely to become a more important feature of our political culture, especially as local authorities are given stronger executive powers. Clearly if it does emerge this is a tension that would potentially be damaging to the idea of partnership working but also highlights the need to better understand the relationship with politicians, their insights on community and wider issues, how to collaborate effectively with them. Community Planning provides a valuable framework for this with local politicians and local community groups working

together to enable statutory service providers to better meet needs and engage with local people.

One of the characteristics of area partnerships working in Northern Ireland has been a traditionally weak engagement by the private sector. Again, their interests might be the same as the Community and Voluntary Sectors (CVS) or they may be contradictory. Whilst their motivation is primarily profit-centred, relationships can be built on issues of mutual concern and they are critical to jobs, the delivery of key projects and wealth creation. It is a sector that has also developed a strong tradition of working outside formal structures to achieve their ends, which, in part, explains the low value they sometimes place on formal partnership structures. Some writers call this 'corporatist' in that powerful economic interests will have access to politicians and decision makers that the CVS sometimes cannot match. Clearly the CVS have, and use, these tactics as well and has some access to high level politicians. But it is important to understand how and where these approaches are used across the policy system in land use planning, economic investment and infrastructure or the sorts of activities that could dominate regional and local authority expenditure.

Our point here is that effective partnership working means better understanding the motivations, objectives, aspirations, restrictions and tactics of those we want to partner with. There is no quick fix or ideal partnership but it is something that will require constant working and being adaptive if the Partnerships are to achieve meaningful gains for the wider community. Community Planning is a long-term and evolving process. It thus provides the opportunity to review and revise structures and processes in the light of experience. These issues are addressed in the remainder of this section of the Toolkit.



4. Influencing Partnership Working and Agendas

The previous section on the Real Politics of Partnership Working addressed the issue of inequalities of power and resources between the public and private sectors and those of the Community and Voluntary Sectors (CVS). All sectors work within partnership structures and arrangements while at the same time seeking to influence them externally. Given their unequal share of power and resources this external influencing role is an essential one for the CVS. In addition the CVS members of partnership boards, committees, working groups etc. will be inadequately resourced and need all the help they can get from CVS networks.

Community Planning is a long-term process and thus requires the CVS to be strategic and plan for systematically influencing the direction of partnership structures. Networking within and across the CVS and identifying common issues for lobbying and advocacy will be essential and require new relationships for the new council catchment areas. Building good working relationships with local councillors will also be crucial and another challenge in the context of the new council boundaries. Local councillors have constituency concerns and insights which often align with those of local community groups. They also have particular issues or themes to which they are committed. The commonalities between their concerns/issues and those of the CVS is fertile ground for working collaboratively on shared aims. Alliances can also be built with statutory agencies. These opportunities tend to be focused on single issues of common interest rather than wider concerns but nevertheless can be very effective.

Community Support Networks in both rural and urban areas have experience of facilitating and building these types of collaboration and some are developing this for the new local government and Community Planning context.

Advocacy Progress Planner <http://planning.continuousprogress.org/>

The Advocacy Progress Planner is an electronic tool developed to aid community and voluntary groups to design and plan strategic lobbying. It contains six elements with guidance and tips on each one leading to the development of a lobbying plan (which can be for anything from a project to a policy change). The six elements are:

1. **Goals and impacts** asks you to think about what you want to see changed (preferably in terms of Community Planning expressed as outcomes);
2. **Audiences** helps you to identify who can make it happen, which gets you to think about how you relate to partners, primary and secondary audiences (and how to influence them) and what tactics you might need to pursue your goals;
3. **Context** for the Community Plan involves thinking through what else is going on and asks you to look at both positive and negative factors affecting change. An example of this might be to think of the: Political; Economic; Social; and Technological factors that impact on the local communities or council area;
4. **Activities** concentrates on how you will get it done. This focuses attention on your tactics with the wider community, the political parties and stakeholders inside and outside the Community Planning Partnership. This in particular looks at policy, politics, communications and outreach activities.

5. **Inputs** are about what you have and what you need in order to mount an effective campaign, the coalitions that are needed and the resources and organisation to support sector activity;
6. **Benchmarks** set major milestones along the road of engagement and influence. Clearly the outcomes of the Community Plan are important but the CVS also need to map out what success looks like for the community and whether the Community Plan is delivering this.

In addition to the supports available from local community networks NICVA's Vital Links Programme www.nicva.org/projects/vital-links provides capacity building and guidance for lobbying and influencing change.

Influencing the Agenda

A statutory sector representative will usually arrive at the partnership with a clearly focused agenda, say in education or health, and will see their objectives and decisions as the best way to enact laws and policies that they are familiar with and to deploy resources that are in their control. Similarly, the private sector will have specific wants but also a wider logic (profit) driving their claims. Work in the past suggests that the CVS tend to arrive at the partnership table with a less precise agenda, which is to some extent understandable given its structure but that might need to change if the Community Planning process is to work in their wider community interests. Clearly, the actual operation of the Community Planning Partnership may or may not always work in community or CVS interests and it is useful to think about the range of tactics that are available to help underpin partnership working.

The sector should, in advance, think through its strategies for identifying, pursuing and processing its interests in the Community Planning process. The Advocacy Progress Planner (above) might assist in defining the sectors aims, methods of working and techniques which might include:

- research into issues affecting the local community;
- public education aimed at the wider community about local issues and the working of the Community Planning Partnership;

- coalition building to work for policy or legislative change;
- grassroots lobbying by mobilising people in specific policy campaigns;
- direct lobbying with politicians;
- administrative lobbying with public sector officials;
- expert testimony to Assembly Committees, consultations, public sector agencies etc;
- media advocacy;
- public events and direct action such as demonstrations or protests.

These are tactics that the CVS are reasonably well versed in but advance planning will be most effective and help to avoid reactive and crises drive approaches as the Community Plan is developed. The need for continuous questioning, reflection and monitoring is essential and formal reviews of performance could even be conducted annually. An annual review held independently by the CVS might reflect, not just on outputs, activities and performance but also on the effectiveness of the governance of the partnership itself. We reflect this in the Community Partnership Assessment in Section 7.

5. Helping Partnerships Work Better

Research has shown that Community and Voluntary Sector partners are often 'less than equal' in the reality of partnership working and this manifests itself in a number of ways:

- There is limited partnership commitment to community involvement;
- Representative forms of politics have more legitimacy than participative forms questioning the authority of the CVS representatives;
- The CVS is involved at the operational but not at the strategic level;
- The community is seen as an implementation tool not a stakeholder with resources, assets or authority;
- Structures of representation, the style of decision making and the organisation of partnership work to disadvantage community interests; and
- Some partnerships are given few resources, responsibilities or status so that they are rendered largely ineffective.

All of this highlights the need to examine the dynamics of partnership working. The CVS needs to know how it is working politically and strategically, who is benefiting and who is being marginalised.

Towards a Level Playing Field?

There are ways to ensure that this unevenness does not lead to the marginalisation, manipulation or incorporation of community interests and that the CVS is constantly watchful of the way in which the partnership works in practice, how it includes and excludes others and the way it delivers its programme of work - here the Community Plan. These might include for example:

- It is essential for the CVS to have a clear vision of its priorities, principles and values especially where they form a framework to evaluate the performance of the partnership;
- Ensure that partnership members from the Community and Voluntary Sector have a track record, bring a clear competence and have knowledge of the policy environment;
- Avoid shotgun marriages, especially over decisions about resource allocation or determining financial allocations to programmes or projects;
- The community needs to be represented in the four key management functions of partnerships: governance, management, engagement and delivery;
- Community representatives can only perform their roles if budgets, workplans and timetables fit with their lives and if the partnership board and staff actively co-operate to make this happen.
- Ensure there is a clear priority to avoid marginalising less organised or vocal constituencies while controlling the influence of dominant partners;
- Avoid reinventing the wheel and partnership proliferation for its own sake, especially outside the Community Planning Partnership in each local authority area;
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation systems aid the CVS to have a transparent understanding of strategy impacts based on an outcomes approach, rather than a range of activity measures that might suit the agendas of programme managers; and
- Acknowledge that there are significant barriers to joined up working, they are almost inevitable and the priority is to work through to attempt to remove them rather than wishing they were not there.

Successful Partnership Structures

It is also possible to determine what makes successful partnership structures and the factors that influence when and where partnership working has an impact on community interests. This happens when the partnership:

- Is **permanent** and is given a chance to form, mature, make mistakes, evolve and lead local development;
- Has a degree of political status, authority and financial **independence**;
- Is **multi-functional** and can plan through an integrated approach to local problems and priorities;
- Has in place processes and structures which link local and wider strategic issues and service/ programme delivery;
- Can **engage the wider economy** and has the resources and influence to ensure that the partnership connects to wider socio-economic drivers;
- Is **enabling** and **entrepreneurial** and capable of taking opportunities to pursue the interests of the community and voluntary sectors and
- Is properly **accountable to stakeholders** and keeps participatory practices at the heart of listening, planning and reporting to the wider community.



6. Protocols for Partnership Working

It is important that the Community and Voluntary Sectors (CVS) shape the early development of the Community Planning Partnership. This will help ensure a meaningful and equal role is agreed before the basic structure, priorities and methods of working are established.

Here, an approach to principles is suggested that might help the CVS think about how to prepare and work in the context of Community Planning across the region. These are based on the principles of: influence; inclusivity; communication; and capacity with each one integral to the sectors performing effectively on the evolving partnership structures. The CVS should consider negotiating a formal **Community Protocol** which would be integral to the working of the Partnership. The principles to consider are:

Influence

- The involvement and ideas of community members are an integral part of the partnership;
- Decision-making processes are open and transparent;
- Credit is given to communities for their input and ideas;
- CVS representation at all levels is equal to that of other sectors;
- CVS representatives are accountable to the wider community;
- CVS representatives reflect the diversity of local communities;
- CVS representatives understand the scope of their involvement; and
- CVS members are involved in validating evaluation findings and developing action plans.

Inclusivity

- Marginalised and excluded communities can participate at all levels of decision making;
- Different needs of CVS representatives are met to enable full participation;
- Equal opportunities policy is developed, implemented and evaluated at partnership level;
- Training and support around equal opportunities, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice is provided; and
- Support (including that of community workers) should enable voluntary members of the CVS to participate.

Communication

- Information is provided in plain and relevant languages and a variety of formats.

Capacity

- Resources are provided to support the development of inclusive, representative and accountable community structures; and
- Partnership working is enhanced through an increase in the knowledge and skills of all partners.

Community Protocol

Each Community Planning Partnership should develop an agreed formal contract in the form of a Community Protocol. The CVS representatives could evaluate it annually to ensure that governance structures as well as the Community Plan work in the wider interests of the sectors and communities.

The Edinburgh Compact Strategy **R3** provides one illustration of how this might be developed and integrated into community planning decisions. It is an agreement between all of the Community Planning partners on a set of principles and actions to improve working relationships for Community Planning and the full involvement of the CVS at all levels. The principles are:

- Transparency;
- Accountability;
- Accurate communication;
- Equity;
- Respect; and
- Fairness across partners.

The objectives of the Edinburgh Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2013 **R4** are:

- Improve the joint planning and provision of services in the city;
- Increase mutual recognition of the particular role and strengths of the community and voluntary sector and the contributions they make to the city;
- Increase the role of the community and voluntary sector in policy, decision-making and service delivery at all levels in the city;
- Retain and develop the shared commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity;
- Sustain and develop the resources available to the community and voluntary sector;
- Support and develop the particular role of volunteering and active citizenship in the Community and Voluntary Sector;
- Support increased and improved community engagement; and
- Increase mutual confidence in the ability of partners to deliver effectively.



Community Protocols for community planning would thus be a foundation stone of new partnerships and an agreed local form of the Concordat between the CVS and the NI Government **R5**. The Big Lottery Fund-supported Community Planning Pilot Project in Belfast worked closely with the Belfast Strategic Partnership in developing its stakeholder engagement. The Partnership's Terms of Reference define the agreed roles and responsibilities of Board Members:

Partnership members should:

- hold senior, decision-making positions within their organisation, or have the capacity to take issues to and from the wider community;
- commit to attending and actively contribute to the Partnership meetings;
- have the ability to take a strategic view and contribute to the development of new policies where appropriate;
- understand and promote the wide range of key issues and interests within the local community;
- ensure internal communication of messages throughout their organisation/sector;
- build ownership of and champion the health and wellbeing improvement agenda within their organisation/sector and seek buy-in of other experts and interested stakeholders;
- identify assets in their organisation/sector which can contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of communities in the Belfast area;
- have an understanding of and a commitment to the principles of community development in achieving improvements in health and wellbeing;
- have an interest in exploring new ways of working together to improve local people's quality of life.

Guiding Principles for Members:

- Equality of all members on the Partnership;
- Reducing bureaucracy to enable agencies to work together;
- Minimising jargon which may not be understandable to all;
- Commitment to attending meetings.



The Fife Community Planning Partnership **R2** defines the role and responsibilities of partners in the following diagram:

What can you bring to a partnership in Fife?

12 qualities which you as an individual can expect to bring to partnership working in Fife.



Diagram 2: What makes a good partner in Fife? **R2** p.12

In Wales the Communities First Programme issued detailed guidance in 2007 on partnership working [R6](#). It encompasses:

- principles for working together;
- selection of partnership members including community representatives;
- rules of conduct of constructive dialogue;
- responsibilities of the local council;
- communications strategy; and
- mainstreaming equality and diversity issues.

In the Republic of Ireland national principles have been developed to guide each City or County Development Board Strategy [R7](#) p.12.

- The Strategy will have a basis in the distinct features and situation of the county, including an understanding of sub county issues and concerns.
- It will promote the principles of participation and inclusion, ensuring the maximum number of groups are represented and that participation by all is facilitated.
- There will be a clear focus on social inclusion.
- Decision-making will be based on consensus.
- It will demonstrate an understanding of the individual needs of the constituent bodies on the CDB.
- Sustainable development principles will be accepted.
- The process of developing the Strategy is considered to be part of the solution.
- Those involved are committed to flexibility and openness to change.
- Transparency and accountability with regard to the process and by participants will be paramount.
- Responsibility and ownership of the process will be shared.

Several County Development Boards have tailored these national principles. For example, Louth County Development Board <http://tinyurl.com/lcdbprinciples> has developed its own set of specific principles which focus on:

- Participation and inclusion;
- Mutual Respect;
- Consensus;
- Social Inclusion;
- Openness and Change; and
- Equality and Environmental Sustainability.



7. Community Partnership Assessment

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) offer the sector an important opportunity to pursue the objectives of social inclusion, fairness and equality. In the real politics of the formation and work of the Partnerships there will be barriers that need to be better understood and managed as well as opportunities for change.

Experience from both here and elsewhere is that the challenges of effective partnership working are significant and that cultural change and continuous learning and development are essential. In recognition of this the English Local Government Improvement and Development and the Institute for Voluntary Action Research delivered a 'Partnership Improvement Programme' to enhance co-operation between councils, the CVS and public sector bodies **R8**. In this part of the Toolkit we present a basic checklist of good practice principles, a set of good governance principles (and how to recognise their absence) and a detailed framework for assessing a Community Planning Partnership in the round.

Reflecting on its considerable experience of partnership working the Fife Community Planning Partnership has identified a checklist of 'key principles' **R2** p.9:

- **The 'Year Zero' Concept** - the preparation time necessary for dealing adequately with practical matters. This involves being aware of the scope of the partnership, being able to meet, talk and share experiences of roles and jobs, agreement of roles necessary for the partnership to work.
- **Clear Vision and Objectives** - recognising the need for these. This involves explaining the origin and idea behind the partnership, the eventual vision and objectives and clear objectives should lead to: clear work plans; clear plans for the person co-ordinating work between the different agencies.
- **Differences Among Partnership Members** - facing up to issues arising from variations in culture, experience and language etc.
- **Building Up Trust, Honesty and Understanding** - only achieved with time and effort. It is important that the building of trust begins during this initial phase of a partnership. It can be aided by joint work on simple projects, with appropriate feedback and evaluation.
- **Communication** - communicating with all parties as effectively as possible. The size of the partnership will affect the structures and procedures.
- **Dealing with Issues of Power and Influence** - issues of inequalities. A common situation can occur when statutory agencies assume that they are leading and the voluntary sector members may feel left out of the decision-making process. The solution is often open discussion, honesty and a preparation phase.
- **Project Management** - developing good management skills. This can include tasks such as a clear plan, clarifying objectives and performance and establishing an understood method of monitoring and review.
- **Target Setting** - having steps along the way.
- **Acknowledging the Work of Partners** - sharing success and recognising contributions can be a simple way of ensuring all partnership members feel valued.
- **New and Creative Ideas** - looking out for innovative ways of working will add value to ordinary, day-to-day activities.

In 2011 Audit Scotland produced a guide to Good Governance Principles for Partnership Working **R9**. This draws on its extensive appraisals of Community Planning and other partnerships and focuses on: behaviours, processes, performance management, and use of resources. It also lists the features of partnerships which do and do not apply these principles.

There are a number of related issues confronting partnership planning:

- How the Partnership is formed and who is represented on it. In particular, how do they engage with the wider community and what are the relationships like with the public sector, politicians and private business interests?
- How is the wider community involved throughout the work of the Partnership and how do the CVS representatives relate to interests traditionally marginal in decision-making processes?
- How are decisions actually taken, who dominates and what legitimacy do they claim for their arguments?
- How are final agreements reached and enforced and what does the sector do if their objectives are not being achieved?
- How does the sector know its objectives are or are not being achieved and what systems and information does it need to hold the wider Partnership to account?

These five broad questions go to the heart of the relationship between the community and the Community Planning Partnership (CPP).



Assessment Framework

In this section we set out a framework for assessing a community planning partnership. This is for use by the CVS in its broadest sense but might be especially useful for network organisations, partnership representatives and sub-regional forums.

1. How is the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) formed and agreed?

| Issue | Reflection | Tactics |
|---|---|---|
| What are the processes for forming the Community Planning Partnership (CPP)? | What mechanisms are used to appoint representatives, develop operating rules and codes of conduct for the Community Planning Partnership? | The sector needs to think through democratic processes of selecting representatives and systems for ensuring the Partnership represents the rights of the wider community. |
| Who is on the Partnership; do the public sector participants have the capacity to finance decisions, make commitments or authorise others? What is the level of honesty between the sector and other sectors? | What is the level of trust within the sector and between the sector and politicians; local government staff; civil servants; and the private sector? Do we need to do anything to strengthen different types and levels of trust? | The CVS should not attempt to condense differences to suit the agenda of others. Some differences do not need to be resolved to make an effective contribution and the value of protest should not be discounted. |
| What channels to participation or methods of engagement are used or proposed: who operates the engagement process and on what terms? | If the resource holders are not in the Partnership what alternatives do you have to access them? Are partnerships working outside the Community Planning process and how are they linked to the Community Planning Partnership? | Are there politicians, coalitions, alternative decision making arenas that could be considered to pursue your objectives? |
| What changed as a result of the engagement exercise and are there methods for continuous listening? | How is the differential capacity between areas and communities dealt with? In particular, is the solidarity of the CVS compromised by ethno-religious differences and how are these surfaced? | Strategies need to be developed to map community capacity to engage in effective partnership working to include underrepresented, weak or marginal interests |
| How well are politicians engaged with the sector in prioritising issues and agreeing actions? | | Strategies also need to be developed to relate to politicians to identify champions and also objectors who may not be sympathetic to the community sector's cause. |
| How does the partnership work with key groups inside and outside the sector; do they privilege others and what role is the private sector playing in the Community Planning process? | What specific actions do you need to take to influence the scale and location of investment or sharing risk in major projects? | Area based or thematic community networks might be important to activate especially in prioritising and delivering the Community Plan. |

2. How is the wider community involved and all interests taken account of?

| Issue | Reflection | Tactics |
|---|--|---|
| Who is represented and can you map them to identify gaps and strengths in stakeholder coverage? | What alternatives do you have: Say by working through VOiCE to map out your strategic approach and related tactics for developing representational capacities? See Toolkit Theme: Engagement | Note if the engagement is inadequate should alternative, even rival, community engagements be undertaken by the sector? Should the CVS consider establishing policy panels to monitor progress, influence and even shape the delivery of services? They might be policy centred: the economy, environment or health. |
| How do neighbourhoods and communities get a voice at the strategic level? | What can we learn from other partnership structures and CPP in the region in order to strengthen skills and operating systems that benefit the CVS? | The sector may need to reorganise to better face onto the CPP. Networks and existing representative structures could be used to do this. |
| Look at the representation of other sectors including: politicians; central government; local authority; the business sector - how do they use engagement and are they more privileged than others? | What is the skill base and competence of CVS representatives? How do they communicate with the sector and on what terms? Is there a two-way flow of communication and analysis or is it primarily one way from CPP members to the wider CVS? | The sector may need to develop a protocol for the working of the CPP but it might also need to agree a framework agreement with CVS representatives and how they relate back to the community sector. A Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for the private sector might be considered in advance of the Community Plan. |

R10 Case Study 1 Evaluation of Neighbourhood Working in Blackburn

3. How are decisions taken?

| Issue | Reflection | Tactics |
|--|--|--|
| How are issues identified and by whom? What research evidence is used to justify the establishment of priorities? | The CVS needs to be able to test the assumptions and value base of the Plan itself. What are these from a CVS point of view for example pro-market or redistributive? | Note for example, there will be strategic tension between growth first approaches highlighting the trickle down effects of enterprise and private led development and approaches that are more socially inclusive. |
| How is research prioritised or presented by the CVS used in the Plan making process. Can you trace through to projects or financial commitments? | What does evidence tell us and is tacit and informal knowledge acknowledged in formulating the Community Plan? | Be clear about what the premise of the Plan actually is and whose interests dominate the formulation process. |
| Do particular groups dominate the way in which the plan is formulated? | The CVS needs to identify whether the formulation is technical or expert-led; clientist in that some interests seem to do better out of the process; politically-led responding to the specific agendas of Parties; or pluralist in that the debate is genuinely open, inclusive and with different types of knowledge and analysis valued in decision making. | The web link below may help to plan what you need to do to advocate effectively in the community planning process: http://planning.continuousprogress.org It may help to map out what the agenda of the CVS is and what tactics they need to pursue their aims. |

R11 Case Study 2 Strategic Leadership in Derby City Partnership



4. How are agreements reached and enforced?

| Issue | Reflection | Tactics |
|--|---|---|
| How is agreement reached and by what criteria are decisions taken? | Is there objection to delivery and how easy is it to change the mind of resource holders? | Note that there are other methods for monitoring and evaluating the social impact of the strategy from a community perspective. Community centred outcomes need to be a central part of the planning approach. |
| Who finally decides and with what resource? | How well does the CVS provide leadership, especially by articulating a clear and ambitious local vision? | What are the arrangements to ensure succession in the CVS in the Community Planning process? |
| How easy is it for those with resources to escape from their commitments and how is delivery monitored and evaluated? | How does the Partnership formally communicate its plans, projects and the results of monitoring and evaluation exercises? | The CVS needs its own communications and dissemination methods to ensure a wider forum for debate about the progress of the Community Plan. There are dangers with information overload so the type, frequency and volume of information needs to be carefully managed. |
| How is accountability handled for example, through politicians or other systems to relate the Plan, the partnership and stakeholders to wider community interests? | How well do politicians report back to their constituents, what systems are used to map and monitor their performance on the CPP? | |

R12 Case Study 3 Hertfordshire A Residential Community – An Innovative Partnership Approach

5. How does the sector know what it is getting?

| Issue | Reflection | Tactics |
|--|--|--|
| <p>What are the formal systems for continuous processes of monitoring and evaluation and how do these relate to Outcome Indicators?</p> | <p>How does the CVS network hold the CPP to account for delivery of the Community Plan? Is there an integrated response that can claim to be the authentic voice of the sector?</p> | <p>The sector may need to build its own monitoring and evaluation framework to complement reporting on Outcome Indicators. These might include Social Return on Investment, Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) or community asset impact.</p> |
| <p>Do the indicators and their reporting allow the CVS to accurately determine the impacts of the Community Plan on specific features of social and spatial exclusion?</p> | <p>Remember that the Outcome Indicators may be limited and not account for the whole needs of the area. How does the CPP work to achieve objectives that fall outside the scope of the formal Indicators and Agreements?</p> | |
| <p>How well is performance management information shared by the Partnership and how well have partners made decisions about aligning, pooling or sharing or integrating budgets?</p> | <p>Does the sector use financial information to monitor what areas, sectors, programmes and projects benefit from the Community Plan?</p> | <p>In particular, does the sector know where financial investment actually flows into disadvantaged areas and sectors? Can the sector produce a map of local public sector spending by area?</p> |
| <p>How far are partners' business plans, programmes, policies and even legislation aligned with the Community Plan and Outcomes Indicators?</p> | <p>In implementing the Community Plan, what is the relationship between the Community Planning Partnership and other area based structures, thematic groups or community networks?</p> | <p>A key tactic will be to identify horizontal disconnections and to advocate for change, ways of working or high level, even Ministerial commitments to change practices. As noted the existing networks might give a role in challenging silo practices and focusing on discrete outcomes in the Community Plan.</p> |
| <p>Is there evidence of or need for joint commissioning to deliver key projects or programmes that are explicitly in the interests of the sector?</p> | <p>How effectively is the CVS organised; are partnerships competent, well integrated and efficient: and does the sector need to realign its structures to make more from the CPP?</p> | |
| <p>Are resource allocation mechanisms clear for the key policy areas and are there points of influence that the Partnership has with public sector programme managers?</p> | <p>How well is risk and resource management integrated with performance management?</p> | <p>The sector will need to rethink partnership structures outside the CPP. As noted earlier, some structures are petty, ineffective and are not real partnerships. The CVS needs to debate and agree the most effective governance arrangements in each Council area, rather than have this imposed by either local or central government.</p> |
| <p>Are there mechanisms for responding to and scrutinising recommendations, stakeholder criticisms or performance against outcome indicators?</p> | <p>What mechanisms are there for learning, looking forward and agreeing the long-term vision for the strategy?</p> | |

Resources

- R1 South East Community Development Networks (2011) *Working Together Strategy*.
- R2 Fife Partnership (2007) *Fife Partnership Resource Pack*.
- R3 Edinburgh Partnership (2008) *In Equal Respect: A Shared Vision. Edinburgh Compact Strategy*.
- R4 Edinburgh Partnership (2008) *In Equal Respect: A Shared Vision. Edinburgh Compact Strategy Action Plan 2008-2013*.
- R5 DSD (2011) *Concordat between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Northern Ireland Government*.
- R6 WAG (2007) *Communities First Guidance*. Communities First Unit.
- R7 Monaghan County Development Board (2002) *County Development Strategy Monaghan 2002-2012 Our People Our Place*. <http://www.monaghancdb.ie/strategy.html>
- R8 IVAR (2011) *Joint approaches to joint challenges. Evaluation of the Partnership Improvement Programme 2010*. Local Government Improvement and Development.
- R9 Audit Scotland (2011) *Good Governance Principles for Partnership Working*.
- R10 Audit Commission (2009) *Working Better Together? Case Study Neighbourhood working in Blackburn with Darwen Strategic Partnership*.
- R11 Audit Commission (2009) *Working Better Together? Case Study Strategic Leadership in Derby City Partnership*.
- R12 Showcase *Taking Off Hertfordshire Residential Community – An innovative Partnership Approach*.
- R13 Showcase *North Coventry Estate Renewal*. Coventry New Deal for Communities.

