



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Consultation: Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency: Community Development Strategy
Date:	23 August 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3532 Barbary Cook, Policy & Business Development Manager, ext 3620

Relevant Background Information	
1.1	The Health and Social Care Board (HSC), together with the Public Health Agency, (PHA) have produced a strategy that aims to improve community development approaches across all health and social care organisations in Northern Ireland. Belfast City Council has been asked to respond as part of a twelve week public consultation.
1.2	The HSC and PHA want to see strong, resilient communities where everyone has good health and wellbeing, places where people look out for each other and have community pride in where they live. They seek a reduction in inequalities by addressing social factors that affect health and wellbeing. The new strategy is based on the premise that community development activity is a key contributor to these aims.
1.3	The strategy (and its related performance management framework) have been designed to support health organisations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• take stock of their attitudes, aspirations, and practice in relation to community development;• systematically develop needs and asset based community development approaches in all aspects of their business;• ensure a realistic progress route for community development;• measure progress on mainstreaming community development approaches; and• incorporate community development into overall performance management arrangements.

1.4	<p>Rather than taking a more traditional approach that examines deficits in communities and the interventions required to tackle them, the HSC strategy is focuses on the needs and 'assets' (both physical and social) within communities and the potential of these assets to contribute to positive health outcomes. The consultation presents six broad questions about the strategy. They include questions concerning the clarity of the strategy's intentions; its likely usefulness to the council in the delivery of our own services and a series of questions around the strategy's performance management framework and impact on equality. The draft council response to the consultation is based around the six questions.</p>
1.5	<p>The Full proposal is attached as Appendix 1.</p>
1.6	<p>The consultation document was sent to council on the 15th July and comments are required to be returned by the 2nd September.</p>
1.7	<p>The strategy is closely linked to the draft HSCB Personal and Public Involvement strategy which is being consulted on concurrently. Consequently, both documents have been distributed to relevant council officers and a workshop on the two was held for officers. The council's proposed PPI consultation response is also being presented at this Committee.</p>

2	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The consultation on the HSC community development strategy is timely as Belfast City Council is beginning a public consultation on its own draft community development strategy. In the pre-consultation stages of the council's strategy, officers engaged with staff from the health sector. This has resulted in a number of connecting and mutually re-enforcing ideas and approaches in both organisations' strategies (e.g. an emphasis on assets, outcomes and the mainstreaming of community development approaches).</p>
2.2	<p>The underlying premise of the council's community development strategy is that by supporting and engaging directly with communities it becomes much easier for the council and its partners to design and deliver effective and appropriate services that make the best use of the city's assets. Likewise the HSC strategy recognises the importance of integrating community development practice within the entire Health Service in Northern Ireland in order to achieve health and well-being outcomes. Their rationale is that community development approaches enable local people to address their own health and social wellbeing needs and develop and improve co-operation with health and social care agencies, leading to better outcomes.</p>
2.3	<p>The council is of course a key health partner in Belfast. Not only are we a joint partner in the inter-agency Belfast Health Development Unit and a key partner in the Belfast Strategic Partnership, but many of our services and activities contribute directly or indirectly to health and wellbeing outcomes. Health and Environmental Services includes work on public health, tackling health inequalities and community safety. Our parks and leisure centres provide venues for a range of programmes to promote fitness. The community development activities of our Community Services section also contributes to improved health and well-being in communities.</p>

2.4	<p>Bearing this in mind there are a number of mutually beneficial opportunities in the joint development and delivery of both HSC and Council strategies and these have been highlighted in the council's draft response. Potential opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting skilled community development staff - Developing shared community development outcomes against which partners can design interventions and measure performance and impact. - Enhancing the role of the community and voluntary sectors in the co-design and co-production of local services. - Developing better joint understanding of neighbourhood assets to support integrated approaches to their use. - Developing shared knowledge systems to identify both need and assets. - Sharing best practice in community development work including approaches to community engagement.
2.5	<p>In summary, the HSC strategy aligns well with the council's own stance on community development. Its assets-based approach and ambition to mainstream community development activity fit well with the council model and provides opportunities for future joint working. In addition the strategy's substantial performance management framework may well provide a useful template for the council for any future developments in this area.</p>
2.6	<p>The strategy does not provide details of action plans for implementation although an ambitious timetable for their implementation suggests that these will be in place by the end of January 2012. It will be important for the council to engage with the Belfast Health and Social Care Board on the content of its action plan to ensure that opportunities can be mutually identified and developed.</p>

	Resource Implications
3.1	There are no resource implications.

	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	There are no Equality and Good Relations implications.

	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked to approve the draft Council response to the consultation and raise any additional issues, relating to the consultation document, that they would like to be included.

	Decision Tracking
Timeline: August 2011	Reporting Officer: Barbary Cook

	Key to Abbreviations
<p>CD - Community Development HSC - Health and Social Care Board PHA - Public Health Agency PPI - Personal and Public Involvement strategy</p>	