Belfast City Council's
Community Development Strategy
2012 to 2015

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Preface

A central aim of the council's new Investment Programme is to enhance the quality of life for people in Belfast by improving our services to communities. We have committed substantial resources to achieving this aim over the next three years with multi-million pound support for a range of new initiatives, on-going community programmes and a series of funds targeted at delivering social impacts.

This investment is based on the understanding that Belfast has a rich history of pioneering voluntary and community action. By working with and investing in the organisations and individuals that represent this unique resource, we believe that together we can deliver substantial social impacts at a time when the city faces many serious challenges.

It is long accepted that community development plays an important role in promoting participative democracy and in unlocking the capacity of individuals, community organisations and their public servants to help identify and then address some of our most challenging societal problems of disadvantage, poverty, social injustice and inequality. Community development activity is often the basis for the kind of interventions needed to tackle the multiple challenges faced by our communities. It is the process where ordinary people come together to make decisions and take action about the issues that matter to them and that affect their lives. Without it the work of any organisation seeking to work with communities to tackle complex social issues becomes much more difficult.

We hope that you agree that this council community development strategy is a welcome contribution to delivering on our ambitions for Belfast. It offers a framework for our continued investment in core community development both in the form of officer support and our substantial grant programme. The strategy gives us the opportunity to work with our partners – in the community, voluntary and statutory sectors – to define, shape and measure the solid contributions that community development activity makes in our neighbourhoods and communities.

We believe the strategy is a necessary foundation stone for designing the kind of collaborative approaches that are needed to tackle persistent, complex issues including those associated with deprivation, health, safety and good relations. Specifically for the council, it has allowed us to build a challenging plan of action for the next three years that will influence the shape and quality of our services to Belfast's citizens.

We look forward to continuing to work with others in achieving this aim.

Councillor Deirdre Hargey
Chair of Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

June 2012

Introduction

Community development can be thought of as both the means by which we work together to support communities and to describe the outcomes we wish to achieve. Community development is thus both an approach to how the council should go about its work and an overarching aim in itself. It can be thought of as both an occupation (for example, the role of a community development worker in a council) and as a way of working with communities. As such it has a fundamental role to play in supporting and shaping how the council plans and delivers its services.

This is also true for our statutory partners and will become more central when Community Planning legislation is introduced to Northern Ireland. At the heart of Community Planning is a commitment by statutory organisations to engage in a co-ordinated way with communities in the design and delivery of public services.

A new strategy for the council

While the council has supported a community development approach in many aspects of its work over the years, this has often been in isolation of any wider framework or strategy for community development. (This situation has changed somewhat in recent months with a number of organisations developing their own strategies including the Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency, the East Belfast Community Development Agency and the Rural Community Network. The council has welcomed these initiatives and has committed to supporting these strategies.)

Research[1] and experience from Belfast and from elsewhere across Europe has demonstrated the importance of community development in ensuring that quality public services are delivered effectively.

While much good community development work has been done with the council it has become increasingly apparent that a well defined position on community development would have obvious benefits for our services. It would allow us share practice across the council and with our partners. It would also support staff in building professional skills in community development. A strategy would also allow us to define the outcomes the council wishes to achieve from community development work. This would allow us to measure more clearly the community impact of the work of the council. If successful such a framework could be shared with our partners across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors in the city.

Consulting on the strategy

We spent much of 2011 engaging with our councillors and staff, the community and voluntary sector, and with our statutory partners, to develop a strategic approach to community development that could support this shared approach. The council has been guided in its thinking by the expertise of organisations such as Community Change and by academic work from Dr Brendan Murtagh at Queen's University and Gabriel Chanon, former director of research and policy at the Community Development Foundation.

In our engagement and in our public consultation on the draft strategy there was considerable support for the council in taking a lead in this area. At a series of

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[1] For example *Civil Renewal* (Dick Atkinson, Brewin Books, 2004); and *The Community Development Challenge* (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007)

workshops and briefings our approach has been informed by the views of groups from across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors.

There was recognition of the importance of community development work to the city and its value to the citizen and in enhancing the work of organisations. This final draft of the strategy incorporates a number of challenges and suggestions from those with whom we consulted. Key challenges included:

- Considering the relationship between elected representatives and community development work
- The nature of community organisations and active citizens
- The need to draw together the wealth of evidence and experience to build a renewed vision for continued improvement of CD practice in Belfast. The council, as civic leader, is in a unique position to encourage this.
- The shared roles and responsibilities of organisations within partnership arrangements.
- Encouraging a shared emphasis on an asset-based approach; recognising the importance of existing community infrastructure as a basis for shaping intervention.
- Emphasising the critical role that community development work has to play in supporting Good Relations particularly given Belfast's post-conflict environment. We are operating in a fairly unique environment and our approach to community development must be informed by this drive towards a shared city.
- Taking a CD approach that recognises that the nature of community is not restricted to one defined by geography but which might also include communities of interest, communities of identity or communities of action.
- In earlier drafts of our strategy we used the metaphor of building blocks to describe aspects of community development work. This was challenged by many as too mechanistic and not reflective of the nature of the work where groups or communities move between strands at different times and in different circumstances.

What's in the strategy?

This final strategy does not attempt to address all of these challenges. Indeed given the nature of CD work it would be inappropriate for us to attempt to do so. The strategy instead provides a common basis on which to engage with communities, councillors, and our partners on these subjects and work towards shared approaches. We do this by offering a number of elements:

1. **A working definition of community development**
2. **Our vision, aims and underpinning values**
3. **A community development model to share across Belfast**
4. **Developing an outcomes framework**
5. **An outline implementation plan specifically for the council**

Community development in Belfast

A working definition

There are many definitions of 'community development'.[2] However, for our purposes a simple definition that can be shared widely is:

> 'Community development activity is the main means by which we can be better engaged with local people and support their involvement in improving the city and its neighbourhoods. It enables people to come together to:
> - influence or take decisions about issues that matter to them and that affect their lives;
> - define needs, issues and solutions for their community; and
> - take action to help themselves and make a difference.
>
> It is a long-term, value-based process which targets positive social change.'

Our vision and aims

Belfast City Council would suggest that a shared vision for community development is that all the communities of Belfast will become engaged, effective and enterprising.

- By **engaged** we mean that communities will be inclusive towards all their members and will have the skills and confidence to work positively with public agencies, with other communities and with elected representatives.

- By **effective** we mean that communities will be skilled in meeting their own needs, in prioritising and articulating needs in relation to public agencies, and will be able to negotiate solutions and assist change and development.

- By **enterprising** we mean that communities will be places of creativity and energy where economic value is multiplied, investment is attracted and opportunities expand.

Implied in all of these dimensions, and underlying them, is the necessity for individuals and communities to be active on numerous issues and interests for their own and others' benefit in order to improve the quality of life for all.

Community development as a professional approach is informed by a core set of values which are now recognised by the National Occupational Standards We provide more detail on these standards in **Appendix One**. Briefly they underpin:
- Social justice
- Self-determination environment
- Working and Learning Together
- Sustainable Communities
- Participation
- Reflective Practice

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[2] It's often useful to think of community development in terms of what it isn't or what the characteristics of a community might be if there is weak or poor community development activity. We examine these ideas in Appendix Two.

It is important to note that adopting a community development approach can contribute directly to the council's aims of improving quality of life. Communities that are challenged, or have weak community infrastructure, can greatly impede our ability to deliver on our corporate priorities. Successful community development activity can foster an environment in our neighbourhoods that makes what we do much more effective.

A shared model of community development

To achieve the dimensions of engaged, effective and enterprising communities requires a full range of community development methods, each with its own characteristic outcomes.

These can be considered as four strands of community development practice, though in practical situations they become intertwined and mutually reinforcing. It's perhaps useful to think of the strands as the branches of a tree with our value and principles underpinning the entire approach:

The four strands correspond broadly to the dimensions in the following way:

- To assist communities to be widely active and generally effective, and also to underpin the other dimensions, requires **Core Community Development.**

- For communities to be engaged requires that some of the community development effort focuses specifically on **Engagement** and, at a more structured level, on **Partnership** working.

- For communities to be enterprising requires that some of the community development effort focuses on **Shared Service Design and Delivery**.

Communities, groups and organisations may focus on one or more strands at different times and in different situations. However, the idea of Core Community Development, the trunk of our tree, with CD values and principles at its root is likely to form the substantive basis of all community development activity.

Four strands of community development

1. Core community development work
2. Engagement that works
3. Building effective partnerships
4. Shared service design and delivery

Strand 1 - Core community development

Working with communities and individuals to build up a critical mass of active citizens, associations, groups and networks that provide the foundations for communities to articulate their needs, issues and purpose and to begin to understand how to work best together and with local and central government bodies.

Strand 2 - Engagement that works

Communities need to have the ability to engage effectively within their own communities (geographical or otherwise); with other communities; and with those who deliver services to ensure that such services meet their needs. Groups therefore need the skills and information necessary to both identify priorities and propose solutions. From the deliverers' perspective, councils and other public bodies must acquire the skills and capacity to engage meaningfully and effectively with communities.

Strand 3 - Building effective partnerships

Increasingly, more formalised partnership-working is at the heart of many of the relationships between communities and service providers in our city. For this to work well community organisations and service providers need the capacity to co-design, monitor and evaluate services that address local need. They also need to be able to understand the wider interlocking social, economic and environmental issues which impact on local areas. Such partnerships might range from loose collegiate arrangements to more formal structures.

Strand 4 - Shared service design and delivery

Although not always relevant or appropriate, in some instances communities may wish to move to a position where they are the co-deliverers of local services. Community groups become delivery partners in meeting local needs, developing community assets and delivering local and central government aims.

The entire basis of the work of the council's Community Services is predicated on a community development model that has a particular focus on **core community development** activity. However, most services across the council already contribute in a variety of ways to community development goals that cross all four strands.

On the next few pages we examine each of these strands in a little more detail. We briefly define each strand and identify how the council currently supports it. We also give consideration to how the council can develop its contribution in the future and how we can begin to measure our impact.

Strand 1 - Core community development

What is this?

This 'trunk' is about developing active citizenship and positive networks and relationships in and between communities. Through community groups, associations, environmental, residents' and other local voluntary groups this strand builds the foundations for communities to articulate their needs and issues and begin to understand how to work best with each other and with local and central Government bodies. This is often an organic, bottom up response to a local need or issue.

Who currently does this?

The council's support for this strand in communities is primarily the work of **Community Services**. While work elsewhere in the council certainly contributes to the strand, it is uniquely the central aim of Community Services.

Where do we want to go?

There are a number of areas of work the council is already involved in, or could pursue over the longer term, to strengthen its contribution to this strand. These might include:

- Build a shared community outcomes framework that can contribute to the measurement of the community impact of the council's work;
- Strengthen and improve the quality of community activity which in turn builds social capital[3].
- Develop a volunteer framework which supports active citizenship internally and externally.
- Provide support and advice to new and emerging community groups.
- Manage and support our community facilities as accessible assets for communities and groups to use.
- Provide grant aid in support of community groups' activities and facilities and for area based networking and capacity building.
- Work to identify and meet specific CD training needs across council.
- Promote community development skills and knowledge across the council as part of our organisational development programme.
- Ensure that front-line council workers understand the role of community activity, groups and networks and respond to and support them where appropriate.

How do we know if we've been successful?

There are a range of outcomes we would wish to see from this strand and which could be shared across council and, over time, with our partners. They include:

- Community groups are flourishing and networks are vibrant across the city
- Citizens have access to a wide range of community groups and activities and are more active in their community.
- Community sector networks operate effectively and reach all relevant groups and organisations.

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[3] **What is social capital?** Briefly, it's the pattern and intensity of networks within and among communities and the shared values which arise from those networks. Definitions vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, 'neighbourliness', social networks and civic participation. OECD define it as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups.'

- ✔ All community groups have access to use of affordable premises for meetings and activities.
- ✔ All community groups have reasonable and fair opportunities to access grants for activities.
- ✔ The needs and concerns of all sections of the community are articulated effectively.
- ✔ Disaffected or marginalised groups develop confidence, influence and negotiation skills.

How might we begin to measure success?

Indicators might include:
- ✔ Large-scale or micro surveys showing how far groups are confident of increasingly meeting their own objectives
- ✔ The range of issues addressed by groups
- ✔ How well groups attract and retain volunteers
- ✔ Whether groups have adequate resources and support
- ✔ Nominal Group Technique to measure social capital
- ✔ Quality of services, opportunities and environment enabling groups to function

Strand 2 - Engagement that works

What is this?

Communities and organisations can engage transparently to design and shape services to meet local need. It supports community groups to gain the skills and information they need to work together, and with others, to identify and articulate shared priorities and to propose solutions. Equally it develops the abilities and knowledge of people working in local government and public bodies to engage meaningfully and effectively with communities.

Who does this currently?

Engagement is an increasingly important strand of work across the council and will be a key capacity for successful Community Planning. Currently, Community Services act both as channels or facilitators for local engagement. Other services with a strong engagement element include Parks and Leisure, Community Safety, Good Relations, Health Development and Cleansing Services. Current activity includes the design of community engagement in the Titanic Quarter, the BIG Lottery Community Planning pilot and work on the redevelopment of Dunville and Woodvale Parks.

Where do we want to go?

There are a number of areas of work the council is already involved in or could pursue over the longer term to strengthen its contribution to this strand. These might include:
-   Facilitate shared learning on community engagement within the council and with community and public sector partners.
-   Develop the capacity to assist council departments to design and undertake community engagement.
-   Engage with community centre users in developing programmes and management structures.
-   Engage with user groups, advocacy groups and community networks to stimulate feedback and invite informed influence.
-   Support the council framework for consultation and engagement that ensures we:
    o   engage communities to help inform and shape Council policy and decision making;
    o   work with partners in the public and community sectors to identify and apply good practice.
-   Value the contribution that community development can make to the corporate themes and individual departmental objectives.
-   Increase CD skills and make wide use of CD in the course of our work.

How do we know if we've been successful?

There are a range of outcomes we would wish to see from this strand and which could be shared across council and, over time, with our partners. They include:
-   Services are improved and better targeted and delivered as a result of constructive dialogue between communities and council departments.
-   Council engagement activity is responded to widely.
-   Communities are influential in shaping services and decisions based on them are considered to have been arrived at in a transparent manner.
-   Residents, community groups and voluntary organisations have good negotiating skills and use them effectively in relating to the council.
-   There is a strong engagement culture across the organisation
-   Staff have good skills for engaging with and responding to communities and use them effectively in relating to local residents and groups.

How might we begin to measure success?

Indicators might include:
- ✔ Reports showing how far resident influence is a factor in departmental decisions.
- ✔ Whether delivery of services is improved by community feedback.
- ✔ Whether groups testify to improved confidence and capability as a result of community development input.

Strand 3 - Effective partnership working

What is this?

This involves effective partnerships between communities and service providers that lead, co-design and monitor and evaluate services.

It builds the community capacity and resources needed to enable people to get involved in partnership structures and processes and to understand the wider social, economic and environmental issues which impact on local areas. These partnership structures can be for a particular geographical area or be city wide or focused on issues such as regeneration, health, safety, sports or the environment.

Who does this?

Our services are involved in formal partnerships for health, community safety, policing, education, neighbourhood renewal, older people and good relations. We also work collaboratively with organisations and communities at a more informal or operational level to deliver projects, services or to respond to emerging issues. The council also leads on Community Planning and is building capacity and learning on successful partnership working.

Where do we want to go?

There are a number of areas of work the council is already involved in or could pursue further over the longer term to strengthen its contribution to this strand. These include:

- Continuing to represent the council on all Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) Partnerships and relevant sub-groups
- Work with the SNAP team to facilitate communication between council services and the NR Partnerships so that the Neighbourhood Renewal programme can effectively influence local area service provision across our departments;
- Co-ordinate the council's work on its priority themes of improving services for children and young people and the Traveller community.
- Support, participate in, and (where agreed) lead city-wide, area and neighbourhood fora and partnerships which further the corporate aims and priorities. These include the Good Relations partnership; Community Safety Partnerships and the Strategic Health Partnership.
- Ongoing development of a Community Planning model for Belfast that ensures communities have an effective means of participating in community planning processes.
- Partnership work with communities for the successful delivery of neighbourhood projects, (eg) Connswater Community Greenway project.

How do we know if we've been successful?

There are a range of outcomes we would wish to see from this strand and which could be shared across council and, over time, with our partners. They include:

- Increased cooperation between Council services and community and voluntary groups and greater trust reported.
- Community representatives or advocates on partnerships have wide credibility in their own sector and effectiveness in relation to authorities.
- Better joint planning and collaborative working on key quality of life themes and local priorities, including shared contributions

- ✔ Community groups successfully create or negotiate multiple improvements to neighbourhood conditions.
- ✔ Evidence of a collegiate approach.
- ✔ Groups understand the Council's business and budgetary planning cycle.

How might we begin to measure success?

Indicators might include:

- ✔ Reports showing how far groups feel they can influence decisions of council departments and partner bodies.
- ✔ Increased joint use of facilities.
- ✔ Joint planning by communities and agencies.
- ✔ Better satisfaction with services as a result of cooperation.

Strand 4 - Shared service design and delivery

What is this?

Communities as co-deliverers of sustainable services such as social economy enterprises or community-managed assets. These meet local needs, develop community assets and help deliver local and central Government aims. They are supported through grant aid, contracts and earned income. Not all communities will wish to proceed to this stage.

Who does this?

Services across council have been exploring the option of working with communities in the direct design and delivery of services – and it's a direction encouraged by national government policy. Both **Community Services** and the **Parks and Leisure** department have a number of facilities that are directly managed by local community organisations and the council's generalist **advice services** are delivered by local advice consortia. In **Waste Management**, Bryson House deliver a kerbside recycling contract operation as a social economy enterprise.

Where do we want to go?

There are a number of areas of work the council is already working on or could pursue over the longer term to strengthen its contribution to this strand. These might include:
- Support community-managed neighbourhood facilities through grant aid, service agreements and advice on management.
- Support community organisations in the development of social economy enterprises.
- Facilitate an area planning approach to maximise access to and use of community facilities in the council, public and community sectors.
- Provide advice and support to community managed facilities to enable them to become more effective and self sufficient.
- Promote and develop shared facilities and amenities with both the community and public sectors including new arrangements for co-production and management.

How do we know if we've been successful?

There are a range of outcomes we would wish to see from this strand and which could be shared across council and, over time, with our partners. They include:
- Community and voluntary organisations take on delivery of specific aspects of public services.
- Community assets are increased.
- Training and employment opportunities are increased through community organisations and social enterprises
- More social economy enterprises supply goods and services to the council and other public sector bodies.

How might we begin to measure success?

Indicators might include:
- Increase in volume of trading by community and voluntary organisations
- Increased user satisfaction with services provided by voluntary and community organisations
- Increased occupational training through these organisations
- Increase in employability through volunteering.

What are the likely roles?

Drawing together the various contributions suggested in each strand, a number of current and potential future roles emerge from the strategy for services across the council. These include:

Specifically for Community Services

- Provide **support and advice** to new and emerging community groups
- Manage and support **community facilities** as accessible venues for community activities and events.
- Support **community managed facilities** through grant aid, service agreements and advice on management.
- Provide **grant aid** in support of community groups' activities and facilities and for area based networking and capacity building.
- Develop a **volunteer framework** which supports active citizenship internally and externally.
- Promote **community development skills and knowledge** across the council as part of our organisational development programme.
- Strengthen and improve the quality of **community activity**
- Develop the capacity to assist council departments to **design and undertake community engagement;** facilitate shared learning on **community engagement**
- Engage with **community centre users** in developing programmes and management structures.
- Represent the council on all **Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships** and relevant sub-groups
- Work with the SNAP team to **facilitate communication** between council services and the NR Partnerships
- Co-ordinate the Council's work on its priority themes of improving services for **children and young people** and the **Traveller community**.

For all parts of the council

- Build a shared **community outcomes framework** that can contribute to the measurement of the community impact of the council's work;
- Ensure that **front-line council workers** understand the role of community activity, groups and networks and respond to and support them where appropriate.
- **Promote community development skills and knowledge** across the council as part of our organisational development programme.
- Work with Community Services to identify and meet **specific CD training needs**
- Facilitate shared learning on **community engagement**
- Support the council **framework for consultation and engagement** that ensures we:
    o engage communities to help inform and shape Council policy and decision making;
    o work with partners in the public and community sectors to identify and apply good practice.
- Support, participate in, and (where agreed) lead city-wide, area and **neighbourhood partnerships** which further the corporate aims and priorities. These include the Good Relations partnership; Community

Safety Partnerships and the Belfast Strategic Partnership for health and wellbeing.
-   Value the contribution that community development can make to the **corporate themes** and individual **departmental objectives**
-   Ongoing development of a **Community Planning model** for Belfast that ensures communities have an effective means of participating in community planning processes.
-   Build on SNAP's co-ordination role to ensure that the Neighbourhood Renewal programme can effectively i**nfluence local area service provision** across our departments.
-   Partnership work with communities for the successful delivery of major regeneration projects (eg) the **Connswater Community Greenway** project and local improvement projects.
-   Support community organisations in the development of **social economy enterprises.**
-   Facilitate an **area planning approach** to maximise access to and use of community facilities in the Council, public and community sectors.
-   Promote and develop **shared facilities and amenities** with both the community and public sectors including new arrangements for co-production and management (eg) developing the potential of those Community Services and Parks and Leisure facilities that are managed by community organisations or social economy enterprises.
-   **Support in practical ways local community initiatives** which complement Council services and priorities (Neighbourhood Watch, local clean-ups, recycling, etc).

Measuring community development outcomes

The previous sections illustrate some of the expected outcomes and indicators for each strand. As part of the implementation of the strategy Community Services staff plan to work with others in the council to expand these initial ideas to construct an outcomes framework that will allow us to jointly measure our community impacts.

In the past it's often been assumed that measuring the impact of community development is difficult. However, evidence can take many forms and be collected at different points in the community development process.

Surveys of staff, councillors, communities and community venue users are already undertaken by the council periodically. These will be continued but their content will be reviewed to find ways to relate it more accurately to community development.

An outcomes framework for more continuous feedback through community development officers' reports and proposals for shared approaches with other departments. This framework will reflect 'theory of change' reasoning, ie:

➔ The work is being done in order to change something.
➔ What is it that needs to be changed?
➔ What is its present state?
➔ What is the desired state that we want to change it to?
➔ What actions are most likely to bring the change about?
➔ How will we recognise whether the change has happened or not?
➔ How will we judge whether the change was the result of the action taken?

Since it would be too onerous to collect evidence of everything that happens, a limited set of indicators will be established for a period to capture whether the community development process as a whole is succeeding in contributing its maximum value to the council's corporate themes.

Appendix 1:

National Occupational Standards for community development[4]

The National Occupational Standards outline clearly the skills, values and practice Principles required for community development work and have been developed to provide the basis from which we can promote effective and appropriate community development work practice.

The Federation for Community Development Learning (FCDL) led the development and subsequent review of the National Occupational Standards through widespread consultation and endorsement within the community development work field.

Key purpose of community development work

The key purpose of community development work is collectively to bring about social change and justice, by working with communities to:

- Identify their needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities
- Plan, organise and take action
- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action all in ways which challenge oppression and tackle inequalities.

Social justice
- Respecting and valuing diversity and difference
- Challenging oppressive and discriminatory actions and attitudes
- Addressing power imbalances between individuals, within groups and society
- Committing to pursue civil and human rights for all
- Seeking and promoting policy and practices that are just and enhance equality whilst challenging those that are not

Self-determination environment
- Valuing the concerns or issues that communities identify as their starting points
- Raising people's awareness of the range of choices open to them, providing opportunities for discussion of implications of options Values and practice principles of community development work Key purpose of community development work
- Promoting the view that communities do not have the right to oppress other communities
- Working with conflict within communities

Working and Learning Together
- Demonstrating that collective working is effective
- Supporting and developing individuals to contribute effectively to communities
- Developing a culture of informed and accountable decision making
- Ensuring all perspectives within the community are considered
- Sharing good practice in order to learn from each other

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[4] The standards identify community development work as an occupation in its own right, and are now held by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), the sector skills council for lifelong learning. For more info www.fcdl.org.uk

Sustainable Communities
- Promoting the empowerment of individuals and communities
- Supporting communities to develop their skills to take action
- Promoting the development of autonomous and accountable structures
- Learning from experiences as a basis for change
- Promoting effective collective and collaborative working
- Using resources with respect for the environment

Participation
- Promoting the participation of individuals and communities, particularly those traditionally marginalised/excluded
- Recognising and challenging barriers to full and effective participation
- Supporting communities to gain skills to engage in participation Developing structures that enable communities to participate effectively
- Sharing good practice in order to learn from each other

Reflective Practice
- Promoting and supporting individual and collective learning through reflection on practice
- Changing practice in response to outcomes of reflection
- Recognising the constraints and contexts within which community development takes place
- Recognising the importance of keeping others informed and updated about the wider context

Roles and skills for community development work

Role A: Develop working relationships with communities and organisations
- Make relationships within communities
- Build relationships within and with communities and organisations
- Develop strategic relationships with communities, organisations and within partnerships

Role B: Encourage people to work with and learn from each other
- Contribute to the development of community groups/networks
- Facilitate the development of community groups/networks Roles and skills for community development work
- Facilitate ways of working collaboratively
- Promote and support learning from practice and experience
- Create opportunities for learning from practice and experience
- Support individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict
- Take action with individuals, community groups and communities to deal with conflict

Role C: Work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action
- Work within communities to select options and make plans for collective action
- Contribute to collective action within a community
- Support communities to plan and take collective action
- Ensure community participation in planning and taking collective action
- Contribute to the review of needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities within a community

- Work with communities to identify needs, opportunities, rights and responsibilities

Role D: Work with people in communities to develop and use frameworks for evaluation
- Support communities to monitor and review action for change
- Facilitate the development of evaluation frameworks

Role E: Develop community organisations
- Encourage the best use of resources
- Review and develop funding and resources
- Develop and evaluate a funding/resourcing strategy
- Develop people's skills and roles within community groups/networks
- Facilitate the development of people and learning in communities
- Develop and review community-based organisational structures
- Develop and maintain organisational frameworks for community-based initiatives Units imported from national occupational standards for management
- Contribute to planning and preparation
- Co-ordinate the running of projects
- Contribute to project closure

Role F: Reflect on and develop own practice and role
- Identify and reflect on own practice, knowledge and values
- Review own practice, knowledge and values
- Evaluate and develop own practice
- Identify and take action to meet own learning and development needs
- Review and meet own learning and development needs

Appendix 2: What is community development?

It's often useful to think of community development in terms of what it isn't or what the characteristics of a community might be if there is weak or poor community development activity. We illustrate these ideas below:

What it isn't[5]

×   **It isn't just for community development workers.** Anyone can perform in a community development role if they are given the training, resources and support to work with communities on the communities' own priorities from the start

×   **It isn't a 'quick fix'.** Community development is a long-term process, focusing on people and their needs and aims. This long-term approach is essential to ensure changes are sustainable and long-lasting.

×   **It isn't a 'numbers game'.** If five people turn up to a public meeting, these are the five people that the work starts with and grows from.

×   **It isn't a euphemism for 'Partnership working'.** Community development is the activity which enables many people to get to the partnership table in the first place. It is the way of working which challenges unrepresentative voices: talking with three 'community representatives' is not representative of the needs of the wider community if the representatives are not accountable to the communities and delegated to express the collective views of these communities. Community development enables many more voices to be heard and ensures they represent the diversity of opinions.

×   **It isn't merely 'Consultation'.** Community development is much more than consulting on decisions already made. It is about residents exploring their own needs and seeking the services which meet their differing needs.

×   **It isn't 'Tokenism'.** It won't provide the answer to all problems, such as a cheap way of providing services, demonstrating management efficiency or validating funding bids.

×   **It isn't just 'Volunteering'.** Volunteering does bring many benefits, including the opportunities to develop teamwork, community spirit and personal growth. But many people become involved in voluntary community activity because they cannot get the service they want, and have to provide it themselves. It is not necessarily because they want to be volunteers.

×   **It isn't the same as 'Community Engagement'.** Community engagement is generally initiated by agencies or people in positions of power to seek community involvement in planning and reviewing services or engaging in democratic life. It can be empowering if it leads to communities having an effective say in service provision or political decisions. It will also benefit from community development which builds the road of organised groups which others may find useful to reach people. However community development isn't merely a tool for community engagement; it starts from communities' own concerns. Community development helps communities reach out to agencies and other influential people when the issues require their involvement. Community development helps communities to develop clear ideas about what they want to say and the changes they are seeking from others, and then to

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[5] Community Development Exchange (2001) http://www.cdx.org.uk/community-development/what-community-development-isnt-about

consider which forums and networks will help them pursue their interests through their collective voices.

What does effective community development look like?

It's often easier to consider the role of community development work if we consider situations where it is weak or mostly absent.

Where there is no or weak community development a neighbourhood often has these characteristics:	Where there is effective community development a neighbourhood often has these characteristics:
× The most disadvantaged people receive poor quality services and are less able to express their needs. × Communities miss out on opportunities and are likely to be more excluded. × People are unable to agree issues and priorities or have them influence decision-makers. × Cultural differences are less likely to be respected. × There is less volunteering and fewer skilled community groups. × Public bodies find it difficult to engage with people and communities. × People who gain employment may move elsewhere thus reducing the pool of skills and spending in the area. × The area may have a poor reputation and fail to attract economic investment and opportunities. × People are less resilient and less capable of benefiting from wider economic change.	✔ People are more confident and able to shape the quality of their lives. ✔ There is more involvement and positive citizenship. ✔ Communities and their leaders better understand wider issues and how to influence change. ✔ There are opportunities for co-designed approaches to tackling issues by communities and public bodies. ✔ Areas have a better image; can point to improvements in quality of life; and are better able to attract economic investment. ✔ Young people who gain qualifications and employment are more likely to stay and the area is more likely to attract employed people, thus increasing spending within the local economy. ✔ Communities take more responsibility for developing their own services, enterprises and social economies. ✔ People are more capable and supported to take advantage of economic and employment growth in the wider city.

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

[As of June 2012]

Councillor Deirdre Hargey (Chairman)
Councillor Gareth McKee (Deputy Chair)

Alderman David Browne
The High Sheriff Alderman May Campbell
Alderman Robin Newton
Councillor Tim Attwood
Councillor Patrick Convery
Councillor Matt Garrett
Councillor Tom Haire
Councillor Claire Hanna
Councillor Máire Hendron
Councillor Mervyn Jones
Councillor Danny Lavery
Councillor Conor Maskey
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Councillor Caoimhín Mac Giolla Mhín
Councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
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Councillor Lee Reynolds