

APPENDIX 1

Neighbourhood Working

In October 2005 Belfast City Council's Development Committee agreed to initiate the Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme as a means of guiding Council's service delivery at a local level. The key function of SNAP is to provide the policy framework and mechanisms within which Council can undertake integrated area based planning and link this to area based delivery. SNAP is also an integral part of Community Planning and will play a key role in linking community needs to the overall vision for the city.

There are a number of key stages involved in the implementation of SNAP can be detailed as follows:

- Appoint a SNAP team to develop and implement SNAP;
- Develop the information systems necessary to deliver SNAP;
- Determine and propose defined neighbourhood areas for the delivery of SNAP;
- Develop mechanisms for engaging elected representatives in the process;
- Ensure that SNAP is an integral part of the Council's next corporate strategy and the community planning process;
- Mobilise internal services in the SNAP process and thus ensure that they are fully engaged in the corporate approach to neighbourhood working;
- Examine how we currently deliver our services and our capacity to adapt them to best serve our neighbourhoods and put in place mechanisms for joining up service delivery;
- Examine the capacity of local communities to articulate their requirements and work with them to develop this;
- Map the role, function and future plans of partner organisations at a local level;
- Research and produce proposals for community engagement;
- Develop a detailed implementation plan for delivering SNAP;
- Scope future resource needs to ensure effective implementation; and
- To put the infrastructure in place to enable SNAP to be rolled out.

Progress to date

1.0 SNAP Team

The SNAP team comprising of a Manager, Communication and Information Officer and Research Officer have been appointed and in position since April 2007. The team is responsible for developing the SNAP framework and necessary mechanisms for rolling out the full programme.

2.0 Neighbourhood Geography

A key priority activity for the SNAP team has been to determine and propose defined neighbourhood areas for the delivery of SNAP.

Over the past year work has been undertaken to define the neighbourhood geography. A range of guiding principles were established for assessing potential neighbourhood geography which are detailed as follows:

i. Universal coverage

The SNAP model must ensure service delivery to everyone in Belfast. Other area models select only a proportion of the city's geography.

ii. Alignment to existing administrative tracts for information and data collection

An essential part of the process is to gather a range of socio-economic and demographic data from as many sources as possible and therefore it is essential that boundaries are co-terminous with existing statistical geographies, e.g. Census Output Area's, Super Output Area's and Wards.

iii. Recognition

The area should be recognisable to local people and local representatives. The SNAP geographies should where possible align themselves to local neighbourhoods as perceived by local people. In addition to this SNAP areas should also reflect the areas of political responsibility.

iv. Equal Population Proportionality

Areas should have an agreed population size range. All areas should have similar population sizes to ensure that it has an equal relationship with the Council and to ensure that any SNAP mechanisms that are in place can be supplied in a similar fashion. Areas must be small enough to allow SNAP to identify and isolate local differences to service requirements but large enough to be cost effective to administer.

v. Optimal number of SNAP districts

The number of Districts must be cost and time efficient whilst conducive to effective delivery of services.

vi. Co-terminous with existing structures

The SNAP model should work effectively with existing neighbourhood structures. A number of structures are already in operation throughout the city such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, Area Partnerships, etc. The SNAP structure should avoid duplication by identifying where possible and practical, neighbourhood geographies that are co-terminous with existing structures.

vii. City Centre

Given that BCC has identified the City Centre as a corporate priority one of the SNAP areas should incorporate city centre as a discreet neighbourhood.

A preferred option was agreed by Members which included the creation of 21 discreet areas across the city. The Cityplaces model will allow us to collect and share information and engage with citizens at smaller geographical levels. We can combine any combination of City Places to help plan services and to work alongside other initiatives and partners. This geographical model was ratified by Council in February 2008. A map of the areas is contained within Appendix 1.

3.0 Consultation

In 2007, the model for Local Area Working was designed and went out to a public consultation. A range of methods were used such as public meetings, household surveys, questionnaires etc.

The following questions were discussed with regard to Local Area Working:-

- Do you think Local Area Working should be a priority for the Council?
- What do you think are the main local priorities for the city?
- How can the Council best support local engagement across the city?
- What is the best way to get individual citizens involved in influencing the Council's work?

A full analysis of the Consultation response is contained within Appendix 2 but the key findings can be summarised as follows:

- There was a general view that the plans to adopt a local area working approach generally makes sense as the needs/issues of concern vary across the city and it was acknowledged that this fits with Community Planning.
- There is a need to integrate local issues within a citywide framework.
- There is a need to ensure that interface areas are dealt with in a sensitive way.
- Engagement methods should be adopted to address different issues or target groupings.
- Council should use its civic leadership to link city places to other agencies in order to get things done.
- Bin collection, community safety and street cleaning were considered to be the highest priority services at a neighbourhood level.

4.0 Information and Research

One of the key priorities of the SNAP process is to develop the necessary information data and information systems to support the implementation process. A number of key activities are on-going and planned, which can be identified as follows:

- Citystats;
- Area Profiles
- Neighbourhood Services Database;
- Statutory Agency research
- Neighbourhood participation methodologies; and
- Internal Service Delivery Audit.

3.1 Citystats

Citystats is an information portal for the Council. The information collated through Citystats would enable the Council to build up a complex profile of the city's neighbourhoods and put in place a robust evidence-based decision making system based on accurate and current data from a wide range of services.

A software package has been purchased to begin the process of collating area based data with both internal and external datasets which would enable the creation of area based profiles. An internal working group has also been established to drive the project forward and strong linkages have been developed with NISRA who are also represented on the group. NISRA has also confirmed that they would like to place a secondee within the Council to further develop this relationship.

A key priority for the Citystats project will be to identify the availability of internal datasets for the system. A standard template has been developed which provides guidelines for collating data that would be compatible for Citystats this includes the provision of a postcode grid reference. Once this information is collated it will need to be quality tested before inclusion in the system.

3.2 Area Profiles

The process for developing in-depth analysis of each geographical area has now commenced. The Area profiles have been designed to compliment the Sustainable Communities wheel. The main indicators for sustainability are:

Well Run – with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership.

Well Served – with private, public, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs.

Environmentally sensitive – providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment.

Well designed and built – featuring quality built and natural environment

Thriving – a flourishing and diverse local economy.

Well Connected – with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health etc.

Fair for everyone- including those in other communities, now and in the future.

Active, Inclusive and Safe – Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared communities.

The Area Profiles are a very rich source of local intelligence which will create a real time understanding of our communities and citizens. They will allow both Officers and Members the opportunity gain access to localised information on needs, local priorities and existing service delivery. It will also be an excellent business planning tool that can assist with accurate resource allocation and local service design based on the key issues and needs of specific areas.

Sample copies of the Area profiles are contained within Appendix 3.

3.3 Neighbourhood Services Database

One of the fundamental requirements in making SNAP work is that the Council has a firm understanding of the social capacity within each neighbourhood in which services will be delivered. Therefore a critical element in the success of SNAP will be to develop a key understanding of the on-going work of other organisations, representative bodies, partnerships and agencies that are currently operating services at a neighbourhood level in the city.

The Neighbourhood Services audit has built upon existing work undertaken in this area by NICVA (Sectornet) and DSD's government funding database (itself an extension of sectornet). The outputs of the dataset are linked to the area profiling work within Citystats.

The research undertook the following:

- A survey of current statutory, community, voluntary and neighbourhood groups who play a role at a neighbourhood level. This also included partnerships, initiatives, task forces and neighbourhood policy frameworks; and
- Creation of a database providing indicative details such as organisation name, contact information, main base of operation, area of service delivery, existing plans and strategies, funding sources, service delivery programme delivery details, client base, relationship to Belfast City Council and opportunities for shared working with Council.

This research identified that there are approximately 4000 organisations providing some kind of neighbourhood service at a local level. Further analysis was carried out with 674 organisations which identified the following:

- 32% received core funding from central government.
- 52% own, rent or manage their own building
- 21% classify children and young people provision as their primary service
- 9% classify community development as their main activity
- 52% deliver their services within a specific geographic location in the city
- 49% deliver services to less than 1,000 people
- 67% regularly consult with the people the service is provided to

In terms of important community services that the Council provides, the following were identified as key priorities:

- Waste Collection
- Street Cleansing
- Health Education and promotion
- Environmental Health
- Community Services activities
- Community Centre provision
- Grant schemes
- Civic events
- Recycling services
- Economic Development & Job Creation
- Parks and playgrounds
- Good Relations
- Community Safety

3.4 Statutory Services Mapping

The Unit has recently embarked on a further piece of research to augment the Neighbourhood Services Knowledge Base. This research will map statutory service provision and future planned provision at an area level, identify which data collection methods carried out by these organisations that could inform the Council's own neighbourhood intelligence system as well as identifying joint initiatives with Council.

3.5 Neighbourhood Participation Methodologies

This piece of work has identified best practice in neighbourhood working and community engagement by public service providers in Europe. Five cities were profiled as best practice models and recommendations regarding how this could be implemented in Belfast have also been provided. The final report is due at the end of November.

3.6 Internal Service Delivery Audit

The implementation of SNAP will mean a transition in the way services are delivered by Council – moving away from the current departmental delivery to supporting a more integrated approach to service delivery for the citizen. A key aspect of ensuring that this can be delivered is to compile a full analysis of current council functions and service delivery and ultimately mobilise internal services in the SNAP process and ensure that they are fully engaged in the corporate approach to neighbourhood working.

There are a number of key tasks were undertaken with regard to this process which included:-

- Mapping the current Council structure
- Auditing existing service provision within the Council and current capacity to respond at a neighbourhood level
- Undertaking an analysis of each service, determining the scale of modification required, if any, for SNAP.
- Evaluation of the Internal Service Delivery audit and identification of the key issues.
- Develop an action plan for adaptation and roll out of services (tied to the Improvement Agenda).
- Identification of a quick win priority list of those services requiring minimal adaptation for SNAP.

The Internal Services mapping has identified more than 150 discreet council services that operate at a neighbourhood level and further analysis has identified a further 100 services which provide an impact at a local level. Key services include:

- Council Grant Schemes
- After-Schools Clubs
- Playgroups
- Summer Schemes
- Capacity Building
- Community Centres
- Events
- Traveller Services
- Recycling
- Bin collection
- Graffiti removal
- Advice and information provision
- Renewing the Routes
- ASB pilots and Community Safety
- Parks, open space and playground provision
- Leisure facilities
- Consumer Safety
- Health and Safety
- Dog Warden
- Pest Control, Noise Control, Air Quality
- Community Education & Awareness
- Street Cleansing

There are approximately sixty different information management systems have been identified within BCC and work is underway to assess their compatibility with the Citystats system.

The SNAP team is also working with ISB to develop a framework within which to organise all of these sources of local intelligence.

4.0 Community Engagement

The development of the Citystats project plus the examination of external partnerships will provide information on the role, function and future plans of partner organisations at a local level. However, if SNAP is to develop key methods of community engagement it must examine the capacity of local communities to articulate their requirements.

One of the key issues that has been raised over the course of the last year is that citizens are often unaware of the full extent and nature of services that the Council can provide for them. In order to address this, one of the key actions of the SNAP team will be to present the necessary information that can inform citizens of service delivery.

Initial work has been carried out by CENI, which looked at the concept of Exploring a Social Assets Approach to delivering local services. This report argues that if communities are to become more involved in the design and delivery of services then service providers should be aware of the social assets of the communities as well as their social needs, since the former are crucial attributes in developing community sustainability. Further analysis will be undertaken later in the year to explore the social assets within the city places.

The Neighbourhood Services Knowledge base has identified a range of organisations in place across the city which could provide a platform for engagement with citizens. One key resource is the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships who already have action plans in place and had been consulted on publicly and have implications for BCC. These actions will be incorporated within the SNAP planning process.

The SNAP team has been working with Professor Peter Roberts from the Academy for Sustainable Communities regarding Area Based community engagement mechanisms. A tool box for engagement will be developed in 2008 which will focus on the specific needs of each area.

Background information has been prepared which can provide a full understanding of how SNAP will work and is provided in Appendix 4.

SNAP is also a member of the corporate Consultation working group which has been established to create a strategic approach to consultation across Council. This working group is currently mapping all existing forms of consultation and good practice across the Council.

5.0 Neighbourhood Renewal

In April 2007 the SNAP team took on the co-ordination of Neighbourhood Renewal on behalf of the Council. A Neighbourhood Representatives group was established to drive this process forward and SNAP also took on the responsibility for co-ordinating the responses to the Neighbourhood Partnership Plans.

The following has been achieved with regard to Neighbourhood Renewal:

- Neighbourhood Renewal representatives group established which meets every six weeks in order to discuss key issues for Council arising out of the Neighbourhood Renewal Process. The SNAP team provides the support framework for the Neighbourhood Renewal representatives group and provides the necessary research, information and assistance to enable the Officers to represent Council in each Partnership.
- A Neighbourhood Renewal Departmental Liaison group was established to co-ordinate departmental issues pertaining to Neighbourhood Renewal.
- Procedure on Council's approach to Neighbourhood Renewal approved at the Development Committee meeting in September 2007 which includes agreement for Council to proactively seek representation on each of the 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships and for this support to be provided by Community Services staff.
- Representation secured on 11 out of 12 Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships which is provided by Community Services Officers and the SNAP team.
- Ten completed Neighbourhood Action Plans received from the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships with consolidated responses completed for nine (Inner South, South West, Inner North, Inner East, Ligoniel Lenadoon, Ballysillan/Upper Ardoyne, Crumlin/Ardoyne and Upper Springfiled) and approved through Council. These plans and responses are all available on Belnet and the Council's external website.
- Responses are currently being prepared for the Greater Falls and Greater Shankill Action Plans in later Summer
- The Action Plan for Andersonstown is currently being developed and will be presented to Committee as soon as possible.

- Formal presentations have been made and a series of meetings held with the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Boards in Inner South, South West Belfast, Inner North, Greater Falls, Lenadoon, Andersonstown, Inner East, Crumlin/Ardoyne and the remaining NRP's will be scheduled for later in the year.
- Two Neighbourhood Development Officers have been appointed to work with the SNAP team to undertake the analysis, co-ordination, responses and implementation of each of the 12 Neighbourhood Action Plans as well as feeding into the overall SNAP process.
- To date 600+ actions have been identified for Council within the eleven Neighbourhood Action Plans that have been received. Initial analysis on the recurrent themes has been undertaken and the key areas of relevance to BCC are – Community Capacity and Development; Parks and Open Space provision; Good Relations; Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety; Environmental Improvements; Arterial Routes development; Graffiti removal; Youth Related issues; Leisure provision; Litter; Economic Development and Public Art.
- Each of these actions pertaining to Belfast City Council is being integrated within the City Places and SNAP planning process to ensure a co-ordinate approach to area based planning.
- Discussions have also been held with BRO regarding the potential to roll out one of the SNAP pilot areas that would be co-terminous with a NR area and to identify joint areas of co-operation.
- A workshop will also be held with BRO in September time to look at sharing best practice with regard to NR implementation on the theme of Community Safety which will be the next topic for the Belfast Strategy Group to deliver on.

6.0 Next Steps: SNAP implementation

6.1 SNAP Progress

Over the past year the SNAP team has achieved the following:

- Developed and formalised a geographical model for Council (called City Places) as a basis for Local Area Working.
- Completed a large public consultation which revealed strong support for greater public engagement.
- Undertook significant awareness raising amongst staff and outside organisations.
- Co-ordinated Council's response to Neighbourhood Renewal (600+ actions with 12 partnerships)
- Mapped Council services to identify practice in local data management, area based working and engagement.
- Built a neighbourhood services knowledge base which mapped services from 4000+ organisations.
- Commenced construction of local intelligence profiles to assist local decision making across council.
- Developed a corporate local area working policy framework underpinned by the ASC's Sustainable Wheel model.

6.2 What key challenges have been identified?

Council is already working on a range of area based initiatives which involve almost all of our services e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal, Community Safety Partnerships, Renewing the Routes, Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and ad hoc area projects such as the Upper Springfield Safer Neighbourhoods Forum. However, this is very much carried out on an individual basis due to the absence of a coherent Neighbourhood Support Policy Framework within the Council.

Participation at an area based level does require corporate co-ordination on planning, resourcing, consultation, engagement, information management and monitoring. At present this does not fully exist within the current Council structure. These issues will be tackled through the new corporate planning process but it will take time before these are fully operational.

6.3 Implications for the roll out of SNAP?

Given the issues and challenges that have been raised above and the fact the SNAP team has limited staff resources it is recommended that the implementation of SNAP is rolled out on a Phased basis starting with the Inner City areas and City Centre and the rolling outwards. This would entail developing Action Plans that would cover a two year period.

Each of the inner city areas have Neighbourhood Renewal Action plans in place which could provide a key baseline for the development of Council Action Plans as they already contain actions that have been fully consulted on with communities.

The SNAP team will continue to implement the Neighbourhood Renewal Action plans pertaining to each of the 12 areas within the city on an on-going basis.

The potential roll out would be as follows:

6.4 Phase 1 Roll out April 09

Area	District Electoral Area
North 1	Court
South 1	Laganbank
West 1	Lower Falls
East 2	Pottinger
City Centre prepared	Laganbank City Centre Action Plan already
North 2	Oldpark

Phase 2 Roll out April 10

Area	District Electoral Area
North 6	Castle
South 2	Balmoral
East 3	Pottinger
West 2	Upper Falls
East 1	Victoria

Phase 3 Roll out April 11

North 3	Oldpark
South 4	Balmoral
East 4	Victoria
West 3	Lower Falls
West 4	Court

Phase 4 Roll out April 12

North 5	Castle
South 3	Laganbank
North 4	Oldpark
West 5	Upper Falls
East 5	Victoria

A copy of the map and proposed roll out of Phases is contained within Appendix 5.

6.5 Structures in place to drive forward

A number of structures would need to be put in place internally to help drive forward Local Area Working. These structures will involve both Members and Officers.

6.7 Member Working Group

It is suggested that the Members working group could be established on a District Electoral Area basis. Each of the designated City Places fits within the District Electoral Area.

Each Member working group will be fully supported and serviced by the SNAP team who will organise meetings, provide local area intelligence, test feasibility of plans, prepare action plans, committee reports and facilitate the 'my Neighbourhood debates'.

It is recommended that these working groups would meet on a monthly basis in the lead up to consultation and action plan preparation and then quarterly afterwards to monitor progress.

6.6 Officer working group

It is proposed that two tiers are put in place to manage Local Area Working Internally i.e. strategic and operational tier.

Strategic Tier

It is proposed that this tier would be Chaired by the Director of Development and would comprise representation from key heads of service and managers within the organisation who would have a responsibility for delivering neighbourhood services.

The SNAP team would provide on-going logistical support in terms of local area intelligence, area profiles, consultation and engagement mechanisms.

It is anticipated that this group would meet on a quarterly basis and set the strategic direction for the operation group.

Operational Tier

It is proposed that the Operational Group would operate on a North, South, East, West basis and would comprise representation from a range of Officers who provide services within that geographical area.

Each operational tier will oversee the Neighbourhood Action Plans that will be in place for those specific geographical areas as well as integrate the actions pertaining to the Neighbourhood Renewal Actions Plans.

The Operation tier will also be fully serviced by the SNAP team who will provide the necessary support and local intelligence mechanisms.

It is anticipated that each group will meet on a monthly basis.

A diagram of this proposed structure is contained within Appendix 6

7.0 Budget

Whilst the key focus of Local Area Working will be to work with Services to incorporate local needs and issues within their business planning and delivery processes it is also recommended that a small budget is allocated to each areas to address specific local issues and priorities, based on local knowledge and engagement with citizens within each city place.

The suggested amount would be £50,000 per area for delivery within a two-year action plan. Spending proposals should be locally derived; meet an identified need; improve local social, economic or environmental well-being and be lawful.

Such proposals would need to be identified and in place with the roll out of the Action Plans in April 2009.

Full guidance with regard to budget usage will be developed by the SNAP team and presented to Members for approval.

8.0 Planning process

In order to progress the development and implementation of the Local Area Action Plans the following activities would need to be undertaken:

Step 1: Agree the phased implementation areas for SNAP. This will include presentation of maps, analysis of area and approval and ratification by Council.

Step 2: Creation of Area Profiles for the pilot areas. The Area Profiles will provide a rich source of local intelligence which will provide information on key issues and challenges in the area, examination of current Council support and provision in the area, neighbourhood service provision and key issues that have already been raised locally e.g. incorporation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plans. See Appendix 2 for sample Area Profiles.

Step 3: Set up a Councillor working group to oversee each of the pilot areas potentially on a District Electoral Area basis. Councillors will oversee the local area working process and lead on the consultation and engagement process which is to be organised and facilitated by the SNAP team. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss and agree the planning framework for the development and implementation of Neighbourhood Action Plans

Step 4: Set up a number of cross-departmental council teams who have a responsibility for providing neighbourhood services in a range of disciplines in order to identify integrated area based working opportunities and will cover the North, South, East and West of the City.

Step 5: Host a number of working group meetings with elected representatives to review the area profiles, discuss key issues and concerns within areas and identify priorities for discussion.

Step 6: Agree an initial statement of priorities with elected representatives to help to frame the debate for the consultation process. Members will need to consider the merits of proposals, needs and priorities.

Step 7: Commence consultation planning. This will include gaining an understanding of the area and the best methods and mechanisms for engagement which will be aided by the development of the citizen engagement toolkit.

Step 8: Host a series of 'my Neighbourhood debates' led by elected representatives which would inform local people what we are doing and to give them an opportunity to identify and determine priorities. The consultation process would take place over an 8 week period. The Area Profiles, engagement mechanisms etc should assist Members to consider the respective merits of the proposals generated and to reach balanced decisions that reflect the best needs of the local community.

Step 9: SNAP team to consolidate the key issues and priorities identified through the consultation process and to investigate internally what solutions can be provided in the short/medium and long-term which would include testing feasibility and costing actions.

Step 10: Engagement and negotiation with other Departments and Service providers within the organisation to gain approval to implement key issues and actions raised. In parallel to this process, Officers will be using the Area profile information and engagement information to inform their business planning process.

Step 11: Development of tentative plans which will be presented and assessed by the Members working group. These plans will also include analysis of the key services that the council is already providing within the area as well as some special initiatives. Discussions will also need to take place around key issues raised that may not be feasible to deliver and potential solutions identified.

Step 12: Plans presented to Committee for consideration and approval. Each plan should contain key information on how the priority was identified, was everybody in agreement?, what the benefit is, financial implications etc.

Step 13: Presentation of plans and approval by communities.

Step 14: Implementation of plans (2 yr period with reviews built in). Neighbourhood Development Officers will be assigned to the Action Plans to ensure delivery and provide regular updates.

Step 15: On-going updates and engagement with the community regarding the plans. This can provide another opportunity to inform and update citizens on the work we are doing at a local level as well as our progress with regard to the implementation of the action plans.

Step 16: On-going engagement with Members working groups to discuss key issues and progress with action plans and consider reporting mechanisms within the community.

Step 17: Monitoring, evaluation and review which will be reported to Council as well as communicated to the City Places.

Next steps:

There are three key steps that need to be agreed in order to move forward with the implementation of SNAP:-

- **Agree to set up the Council and Member structures to progress SNAP**
- **Approve SNAP roll out plans in four phases**
- **Approve the budgetary implications of 50k per city place**