



Development Department

Your reference: Consultation: Community Development Strategy for Health and Wellbeing

Our reference: #119352

Being dealt with by: Mark McCann

Date: 16 August 2011

Tel: 028 9027 0579

Mr Martin O'Neill
Community Development Lead
Health and Social Care Board
Southern Office, Tower Hill
Armagh BT61 9DR

Dear Martin,

RE: Consultation: HSC Board and PHA: Community Development Strategy for Health and Wellbeing

Please find below our provisional response to your consultation. Please note that this is still subject to final ratification by full council on 1 September 2011.

Provisional response

Overall comments

Belfast City Council warmly welcomes the HSCB/PHA community development strategy and believes it will play an important contribution in delivering better health and wellbeing outcomes across the Health Service in Northern Ireland.

We support the strategy's case for the mainstream integration of community development approaches within health and social care organisations and the role community development can play in ensuring the needs and views of communities are expressed in public service design and delivery. We are supportive of the needs and assets-based approach that the strategy has adopted and welcome the planned performance management framework.

The development of the strategy is timely as Belfast City Council is beginning a public consultation on its own community development strategy (and would welcome continued input from the health sector). There are a number of connecting and mutually re-enforcing ideas and approaches in both organisations' strategies.

We note that action plans for the HSC strategy are to be developed early in 2012. The council would like to be consulted on the design of the Health and Social Care Board's & the Belfast Trust's action plans as we believe there may well be areas of mutual benefit for both organisations in terms of enhancing our approaches to community development in the city.

The council's own draft community development strategy proposes a broad outcomes-based model for community development activity in Belfast. The model describes four supporting strands of activity and the likely outcomes to which they could contribute.



The strands include support for core community development skills (such as volunteering, group capacity building, etc); support for effective community engagement; effective partnership working; and, ultimately, support for shared service design and delivery with communities.

The purpose of the model is to encourage organisations to adopt mutually reinforcing community development approaches that jointly contribute to shared outcomes. We wish to work with partner organisations, including the HSC and PHA, to explore how this might be achieved.

Responses to the specific questions

1. Do you think that the strategy will be helpful in your area of interest or work?

There are a number of areas in which the strategy would be helpful to the council and we would welcome further engagement with the HSC and PHA on exploring this. Areas might include:

- 1.1 Learning from the development of your strategy, and the design and implementation of its actions plan, can inform the council's own strategy and implementation plan. We would wish to share information on this.
- 1.2 Approaches to community consultation and engagement. The council is currently developing a framework for consultation and engagement and would welcome ideas on developing approaches to engagement.
- 1.3 Ensuring the council's service contributions to health outcomes have community development approaches embedded with them. This might include activities associated with our corporate Healthier City plan (which includes contributions from Parks and Leisure, Community Services, Health and Environment Services, etc) and our contribution to the Belfast Joint Health Development unit.
- 1.4 Working with our Community Services team to explore opportunities for joint working on projects that could involve our community centres and community development workers across Belfast's neighbourhoods.
- 1.5 Contributing to our growing city and neighbourhood evidence base. Our Strategic Neighbourhood Action Programme (SNAP) team have gathered a substantial resource on community assets and needs. There may be opportunities to share learning with the HSC on better utilising this information in community development approaches.
- 1.6 Measuring impact – the council is keen that its community development strategy has the capacity to measure the impact of our activities. There may be opportunities to develop joint measures with our partners.
- 1.7 Aspects of your performance management framework might prove useful for the council in measuring the successful implementation of its own strategy.



2. In your opinion is the strategy clear in what it intends to do?

Yes. The underlying premise of Belfast City Council's draft 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.

This chimes well with the HSC premise 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 and more sustainable outcomes.

3. Is the Performance Management section clear and understandable?

Yes.

4. Do you agree with the Conclusions and Recommendations in the Summary Document?

Yes.

5. Are you satisfied with the outcomes of the screening exercise?

Yes.

6. Are there any other issues in relation to equality and human rights that you think should be highlighted?

None.

7. In your opinion has any major issue been omitted?

There are three issues which the HSC might want to consider:

1. **Supporting a joint outcomes model for community development.**
One of the drivers for the council in developing our CD strategy was the absence of any model in Belfast against which we (and our partners) could shape and measure our own community development activity. We would encourage the HSC to champion its community development work with other partners and highlight the benefits that would accrue for establishing shared community development outcomes across partner organisations.
2. While there is currently no **Community Planning** legislation in Northern Ireland, there is a trend towards utilising Community Planning approaches. Community Planning principles are something that Belfast City Council has endorsed – and we have noted the importance of community development activity in underpinning this approach. This is also likely to be relevant to the health sector over the medium to longer term.



3. The fourth strand of Belfast City Council's community development strategy is about support for the co-design and co-delivery of services with community, mutuals, co-operatives and other social economy partners. We would note that there is a growing national government policy trend in this direction and it may be something which you would wish to address in your strategy, given that community development underpins such approaches.

8. Do you or your organisation want to be involved in taking forward this strategy? If so, please tell us how?

There are a number of mutually beneficial opportunities in the joint development and delivery of both the HSC and Belfast City Council strategies. They might include:

- Supporting the cohort of skilled community development staff in Belfast.
- 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

9. Please provide any other comments, evidence or information that you wish to share.

We would encourage the HSC and PHA to contribute to the public consultation on Belfast City Council's community development strategy.

Thank you for asking us to respond to the proposals.

Yours sincerely

Mark

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