

Evaluation of the effective engagement of communities in regeneration

Final baseline report

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by

ODS Consulting

A Report to Communities Scotland

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 We were appointed by Communities Scotland in April 2006 to establish robust baseline information to ensure that Communities Scotland has sufficient and credible evidence to demonstrate the effective engagement of communities in regeneration and respond to their targets for community engagement.
- 1.2 The objectives for this study were to:
 - gather and analyse information on the National Standards for Community Engagement and community engagement activity in Regeneration Outcome Agreements (ROAs)
 - identify practical examples of how community engagement is being tackled in regeneration, including the role of communities in influencing decisions
 - make recommendations for the future measurement of community engagement activity, to ensure that achievement of Communities Scotland's corporate targets can be evidenced.
- 1.3 This has resulted in the production of two reports. This baseline report sets out our findings on the current experience of community engagement activity across Scotland. A separate options report has been produced for Communities Scotland which sets out options for measuring progress in community engagement in regeneration.
- 1.4 Our methodology for this baseline report has involved:
 - analysis of all 32 Regeneration Outcome Agreements – paying particular attention to the section on community engagement
 - reviewing all the ROA annual reports from community planning partnerships – again paying particular attention to the section on community engagement
 - identifying seven community planning areas (one in each Communities Scotland area) for more detailed investigation

- interviewing officers from a range of partners involved in community planning in these seven areas
- holding a focus group of community activists in each of the seven areas
- interviewing staff from organisations with a national perspective on community engagement (like Communities Scotland, Community Voices and the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations)
- Facilitating a half day seminar attended by more than 30 people drawn from the community members and officers who had been interviewed in the research; Communities Scotland and the Community Voices Network. This focused particularly on the measurement of effective community engagement in regeneration.

1.5 This research has assessed the current position of community engagement activity, and scoped some of the options for measuring activity in the future. Communities Scotland will now consider how these options could be developed into a final model for measuring community engagement activity.

2 Regeneration Outcome Agreements and Annual Reports

Regeneration Outcome Agreements

- 2.1 There are 32 community planning partnerships in Scotland. All of them produced a Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA), following guidance prepared by Communities Scotland. Regeneration Outcome Agreements were prepared in 2004/05 and approved by Scottish Executive Ministers in 2005. They cover a three year period up to March 2008.
- 2.2 The ROA was designed to provide the strategic and operational framework for community planning partnerships (CPPs) to deliver the Scottish Executive objective of *'regenerating the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, so that people living there can take advantage of job opportunities and improve their quality of life'*. The ROA is particularly focused on the most deprived 15 per cent of areas identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004.
- 2.3 The Community Regeneration Fund (CRF) was established in 2005 to help bring improvements to Scotland's most deprived areas and help individuals and families escape poverty. The CRF replaced the existing Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) and Better Neighbourhood Services Fund (BNSF) programmes and builds on the lessons and good practice from these programmes.
- 2.4 The ROA is to provide *'clear, measurable and time-bound outcomes to be achieved through the CRF, mainstream and other expenditure'*. The focus on outcomes developed the approach used in the Better Neighbourhood Services Programme.
- 2.5 The whole ROA can be a substantial document – often over a hundred pages long. The sections dedicated to community engagement are short – usually a handful of pages.

2.6 The guidance from Communities Scotland is specific about the essential role that community engagement plays in community planning:

'Effective and genuine community engagement is at the heart of community planning and there must be evidence of this in the ROA. We are looking for CPPs to excel at engaging effectively with the disadvantaged communities they serve. It will be particularly important for CPPs to actively engage communities...throughout the process of developing the ROA, and in its delivery, monitoring and evaluation'. (Communities Scotland: Community Regeneration Fund: Guidance on Regeneration Outcome Agreements, August 2004)

2.7 This guidance also states that the ROA needs to provide detailed evidence of:

- genuine community engagement, particularly at targeted neighbourhood levels, in prioritising outcomes and outputs and in ongoing monitoring;
- how existing community engagement structures are built into the ROA development process;
- how the CPP is engaging with a broad range of representative structures within communities;
- how the CPP is using a range of approaches to engage communities, in particular highlighting innovative ways of engaging with the most excluded communities, who are often described as 'hard to reach';
- the mechanisms that CPPs will use to monitor and review community engagement practice to ensure that it effectively improves the planning and delivery of services to meet the needs and aspirations of communities; and
- the resources that are being directed towards supporting community engagement, including those which help to build the capacity of communities to engage.

2.8 We have looked at all the Regeneration Outcome Agreements and will describe their approach to community engagement in

detail in the rest of this section. In summary, the majority of the ROAs failed to provide all the evidence requested by Communities Scotland in its Guidance. In particular, few ROAs described the ways that CPPs would monitor and review community engagement practice to ensure that it improved the planning and delivery of services to meet the needs and aspirations of communities.

- 2.9 Communities Scotland has supported the development of National Standards for Community Engagement. In August 2004, when the ROA guidance was published, these were in draft form and were being piloted. The ROA guidance '*expected*' community planning partnerships to use the standards as a framework to engage communities. The majority of the ROAs do refer to the National Standards and the way that they will be used in their area.
- 2.10 The remainder of this section reports on the review that we have undertaken of all the ROAs. Although these were all produced to standard guidance, the approach taken varies greatly from area to area. In some cases this is because of the particular local situation – for example whether there were Social Inclusion Partnerships operating in the CPP area. This has made quantitative analysis difficult. We have used sub-headings to try to provide a picture of the very varied information contained in the ROAs.

Community involvement in the development of the ROA

- 2.11 The guidance from Communities Scotland stressed the importance of CPPs actively engaging communities throughout the process of developing the ROA. Twelve of the ROAs (38%) included no evidence of communities having been engaged in the development of the ROA (although this does not necessarily mean that no engagement took place).
- 2.12 Of those that provided evidence, a wide range of methods were used, including:
- building on the existing community engagement structures – mainly involving SIPs and occasionally the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund

- public meetings, conferences, open days and community workshops
- questionnaires
- focus groups
- consultancy support to active community participants.

2.13 In four cases evidence is given that there was consultation with equalities groups as part of the development of the ROA. In two cases, equality theme groups were directly involved. Another two ROAs described the use of focus groups or specific work with young people.

Structures for community planning and community engagement

2.14 We thought that it would be useful to compare the structures for community planning and community engagement that have been put in place in each ROA. There is no consistent approach taken within the ROAs to the description of the structures and relationships. However, there are a few good examples of clear descriptions of the structure (in five cases accompanied by a useful diagram). In six cases, there is no description of community engagement structures. We acknowledge that the ROAs were written at a time of significant change in each area. But our overwhelming reaction, having read all the ROAs, is one of confusion:

- there is a bewildering range of terms used to describe the relationship between the community planning partnerships and their sub-groups (which are sometimes geographic, sometimes thematic and sometimes both)
- the structures for community planning are complex
- the structures for engaging the community in the different levels of community planning are generally not clear – phrases like '*organic framework*' are not helpful
- there is a confusion between structures for community engagement and methods of community engagement.

2.15 In relation to community planning structures, 11 ROAs describe arrangements for local community planning partnerships; three

describe a combination of local community planning partnerships and communities of interest; and four describe less formal area structures.

Methods of community engagement

- 2.16 The guidance from Communities Scotland asks CPPs to provide evidence of how the CPP is using a range of approaches to engage communities. All but two of the ROAs mention methods of community engagement – and many include a range of approaches.
- 2.17 Because of the different styles and local terminology used in the ROAs, it is difficult to quantify the range of methods proposed for community engagement. We have tried to identify some of the most common methods of community engagement and some of the more innovative approaches that were planned.
- 2.18 Community capacity building was a common feature of ROAs. The resources from the Community Voices programme (and, on occasion, additional resources from the CRF) were often dedicated to developing strong local support structures for community activity.
- 2.19 Among the most common methods which were mentioned for engaging communities were:
- residents' panels made up of a representative cross section of the community who were asked for views on service provision and other issues (most commonly called peoples' or citizens' panels). These were usually standing panels, with views being asked once or twice a year. But in some areas they had been arranged on a one-off basis;
 - 'Planning for Real' – an opportunity for residents to design improvements in their community. This is usually supported by external consultants;
 - civic forums and assemblies – either made up of community representatives or regular events that are open to the public. They provide an opportunity for the community to discuss service delivery issues with the service providers;

- community involvement in (or leadership of) the development of local community plans;
- residents' juries made up of about 15 local people who consider a single issue in considerable depth;
- surveys and questionnaires; and
- approaches based on information technology – touch screens in public areas and 'online polling' using the internet.

2.20 Some of these approaches were innovative. In addition, ROAs mentioned:

- the planned establishment of a community radio station;
- an audit of all community engagement structures;
- the use of arts to engage the community (drama; music; writing and visual arts); and
- community led research on community priorities (often funded by SCARF – the Scottish Community Action Research Fund).

Engaging young people

2.21 The guidance from Communities Scotland required evidence to be provided on ways that the most excluded communities can be engaged. We looked for evidence relating to young people and also to wider equalities groups. 23 of the ROAs made specific reference to engagement with young people – 9 did not. Of those that provided evidence, the majority included multiple initiatives or methods for engaging with young people.

2.22 The level of engagement of young people varies from area to area. Most of the ROAs that evidence youth engagement include youth forums, youth groups or committees. Some refer to youth conferences and several mention Dialogue Youth initiatives as the main method of engaging young people. Other approaches which were mentioned were:

- a Young People's Manifesto being developed as a result of a youth conference
- young people directly involved in decision-making on how the Community Regeneration Funds are spent

- young people having ‘direct representation’ on community planning, as the Youth Congress sat within the community planning structure.

2.23 More innovative ways of engaging with the young communities were also found:

- use of video, DVD and the internet to engage young people
- the use of drama
- a youth festival
- participation in debates in the council chambers
- links to the Scottish Youth Parliament
- the training and support of young people to conduct a survey on young people.

Engaging other equalities groups

2.24 The ROAs were slightly less likely to mention equalities groups other than young people – and the evidence provided for other groups was less substantial than for young people. Just over half of the ROAs included additional information on engagement with other equalities groups.

2.25 Of the 17 ROAs which mentioned engaging other equalities group, ten incorporated engagement with the older community, 11 included people with disabilities equalities group and nine mentioned minority ethnic communities. In only two cases was the LGBT community mentioned.

2.26 Most of the references to engaging equalities groups were not specific. However, in three areas there were formal arrangements for the engagement of a range of equalities groups as sub groups of the community planning partnership. In one area key information about regeneration was translated into six languages.

The National (and local) Standards for Community Engagement

2.27 26 of the ROAs referred directly to the National Standards for Community Engagement - 6 did not. Of the 26 ROAs which did refer to the National Standards, 3 have gone on to develop local

versions of the National Standards for Community Engagement. In addition, one of the ROAs which did not mention the National Standards referred to local standards being developed.

2.28 The ROAs have used a variety of phrases to describe their use of the standards, including “fully aware of”, “will take account of”, “has adopted”, “committed to” and “at the heart of.”

2.29 In one case, the ROA states that the Standards will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement.

Measuring performance

2.30 The guidance from Communities Scotland required that the ROAs should provide evidence on the mechanisms that CPPs will use to monitor and review community engagement practice to ensure that it effectively improves the planning and delivery of services to meet the needs and aspirations of communities.

2.31 Only six ROAs include any reference to the mechanisms to be used to monitor and review community engagement practice – and these were not explicitly linked to service delivery. The mechanisms that were identified in the six ROAs were:

- an annual community representatives study of the effectiveness of community engagement
- commissioning consultants to undertake an audit of the techniques used for measuring the effectiveness of engagement
- performance to be measured in two ways – firstly an increase in the community’s perceptions of their effective engagement in community planning and secondly an increase of one full percentage point in agencies’ evidenced assessment of their achievement of the National Standards for Community Engagement
- the National Standards to be used as the basis of monitoring and evaluation
- self assessment by the community of the success of

engagement; communities to help brief consultants for an evaluation of community capacity building; and community to be involved in selecting community capacity monitoring indicators

- the planned development of a scorecard, leading to developmental indicators, to allow progress to be made.

2.32 An additional six ROAs contain specific outcomes relating to increasing community engagement. The majority refer to increased participation by residents in community and voluntary activity. Only one sets targets for improvement. One ROA includes as an indicator 'Increase the number of organisations operating to the National Standards for Community Engagement'. Another seeks to increase the involvement of 'hard to reach' groups.

2.33 In addition, twelve ROAs contain outcomes and indicators relating to increased engagement of young people.

Links to strategies

2.34 17 of the ROAs make explicit links in their community engagement section to other strategies. The most common link was to the Community Learning and Development Strategy, which was mentioned in the community engagement section in 15 of the ROAs.

2.35 In addition, there were mentions of:

- the Community Regeneration Strategy
- the Youth Strategy
- the Active Citizenship Strategy
- the Public Involvement Strategy
- the Equalities Strategy.

Training and support

2.36 More than half of the ROAs (18 in total) indicate a commitment towards training and support for community participants. Sometimes this is part of training for all partners, and sometimes it is directed exclusively at active community participants.

2.37 In relation to community engagement, nine ROAs describe training aimed at community participants; two refer to training in community engagement for partner agency or partnership staff and five refer to training for both community participants and staff. In some cases, the ROA has built on previous practice in the SIP. In one case the ROA describes a commitment to the delivery of training for community participants – but notes that ‘no community representatives have taken advantage of this’. Another says that a training needs assessment will be undertaken.

2.38 The approaches to training set out in ROAs include:

- training on creative ways of involving people (2 day course tailored for staff or community participants); training on using technology to engage people; promoting the SVQ Certificate in Public Involvement; and ‘participatory appraisal’
- an aspirational learning programme run by the Pacific Institute for community participants
- training for community participants – two full day sessions and five evenings; training on community learning and development techniques; and an HNC in Working for Communities
- training in survey methods for young people – to allow them to undertake a survey of young people
- capacity-building training for community participants which has included public speaking, time management; financial monitoring and reporting; effective marketing and strategic planning
- the planned development of a skills toolkit to support the growth and development of community organisations; development of the community’s skills in community planning and community governance; helping community organisations to work with service providers and influence local service delivery
- Induction training and Individual Learning Plans for all partnership members.

The annual reports

- 2.39 All Community Planning Partnerships are required by Communities Scotland to submit an annual report (following the detailed guidance set out in the National Performance Management Framework¹). The first Annual Reports (for 2005/06) were to be submitted to Communities Scotland by the end of June 2006.
- 2.40 In relation to community engagement, the reports include two templates which are to be completed. The first gives the Community Planning Partnership the opportunity to assess its performance in relation to the National Standards for Community Engagement using a list of eight areas identified by Communities Scotland. The second is an Action Plan – identifying key barriers, and the steps that the partnership will take to overcome the barriers that it has identified. These templates are attached at Annex 1 and 2.
- 2.41 Partnerships are asked to provide a 1-2 page overview of the templates – ‘offering examples or case studies which demonstrate improvements in practice, processes or structures and importantly look to evidence the impact which improved community engagement is having on the delivery of better public services.’
- 2.42 At the time of completing this report, 31 of the 32 CPPs had submitted their Annual Report to Communities Scotland. Of the 31 CPPs that had submitted their Annual Report, four did not submit one or both of the community engagement templates, meaning that full information was available for 27 CPPs.
- 2.43 We have looked at all the Annual Reports which were received by Communities Scotland and highlight some of the most significant issues that were raised in the reports about community engagement in the rest of this section. In general, we found that the language used in the Annual Reports in relation to community engagement was often more positive and confident than we had found in the ROAs.

¹ *Community Regeneration Fund and Community Voices Programme Regeneration Outcome Agreements: National Performance Management Framework: Detailed Guidance*, Communities Scotland, September 2005

The National Standards for Community Engagement

2.44 27 of the 32 CPPs confirm that they have endorsed, or will endorse, the National Standards for their use. In some cases local standards have been developed, building on the National Standards. In one case there is specific mention that the Standards are challenging and that the CPP will focus on three of the Standards initially. In two cases, meeting the Standards is a requirement for projects hoping to receive resources from the Community Regeneration Fund.

2.45 The five CPPs that do not mention the Standards at all are areas with small CRF funds, with no prior significant involvement in the SIP or BNSF programmes.

2.46 The training which has been made available to CPPs (supported by Communities Scotland and provided by the Scottish Community Development Centre) has been reported by a majority of CPPs – with 19 CPPs stating that they had been involved in this training on the Standards.

2.47 The Annual Reports describe the methods used to achieve community engagement. There is a very wide range of activities – as had been suggested by the ROAs. But, in general, the activities as reported in the Annual Reports seem more vibrant than in the ROAs. Some of the activities relate to structures (often the establishment of more local structures to engage communities); some to seeking views (a wide range of peoples' panels and opportunities to give views to service providers) and others to establishing community priorities (including participatory appraisal; 'Planning for Real' and art based approaches to establishing priorities).

Monitoring and evaluation

2.48 A substantial majority of the CPPs say nothing in the Annual Report about monitoring and evaluation of community engagement. In total, 11 of the 32 CPPs describe their approach

to monitoring and evaluation of their performance in community engagement. The main methods described are:

- surveys and community workshops
- scorecards and key performance indicators
- evaluation of CRF projects
- using the National Standards
- appointing monitoring staff.

Equalities

2.49 The Communities Scotland guidance on the contents of the Annual Reports includes a section on progress on equalities. The majority of references to equalities issues were to be found under section 6 of the Annual Reports – *Progress on aspects of the ROA highlighted for improvement*. In total, 29 of the Annual Reports provide some detail in relation to equalities issues (though not necessarily in relation to community engagement). Two Annual Reports make no mention of equalities.

2.50 A significant number of the Annual Reports acknowledge that the ROAs should have said more about equalities – and commit to take action. The Annual Reports contain more information about the engagement of young people than about other equalities groups. But the Annual Reports do capture more issues about other equalities groups than was the case in the ROAs. In particular, there are commitments to equality and diversity training for those involved in community planning; improved data gathering; the undertaking of equality impact assessments; and increasing accessibility. There is a sense that these early steps may lead to more specific outcomes in terms of service planning and delivery in the future. However, it should be noted that seven of the Annual Reports say nothing about engaging equalities groups (other than young people).

2.51 The main barriers to progress on equalities issues in community engagement were identified as:

- a lack of understanding of equalities issues
- a difficulty in the collection and ethical use of equalities statistics - leading to a difficulty in producing a baseline against which to measure progress.

Assessing community engagement

2.52 In addition to an overview of community engagement, CPPs were required to submit two templates directly related to community engagement in their Annual Report – template 2.1 *Community Engagement Assessment* and template 2.2 *Community Engagement Action Plan*. In total, 28 CPPs submitted the self-assessment template – one of them did not complete statement eight. 29 CPPs submitted the Action Plan template.

2.53 In 24 cases, the method for assessing the CPPs performance (and completing the relevant template) is not described. It appears likely that in a number of these cases, the assessment has been completed by one officer (or a small number of officers). Of the eight CPPs which described their method:

- 3 had gathered the views of the members of the CPP or a sub-group
- 2 had gathered the views of the local community planning partnerships operating in their area
- 1 had gathered the views of a number of local authority offices
- 1 had gathered the view of relevant staff in the partners and from focus groups facilitated by an independent person
- 1 had asked all those involved in community planning to assess the performance on community engagement.

2.54 The assessment sheet consists of eight statements. Seven of these are based on the National Standards for Community Engagement and one relates to Community Learning and Development and Tenant Participation. While Communities Scotland did not expect that the partnerships would have met all the National Standards for Community Engagement, it was expected that the assessment sheet will show 'evidence' that partnerships are actively promoting and using them.

2.55 In the assessment:

- a score of 1 indicates that the CPP has little or no evidence to support the statement

- a score of 3 indicates that the CPP has some evidence to support the statement
- a score of 5 indicates that the CPP has strong evidence to support the statement.

2.56 We have recorded the scores assessed by each CPP for each of the statements. We have also calculated the average score for each CPP area – and the average and median for each statement. This is contained at Annex 3.

2.57 By comparing and analysing each CPP individual self-assessment score we found that:

- the average individual scores range from the lowest individual CPP assessment of 1.3 to the highest assessment of 4.8
- 19 (68 per cent) CPPs scored at least an average of 3 or above – 9 therefore scored below an average of 3
- 16 CPPs scored some evidence below 3. Of these, nine only scored 1 statement below 3; seven scored at least 2 statements below 3 and one of these scored seven statements below a score of 2
- the total average score for all CPPs was 3.2
- the score of 3 was used nearly 38 per cent of all scores given.

2.58 We also looked at the scoring for each of the eight statements, which revealed that:

- the statement receiving the highest average score was “CPP identifies resources for community engagement and continuous improvement” – with an average score of 3.5
- the lowest average score (2.9) was for “CPP refers to CLD and Tenant Participation strategies to show how it understands these can support engagement” – nine CPPs scored their evidence below 3
- the median score for all eight statements was 3.

2.59 In addition to the scoring, the CPP is required to outline a

justification and include evidence to support the score that it has given itself. We have reviewed all the questions and found that:

- in relation to the guidance offered by Communities Scotland to 'evidence the impact which improved community engagement is having on the delivery of better public services' most justifications only outline actions planned and methods used - rather than provide evidence of outcomes
- there is no consistency in the scoring in relation to the evidence offered between CPPs
- there is little consistency in the scoring in relation to the evidence offered for the eight statements within each CPP's assessment.

Barriers to effective community engagement

2.60 The partnerships were also required to submit a Community Engagement Action Plan which set out the barriers to effective community engagement and their planned actions to deal with these barriers.

2.61 Most of the CPPs reported around three barriers – perhaps because there were three rows on the template which was provided to them. We have grouped together the barriers that were identified under six sub-headings. These cover the majority of the barriers that were identified by CPPs.

Involvement

2.62 A majority of the CPPs listed 'involvement' barriers to effective community engagement. The barriers included:

- engaging with young people and 'hard to reach' groups
- low level of awareness from the community
- lack of understanding of community planning in the community
- apathy within communities
- financial support and childcare.

Capacity building

2.63 Related to involvement, a number of issues about community capacity building were raised:

- lack of opportunity for individuals and groups to be engaged at all levels of the process
- difficulty in developing community confidence
- too little community influence in service development and delivery.

Structures and processes

2.64 Under this group, the barriers included:

- lack of understanding of CPP structures
- the transition from SIP to CPP has generated confusion around responsibilities and how the partnership is structured
- community engagement networks are less developed in new regeneration areas than in more established target communities
- wide range of different policies connected to the ROA priorities
- insufficient community involvement - community representation on CPP structures does not necessarily lead to the engagement of the wider community but can create a form of dependency which then defines community engagement as representation
- 'red tape' constraints.

Time management

2.65 Time management was a recurring theme. Some of the barriers raised were:

- lack of co-ordination and time-management in partnership working
- completing Annual Report as well as other local plans
- too many demands on time of community representatives
- little investment in time in building partnership relationships
- increasingly tight timescales for implementation of projects.

Information

2.66 Information was identified as a barrier – with the following issues raised:

- information overload
- lack of information which is easy to understand and not in jargon
- limited feedback on community involvement from projects
- feedback does not demonstrate changes or impacts
- little feedback from the wider community.

Other resource constraints

2.67 Finally, a number of barriers relating to resources were raised:

- lack of time and resources given to staff due to agencies not understanding the benefits of community engagement
- lack of training in the Standards for community engagement
- resource shift to statutory priorities
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality staff.

Key actions to make community engagement more effective

2.68 Having identified the barriers to effective community engagement, the partnerships set out planned actions to overcome the barriers. We have grouped the actions (broadly) related to the main barriers which were identified.

Involvement and capacity building

2.69 Low levels of community involvement and awareness were often identified as barriers. To deal with these, several CPPs included actions to raise the level of community engagement. The actions included:

- increasing the number of community representatives
- awareness raising seminars
- development classes to raise self-esteem
- increased support and training for community representatives.

Information

2.70 A commonly identified barrier was the lack of appropriate or

adequate information amongst the partnership and for the community. The actions identified in response to this barrier included:

- introduction of feedback mechanism and sessions
- upgrade of IT and internet access for community members
- development of an information, advice and neighbourhood resource base; web based archive and notice board; e-resources; and 'e-engagement' techniques
- introduction of communications plans, including a 'Consultation and Engagement Toolkit' and consultation exercises.

Resource constraint and time management

2.71 In order to deal with the resource and time-management constraints, a number of actions plans are proposed. These include:

- re-prioritising
- appointment of more community representatives
- appointment of more local staff
- extending timescales.

Structures and processes

2.72 Few actions were included to deal with the barriers previously identified as structural and process-related. Interestingly, however, around a quarter of all CPPs advised that they would improve on partnership working in relation to effective community engagement. This also included suggestions to link community planning programmes to other already planned programmes and an emphasis on holding partnerships responsible for the effectiveness of community engagement.

Monitoring

2.73 In addition, there are several actions relating to monitoring. These include:

- development of reporting mechanism
- development of assessment instruments
- development of residents survey
- periodic reviews – usually six monthly.

Judging success of improved community engagement

2.74 The partnerships were also asked to set out how they would measure the success of their action plans. There is limited evidence of an outcome based approach to this and most measurements of success are based on the completion of a 'task'. For example, if the setting up of a database has been outlined as an action, then the measure of success has been set at the time of the completion of the database. There is no reference to the added value of that particular task, and more importantly, the successes of the actions are not related to the improvement of public services.

3 Approaches to community engagement: an analysis of seven CPPs

- 3.1 The ROAs describe in general terms the approach to community engagement to be adopted by each community planning partnership. We were interested in understanding more about the approach:
- in more detail;
 - from different perspectives; and
 - to understand what had actually been done since 2004.
- 3.2 We therefore worked with Communities Scotland to identify a number of community planning partnerships which would be examined in more depth. In the end, seven CPPs were identified with different characteristics:
- one from each of Communities Scotland's areas
 - three cities; two urban areas containing rural areas; one predominantly rural mainland area and one predominantly rural island area
 - a range of sizes of population
 - three with previous experience of both the Social Inclusion Partnership programme and the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund; three with experience of the SIP programme only and one with experience of neither
 - a range of different approaches and histories of community engagement.
- 3.3 In each area, we conducted interviews with about six officers from organisations linked to community planning, for example:
- community planning managers
 - the council; NHS; police; Job Centre Plus and Communities Scotland
 - voluntary sector organisations
 - community learning and development partnerships.
- 3.4 And in each area we ran a focus group of members of the community who were actively involved in community engagement.

We aimed to achieve six to ten participants in each area. In fact, the numbers ranged from three to 22. In some cases we followed the focus groups up with further one to one interviews with community activists.

- 3.5 Each of the areas that we looked at in detail is described, using a broadly similar structure, in the following seven sections.

4 Aberdeen

Introduction

- 4.1 The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA) was launched in June 2002. It is the forum which provides strategic leadership for the community planning process.
- 4.2 Community engagement has been developed at a number of different levels. TACA has established structures based on neighbourhood participation, communities of interest, thematic forums and city wide participation. In general, community engagement structures have developed with no significant changes from the proposals contained in the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA).

Community engagement structures – The ROA

- 4.3 The ROA states that TACA has “made a specific commitment to community engagement in Community Planning.” The Community Engagement section of the ROA very clearly sets out the range of ways in which communities will be involved in community planning in Aberdeen:
- at a neighbourhood level
 - for specific communities of interest
 - at a city wide level.
- 4.4 The structure has been established with the intention that engagement at a neighbourhood and communities of interest level feeds into city wide engagement. In addition, city wide engagement also seeks to involve a wider range of people who are not involved in other parts of community planning.

Community engagement structures – neighbourhood level

- 4.5 Community engagement in community planning at a neighbourhood level has been sought through two different processes:
- Neighbourhood Community Action Plans – which enable local communities to prioritise key issues and feed these into the community planning process

- Community Councils – which allow neighbourhood based representation onto city wide community planning structures.

Neighbourhood community action plans

4.6 For the purposes of community planning, Aberdeen City has been divided into 37 neighbourhoods. In the ROA, the Aberdeen City Alliance committed to developing a 'Neighbourhood Community Action Plan' for each of these 37 areas. TACA produced guidelines on the preparation of these plans, which aimed to integrate regeneration and community learning activity at a local level. This guidance stated that the Action Plans should include:

- a map of the neighbourhood concerned
- a neighbourhood profile – population and area characteristics
- audit of existing resources in the community
- identification of neighbourhood priorities
- production of an Action Plan
- feeding Action Plan into wider community planning structures
- monitoring of activities.

4.7 Neighbourhood Community Action Plans were developed with a focus on community engagement. As each neighbourhood across the city had its own identity and community planning history, the approach to community engagement varied between areas. However, in many areas community engagement was ensured through activities such as:

- 'Planning for Real' events – enabling communities to see models of the area and discuss priorities in a visual way
- open day events and postal surveys
- discussions with local community groups.

4.8 Work on development of these 'Neighbourhood Community Action Plans' has been a long term process. Different neighbourhoods have progressed at varying speeds. But ongoing work since 2003 has meant that by 2006 each of the 37 areas now has a finalised Plan in place.

- 4.9 As at 2006, the 37 neighbourhoods are supported by Aberdeen City Council officers. There are four Neighbourhood Community Planning Officers and three Tenant Participation Officers. Discussion with community planning partners identified that the relationship with Community Learning and Development staff on the ground is not clearly defined. There was recognition that their role in the context of community engagement within the community planning process was underdeveloped.

Community councils

- 4.10 The process of developing Neighbourhood Community Action Plans has allowed local communities to have an influence over the issues considered by community planning in Aberdeen. But it does not provide a framework for community representatives to become involved in wider community planning structures. Neighbourhood involvement in city wide community planning structures in Aberdeen has been organised through Community Councils.
- 4.11 There are 31 Community Councils in Aberdeen. Each Community Council is able to elect three or four representatives on the 'Community Forum'. This is the main city wide forum for community engagement. The number of representatives each Community Council has depends on the size of the area it covers. More detail is provided below.

Community engagement structures – communities of interest

- 4.12 TACA also wishes to ensure that communities of interest are able to become effectively involved in community planning. Eight 'communities of interest' forums have been established. These are:
- Community Partners – communities in priority regeneration areas
 - Disability Advisory Group
 - Women's Alliance
 - Ethnic Minority Forum
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Forum
 - Youth Action Committee
 - Senior Citizens Forum
 - Gypsy/Travellers Group.

- 4.13 At the time of writing the ROA (in 2004) the majority of these groups were established. Some of the groups had been running for some time and were independent, sustainable groups. Others had just had their first meeting, or required some effort to reinvigorate the group. The Gypsy/Traveller group involved a small number of community representatives supported by the Aberdeen Travellers Education and Information Project.
- 4.14 Although some groups received support in becoming established, by 2006 the Forums are now relatively autonomous. Each Forum is expected to develop their own plans to extend community engagement. Nine Aberdeen City Council staff can provide support to the Forums, although they are not solely dedicated to this work.
- 4.15 The level of activity in each of these forums has varied over time. The frequency of meetings is also variable. For example the LGBT Forum initially had a relatively narrow focus - on the co-ordination of the Aberdeen Pride. Now the Forum is in the process of applying for charitable status.
- 4.16 Each of the Community of Interest Forums has representation on city wide community engagement structures. Dependent on the size of the Forum, each group has between two and four representative spaces on the Aberdeen Civic Forum. These structures are explained in more detail below.

Community engagement structures – city-wide

- 4.17 At a city-wide level, the ROA sets out three main structures for involving communities:
- The Civic Forum
 - Aberdeen's Voice
 - The City Assembly.
- 4.18 In addition, since the ROA was written the Aberdeen City Alliance has been establishing a further city wide structure for engagement – a series of themed 'Challenge Forums'.

The Civic Forum

4.19 The Civic Forum was launched in 2002. It is a city wide representative forum, and provides an opportunity for communities across Aberdeen to meet and influence decisions. The Forum is a membership organisation, with representation from geographic areas and communities of interest. Representatives are formally elected onto the Civic Forum and serve for three years.

4.20 There are 126 spaces for community representation on this Forum:

- 24 Community Councils elect three representatives
- seven largest Community Councils elect four representatives
- eight Community of Interest Forums elect between two and four representatives.

4.21 The Forum meets three or four times a year. The aim of the Forum is to provide a structured way in which the views of the community can be taken into the community planning process. Although there are over 100 spaces for community involvement, TACA has a target of involving 80 representatives at each Forum meeting.

4.22 The Civic Forum has a small lead group which functions as an executive and it has four places on the Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA). In addition, the Forum sends representatives to the Challenge Forums and other *ad hoc* community planning working groups. The Civic Forum is supported by a part time officer. Training is provided to community representatives to assist them in attending the Challenge Forums and the Aberdeen City Alliance.

Aberdeen's Voice

4.23 Community engagement at a city wide level is also encouraged through Aberdeen's Voice. This is a citizen's panel involving approximately 1,400 individuals. The panel was established in January 2003 and comprises of a cross section of Aberdeen's population. Members of the panel were drawn proportionately from different age groups, neighbourhoods, housing tenures and communities of interest.

4.24 Panel members are sent four questionnaires each year, asking questions about public service delivery in a range of areas. This includes health provision, social work services, housing, crime and democracy. These questionnaires are also made available online.

Civic Assembly

4.25 An annual Civic Assembly meeting is held. This meeting is open to the public and its agenda is made up from items proposed by community groups and members of the public. In 2005 the topics ranged from sustainability and the local economy to teaching civic responsibility in schools. The Civic Forum takes account of the views expressed at the Assembly when it represents the community in its meetings.

Challenge forums

4.26 In development of the Aberdeen Community Plan, TACA identified 14 key areas for development. To support this work, challenge forums were established for each activity. These were:

- Clean city
- Transport and connections
- Prosperity and jobs
- Aberdeen's image
- Learning
- Arts, heritage and sport
- Leading the city
- Being informed
- Getting involved
- Neighbourhood action and locality planning
- Health and social care
- Homes
- Safety
- Land use and environment

4.27 It was later identified that the remits of the 'Being Informed' and 'Getting Involved' forums were over-lapping. As a result these have now been merged.

4.28 All Challenge Forums involve community planning partners and community representatives. Community representatives are elected through the Community Forum. Each of the Challenge Forums has a chair and a facilitator. The Forums are all expected to undertake community engagement as part of their remit.

Community engagement structures – perceptions

4.29 Community planning partners, including community activists were consulted on their views towards community engagement activity in Aberdeen. Community activists were very positive about progress at a geographical level through the development of Neighbourhood Community Action Plans. It was felt that the process of developing the plans had been very positive, with “*real engagement*” of local communities. People were also very pleased with the actions agreed as a result of the plans. It was felt that plans would provide an effective focus for future action.

4.30 However, the process of developing neighbourhood plans also had some negative aspects. Community activists stressed that neighbourhood level participation raised interesting issues about how competing priorities are identified and resourced. They suggested that in the future there could be competition in accessing resources, resulting in a risk that community planning partners could fail to meet expectations.

4.31 In terms of engagement of partners, community activists suggested that there were varying levels of responsiveness to community views. Grampian Police were identified as a valued partner which had made a serious commitment to engaging within community planning structures. Discussions with the Police identified that the organisation had been entirely restructured to ensure that operational activities fit with the 37 community planning neighbourhoods. The organisation was also strongly committed to community engagement, and actively attending community planning groups at a local, thematic, community of interest and city wide level. Other partners, such as those involved in the transport sector, were seen as much less responsive.

4.32 Although community activists were positive, it was felt that the community planning structures within Aberdeen City were complex. The community and other partners mentioned that communications within TACA and between partners were not always effective. In some cases, there was a feeling that a lot of time could be dedicated to attending meetings, with little to show as a result. Community activists emphasised the importance of ‘doggedness’, ‘belief’ and ‘determination’ in continuing to be involved in community planning. It was felt that community members make a significant time commitment in becoming involved in community planning.

4.33 However, community activists did stress that it was important to give the new community planning processes time to settle in. It was felt that the transition to community planning over the last three to four years had mainly involved getting the structures in place. This had involved intensive work with the Civic Forum and TACA, ensuring management frameworks were effective. It was felt that, now that these structures were in place, this marked a significant shift towards setting a new agenda and listening to community priorities.

4.34 All community activists were very clear that they needed support to allow them to be effective. They pointed to the value of the support given to the Civic Forum by a part time worker and the need for this to continue in the future.

National Standards for Community Engagement

4.35 Aberdeen City’s ROA clearly states that “the Aberdeen City Alliance has adopted the recently published National Standards for Community Engagement.” It used the standards to develop two clear outcomes for community engagement activity in Aberdeen:

- communities, through a range of community groups, inform and strengthen the decisions made by The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA)
- communities take more responsibility for identifying their priorities and encouraging community involvement.

- 4.36 The ROA also stated that more specific outcomes for community engagement would be developed in the future, based on the National Standards.
- 4.37 Discussion with community planning partners identified that all were aware of the National Standards for Community Engagement. All consultees considered them to be an excellent source of good practice. The most useful element of the standards was that they were seen as providing a 'checklist' of good practice. However, some stated that they were perceived as minimum or baseline standards, and that often community engagement in the Aberdeen area has exceeded the level of the standards.
- 4.38 The Standards had been used by TACA to develop a 'Community Engagement Protocol'. This was developed to support staff in their community engagement activity. The aim was to adapt good practice in community engagement to the Aberdeen context. For example, one suggestion within the Protocol is that all services should inform the community planning website of any proposed consultation. The National Standards were described as very helpful in the development of the Protocol. The Protocol was issued in July 2005 and amended in November 2005.
- 4.39 Although there is commitment within the ROA to adopt the National Standards for Community Engagement, this did not occur immediately for all partner organisations. Aberdeen City Council has been going through a restructuring process, and indicated that as a result the plan to integrate the community engagement standards into the Council was delayed.
- 4.40 However, in spring 2006 Aberdeen City Council took up the offer of training on the National Standards from Communities Scotland and external consultants. This means that all senior managers within the Council have now been trained on use of the Standards. Council consultees indicated that, at the time of interview, the Council and its community planning partners were now ready to develop the use of the Standards.

- 4.41 Other community planning partners were also working towards use of the National Standards. Although representatives from Grampian Police and NHS Grampian were very familiar with the National Standards both indicated that they are not yet fully using the standards in all community engagement activity.
- 4.42 Grampian Police had been involved in awareness raising activity by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. This Association discussed the Standards in 2005 following their launch. The importance of the Standards in assisting effective engagement with the public was emphasised. At a local level, Grampian Police were developing training material on community engagement, which includes the National Standards. Overall, the Standards were seen as a useful target to aspire to.
- 4.43 NHS Grampian indicated that officers who participated in community planning structures were very aware of the National Standards. However, although the Standards were seen as valuable, NHS Grampian is not yet using the standards fully. As a result, NHS Grampian is in the process of employing a full time officer to be responsible for developing and integrating the National Standards within the NHS. This will be developed in conjunction with other guidance to which the NHS is working, such as guidance produced by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland, the NHS Primary Care Directorate and guidance on Community Health Partnerships.
- 4.44 Two community activists interviewed as part of this study were very familiar with the National Standards, having been involved in the consultation undertaken when developing the Standards. This consultation had occurred through the Civic Forum. The standards were seen as very valuable. However, it was recognised that TACA was in the early stages of implementing the Standards as an everyday part of their community engagement activity.
- 4.45 Another activist, who was involved in two Community of Interest Forums, was unaware of the National Standards. But she did feel that anything which improved awareness about good practice was

valuable. In addition, one development worker who attended one of the Communities of Interest Forums was unaware of the National Standards.

- 4.46 Feedback from the local Communities Scotland office supports the findings that community planning partners are fully aware of the National Standards and have referenced them within their planning documents. However, it was felt that, as with many areas across Scotland, the Aberdeen City Alliance was relatively weak on setting performance targets, indicators and outcomes for community engagement. This emphasises the importance of developing a more structured approach to measuring community engagement activity, through this piece of research.

Engaging with equality groups

- 4.47 In Aberdeen City, community engagement with equality groups is undertaken through eight 'Community of Interest' Forums. These involve people from equality groups, including minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, older people and so on. More detail is provided earlier in this case study.
- 4.48 Discussions with community planning partners, including community members, identified that the Forums were seen as valuable in allowing each equality group to develop their own agenda. One consultee felt that these Forums were particularly important due to the profile of the communities involved in geographical groups – *“the white middle class interests largely form the bulk of the geographical representation.”*
- 4.49 However, it was felt that often the neighbourhoods could dominate community planning discussions. The Neighbourhood Community Action Plans were seen as a strong process, which gives weight to the demands of people at a geographical level. The plans developed by the Equality Forums were not always seen as having the same stature within the community planning framework. It was felt that it could prove difficult for equality groups to have their agendas and priorities accepted, with so many other priorities at a neighbourhood level.

- 4.50 In addition, some consultees felt that there could be potential areas of duplication between city wide Civic Forum, and the Community of Interest Forums. The reason for this was that consideration was being given to forming sub groups of the Civic Forum which would undertake a form of scrutiny role in relation to the delivery of TACA objectives. This could possibly create a conflict with one of the roles of the Community of Interest Forums. Further consideration is being given to how community participation in the monitoring of delivery would be developed.
- 4.51 Discussion with community activists involved in Communities of Interest Forums identified that these Forums did experience some difficulties in engaging with wider community planning processes through TACA. There were time pressures on community activists, who had to attend both Community of Interest Forums and the Civic Forum in order to become personally involved in TACA. Others were frustrated due to the length of time that it can take for community planning to reach a decision and take action.
- 4.52 Some minority ethnic communities attending the Ethnic Minority Forum were also experiencing language barriers which prevented them from fully participating in discussions. In many cases, community activists were unwilling or unable to dedicate time to attend these meetings. This had meant that in some cases, Community of Interest Forums were in danger of losing their representation on the Civic Forum. This would mean that the link with wider community planning structures was effectively lost.
- 4.53 The importance of creating linkages between Community of Interest Forums and wider community planning structures was emphasised by a number of people in relation to young people. Community activists commented that young people (from the Youth Action Committee – a Community of Interest Forum) did attend the Civic Forum. However, young people did not attend on a regular basis. This made a number of people concerned about future community engagement activity. Many stressed the need to ensure that young people are kept interested, and encouraged to continue their involvement into adulthood.

4.54 Some Forums also suggested that TACA partners were not always actively engaged in Community of Interest Forums. Again, Grampian Police was highlighted as a positive partner, attending individual Forums and being very approachable. Support provided by Aberdeen City Council to the Forums was also generally seen as high quality and useful. However, groups such as the LGBT Forum mentioned that many TACA partners had not taken up the opportunity to come and discuss issues with the Forum.

Measuring community engagement

4.55 Community planning partners, including communities, were also asked for their views on how community engagement activity could effectively be measured. None of the organisations consulted had specific targets or outcomes for community engagement activity. Some – such as NHS Grampian and Grampian Police – were working on developing monitoring frameworks for the future.

4.56 Aberdeen City Council officers stated that the development of indicators to measure the effectiveness or extent of community engagement was a weak area for community planning. It was suggested that it would be helpful to have agreed national indicators.

4.57 Some problems in measuring effective community engagement were identified:

- **Managing data** – with the range of different community engagement activities underway, partners felt that it was difficult to establish a baseline of activity across the Aberdeen City area. It was felt that this was essential to make the most of the resources available and to prevent duplication of activity.
- **Managing priorities and expectations** – many consultees pointed to the positive steps which had been taken in identifying key issues, through community engagement. But people were concerned about how all of these needs would be met in the future due to resource constraints.

- **Measuring ongoing involvement** – some people emphasised the importance of looking at trends in community engagement activity. Partners pointed out that involvement in the Civic Forum, which was originally very high, had been falling in recent months. This highlights the danger of taking an approach which just looks at a particular ‘snapshot’ in time.
- **Understanding different agendas** – all partners in Aberdeen were very aware of the varying, and sometimes competing, agendas of communities and partners across the local authority area. What is effective engagement for some may not be for others. Ensuring that this is built into a monitoring framework for measuring community engagement is important.

4.58 Consultees highlighted some of the most positive outcomes of community engagement, suggesting that these could be built upon to develop a framework for measuring engagement activity:

- **Neighbourhood Community Action Plans** – it was felt that the number of people involved in the development of these plans, and the influence which they had over the content of the plans, had been a major success. Partners did stress however that there was a need to make sure the plans are taken forward effectively, and the needs of local communities met.
- **Establishing structures** – it was felt that the process of simply establishing community engagement structures within Aberdeen had required dedication of a lot of time and effort. Getting these structures in place was seen as a big achievement, particularly as structures had been implemented in the way set out within the ROA.

Key points

- Aberdeen City’s community engagement structures have been implemented broadly as set out in the Regeneration Outcome Agreement
- There are structures in place to involve people at a local area level and from communities of interest

- City wide community engagement structures also bring communities from across Aberdeen City together
- The process of involving people at a neighbourhood level, through Community Action Plans, has been seen by partners and communities as working well
- There are some concerns about meeting expectations of local communities, and resourcing all of the plans which have been developed
- Equality groups often feel that their views are not always heard due to the focus on neighbourhood plans
- Time pressures and other barriers to participation (such as language) mean that links between equality groups and wider community planning structures are fragile
- The National Standards for Community Engagement are seen as a helpful framework for best practice, but partners do not feel they are fully meeting the Standards at present
- Many partners have plans to prioritise the Standards in the future, through developing clear frameworks for community engagement activity
- Measurement of community engagement activity is a difficult issue for the Aberdeen City Alliance and an area which partners recognize is weak at present
- Partners stressed the need to take account of a number of factors when measuring community engagement:
- Understanding the range of community engagement activity
 - Managing priorities and expectations
 - Measuring ongoing involvement
 - Understanding different agendas

5 Dumfries and Galloway

Introduction

- 5.1 The first Community Plan in Dumfries and Galloway was developed in 2000. Since then, the partnership states that it is “committed to engaging and involving local communities, businesses and individuals in all aspects of its work.”
- 5.2 Community planning is led by the Dumfries and Galloway Community Planning Partnership.

Community engagement structures – The ROA

- 5.3 In Dumfries and Galloway, the Community Planning Partnership involves the main statutory organisations as well as in excess of 40 member organisations. These include groups such as the Elderly Forum, the Youth Strategy Executive Group and Volunteer Action.
- 5.4 The community plan is delivered through three thematic forums:
- Enterprising and Learning Communities
 - Inclusive Communities
 - Safe and Healthy Communities.
- 5.5 There are four Local Rural Partnerships which are the local arms of community planning. These Partnerships involve local community representatives, Community Councils and Tenants and Residents Associations. In addition, a range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations are involved. The ROA describes these Partnerships as the ‘*standard conduit for consultation on community planning matters*’.

Community engagement – perceptions

- 5.6 Both statutory and community participants in the study felt that Dumfries and Galloway had got off to a strong start with community planning. Community engagement structures were already well developed due to previous engagement as part of

regeneration activity in North West Dumfries. In areas like Stranraer and Whithorn this was less well developed.

- 5.7 Engagement in the development of the ROA was primarily through the two Local Rural Partnerships which contain priority regeneration areas. The Community Regeneration Fund Steering Group was also involved.
- 5.8 It is, however, acknowledged that the haste with which the ROA had to be put together worked against engagement in early decisions about the ROA and the allocation of funding. This still rankles with some community and voluntary sector partners. For example, some community partners suggested that funding was allocated to continue Better Neighbourhood Services Fund projects due to the priorities of statutory agencies rather than community views.
- 5.9 Residents from the ROA areas who attended the discussion group in the main spoke positively of the opportunities they had to influence regeneration in their neighbourhood, particularly in relation to housing. However, some felt that opportunities for influence were predominantly at local level and that it was harder to influence 'wider events'. For example, only one member of the discussion group reported an ongoing involvement in decisions about the allocation of regeneration funding.
- 5.10 There was a feeling that despite a strong start, community engagement in Dumfries and Galloway now seemed to be faltering. The initial extensive involvement of community and voluntary sector groups has dwindled leaving some of these groups feeling that it has been a waste of effort. As a result, community planning structures are currently under review.
- 5.11 There was some cynicism from communities about community engagement in areas which had been involved in earlier regeneration initiatives. In some areas, community engagement was seen as being undertaken "*by stealth*." A range of activities,

such as community fun days were held, with the aim of offering activities while at the same time gathering views on issues such as learning and health.

5.12 A number of partners, including communities, suggested that the demands made on statutory agencies to address national priorities could inhibit their effective engagement with local communities. There were seen to be many aspects of service redesign and delivery over which communities could have very little influence.

5.13 This was thought to be particularly true of the health service, which has many national priorities to work towards. The Health Service has attempted to link with community planning through linking their four Local Health Partnerships to the four Local Rural Partnerships. This reflects a desire to build on existing structures rather than create new ones. However, there were mixed views on how well this arrangement is functioning.

5.14 Communities Scotland and the Scottish Executive were felt to be 'pushing' the community engagement agenda without always changing their own practice and joining up their own guidelines and publications to reflect this.

Understanding of community engagement

5.15 Both statutory and community sector participants in the study, perceived community engagement to be about two main activities:

- involving individuals in the community
- involving community organisations.

5.16 This was consistent with the approach taken in the National Standards for Community Engagement.

5.17 The group focused strongly on what community engagement meant in the Dumfries and Galloway context, and mentioned a number of methods used in this area:

- the Xchange network - about 60 individuals who have volunteered to comment on a range of policies and strategies

- Community Development Agents – work with communities and community groups
- Community Council activity
- Community and voluntary group consultation

5.18 Overall, there was some confusion among community representatives about the structures of community engagement in Dumfries and Galloway, and what community engagement does or should mean. This is likely to be because communication about the structures - particularly about changes and planned changes to the structures - did not appear to have been widely or consistently communicated to communities.

5.19 Understanding of the structures and the processes associated with them was patchy within the community discussion group. The fact that some communities seemed to get information and not others caused them some concern, particularly when it involved opportunities to participate in decision making.

5.20 There was consensus among community activists that where community engagement was effective it tended to be so because there were individual officers wanting to make it work on the ground. Higher level decision makers were seen as less responsive and lacking in understanding about 'genuine' engagement.

5.21 Within the discussion group there was a strong focus on formal meetings as a mechanism for community engagement. There seemed to be very little understanding or acceptance of less formal approaches that take place outside of meetings. It may be possible that residents who had participated in these less formal approaches did not recognize the community engagement element of their experience.

5.22 Knowledge of the purpose and structures for community engagement was stronger in the statutory and voluntary sector. Partners stressed that community engagement doesn't only

involve improving the communities' capacity to engage, but also that of the statutory agencies. This was evidenced in the way the National Standards for Community Engagement have been implemented in Dumfries and Galloway.

National Standards for Community Engagement

5.23 In Dumfries and Galloway, the National Standards for Community Engagement are seen by the statutory and voluntary agencies as having great potential for improving the community engagement process and for assessing what progress has taken place.

5.24 Much time, effort and resources has been invested in rolling out the Standards and training people to cascade them and to apply them to their community engagement practice. A 'training for trainers' programme was run for community planning partners. To participate, each partner had to commit to 12 sessions – involving a mix of training and networking activity. This has been complemented by mechanisms to encourage their adoption and to assess how well they are being implemented. For example, use of the Standards is often a requirement for accessing Community Regeneration Funding.

5.25 Individual projects have also been asked to score themselves against the Standards, using the Scottish Community Development Centre's self-assessment materials. It is intended that this information will be gathered across Dumfries and Galloway and used to create a baseline for community engagement.

5.26 Other examples of the Standards in practice include:

- their use to guide how the public was engaged in the development of the Health and Community Care Plan
- community organisations are encouraged to place a copy of the Standards on the table at the start of meetings as a reminder to themselves and the other agencies present.

5.27 Despite this strong focus on the Standards, only around five of the

twenty two community activists present at the discussion group had heard of the Standards. Once the Standards were explained to the others the wider view was that they could be helpful. Many community activists were interested in getting more information about them.

Engaging with Equality Groups

5.28 The Regeneration Outcome Agreement highlights a number of ways in which equalities groups can become involved in community planning:

- representation of the Multi-Cultural Association on one of the three strategic forums within community planning - the Inclusive Communities Forum
- establishment of a diversity sub group including representatives of 'minority groups'.

5.29 Discussion with partners identified that communities of interest such as older people are represented on the Local Rural Partnerships, as well as the Community Regeneration Fund Partnership. However some participants highlighted the danger of engaging a few more accessible equality groups because this is easier. However, there was a general acknowledgement that progress was being made. For example, Local Rural Partnerships have held workshops which examine roles in relation to diversity.

Measuring Effective Community Engagement

5.30 As indicated above, community planning partners saw the National Standards for Community Engagement as a valuable tool in assessing the effectiveness of community engagement processes. The guidance and standards produced by HMI entitled 'How Good is Our Community Learning and Development?' was also seen as a useful resource.

5.31 Consultees did feel that more could be done to establish a framework for measuring community engagement activity. A wide range of suggestions were provided:

- How many new people have got involved?
- How representative is each person?

- Have joint targets been agreed with service users?
- Has progress been made with learning and development activity?
- How many complaints have been made by those involved in community engagement?
- How many people are turning out to vote at elections?
- What new methods have been used to engage people?
- How long does it take for engagement structures to be established?
- How much does community engagement cost?
- How much 'ownership' is there of community engagement processes by statutory agencies?
- To what extent is decision making devolved to local areas?
- Has there been an impact on anti-social behavior/vandalism?
- Has community engagement been a stepping stone for people to become more involved in their community?
- What service changes have been made in response to community opinions?
- Have people's lives improved?

5.32 The community activists at the discussion group suggested that performance indicators for community engagement should be reported to Audit Scotland, as with other service indicators. This would mean that agencies could be held accountable for community engagement in the same way that they are for other aspects of service delivery.

Key points

- Partners, including communities, felt that initially community planning had begun well in Dumfries and Galloway
- Generally, community activists were positive about their involvement in the development of the ROA
- There was a perception among all consultees that community planning was now faltering and was not as effective as it could be
- There was some confusion among community activists about what community engagement was and how it worked in Dumfries and Galloway

- There has been a lack of clarity from partners about how the community engagement process works in Dumfries and Galloway
- The National Standards for Community Engagement have been central to the community planning process in Dumfries and Galloway
- An in depth training programme on the Standards has been developed, and they have been integrated within the community planning process
- Equalities groups are involved through mainstream community planning structures and there are some concerns among partners that this arrangement is missing out certain communities
- A wide range of measurements for community engagement activity were suggested – some quantitative and others qualitative

6 Dundee

Introduction

- 6.1 The Dundee Partnership is the strategic community planning group in Dundee. It was established as early as 1981 as the Dundee Project, and involves the public and private sector in working towards physical and economic transformation of the area. Key partners include Dundee City Council, Scottish Enterprise Tayside, Communities Scotland, Tayside Police, NHS Tayside and local communities.
- 6.2 The Community Plan for Dundee has five themes:
- Building Stronger Communities
 - Community Safety
 - Dundee Environment
 - Health and Care
 - Learning and Working.
- 6.3 Dundee City's Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) clearly sets out structures for community engagement at a city wide and local neighbourhood level.

Community engagement structures – The ROA

Local community engagement

- 6.4 For the purposes of community planning, Dundee is split into nine local areas. A Local Community Plan has been developed for each area. Other key partners, including the Police and NHS have aligned their services to the Local Community Plan areas.
- 6.5 Five of the areas have been designated Community Regeneration Areas. In each of the five regeneration areas, Local Community Regeneration Forums have been established. These groups involve residents from within the regeneration areas, with support provided by Community Regeneration staff and other service providers.
- 6.6 The ROA states that these groups have the “*ultimate say*” on the allocation of the Community Regeneration Fund at a local level.

This is achieved through delegation of the Community Regeneration Fund to the 'Building Stronger Communities' Theme Group. In turn, responsibility for allocation of the funding has been delegated to the five Local Community Regeneration Forums. However, there is a requirement for the 'Building Stronger Communities' Theme Group to endorse their decisions.

- 6.7 Representatives from the Local Community Regeneration Forums can also be elected to attend city wide engagement structures and thematic groups (see below).
- 6.8 All of this is underpinned by a range of capacity building support for community organisations. Each Local Community Regeneration Forum has been assisted to produce a Training and Development programme.

City-wide community engagement

- 6.9 At a city wide level, there are three main ways in which communities are involved in community planning:
- **The Dundee Partnership Forum** – this group involves community, voluntary and public sector organisations and is chaired by Dundee City Council. The group meets twice a year, with meetings structured into participatory workshops on key strategic issues. There are eight spaces for community and voluntary sector representation on this Forum. Representatives are elected through local community involvement mechanisms – primarily the Local Community Regeneration Forums.
 - **The Dundee Partnership Management Group** – involves key officers from public sector partner organisations, as well as community representatives. There are five spaces for community and voluntary sector representation.
 - **Thematic Groups** – each of the five community planning themes has a strategic Theme Group. These groups have between two and eleven community and voluntary sector representatives.

- 6.10 In addition, there is an annual conference which brings

communities and agencies together across the Community Planning Partnership. Quarterly 'gatherings' bring together residents of the five Local Community Regeneration Forums to review progress and plans for the future.

Community engagement structures – perceptions

- 6.11 Discussion with community representatives identified that community engagement in local structures was widely held to be effective. Autonomy to make decisions about Community Regeneration Funding allocations at a local level was welcomed by community members.
- 6.12 The development of strong local groups had also resulted in the development of good local relationships with partner organisations, such as Dundee City Council and the Police. In the case of the Police, one example is that they share intelligence with the Local Community Regeneration Forums. This assists in jointly identifying priorities and creating local targets.
- 6.13 In spite of this positive attitude from community members, some statutory agencies had concerns about the decentralisation of decision making regarding the Community Regeneration Fund. It was felt that this sometimes worked against strategic decisions for the area as a whole. Communities also noted that it was difficult for some of the smaller areas to support area wide initiatives because they would use up a large portion of their Community Regeneration Fund allocation.
- 6.14 Communities were less positive about their wider involvement in city wide community planning structures. This was primarily through the Building Stronger Communities Committee, which involves one community representative from each of the five Local Community Regeneration Forums. Communities felt that in practice this group was "*Council dominated.*" There was also a feeling that Local Community Regeneration Forums were not properly represented elsewhere in the community planning structures.

6.15 Opportunities for influence at a strategic level, particularly in relation to mainstream budgets, were felt to be limited and to come 'late in the day'. It was also felt that although the Local Forums could influence decisions about the Community Regeneration Fund, partners did not always listen to communities when dedicating mainstream funding.

Understanding of community engagement

6.16 Consultation with partners and communities identified that community engagement in Dundee City is mostly understood to mean engagement with community groups and organisations.

6.17 Community engagement structures and processes in Dundee are relatively complex. While most participants in the study were quite confident in understanding their own sphere of operation, the interaction between the broader community planning structures and the regeneration area structures was not always fully understood. This included both public agencies and communities.

6.18 The community members spoke about the pressures which are put on community activists through the drive for effective community engagement. They felt that being involved in decisions about the Community Regeneration Fund had been a steep learning curve. The job of a community representative is seen, both by the community and other partners, as getting harder, more technical and highly complex. In recognition of this, Dundee Partnership has produced an Induction Pack, a Code of Practice and other materials to assist representatives follow appropriate procedures in their allocation of Community Regeneration Funding.

6.19 Within the community discussion group there was a good understanding of the implications and the responsibilities of community engagement. For example, it was recognised that involvement in mainstream funding decisions also means helping to take decisions about what services or projects would be awarded funding.

The National Standards for Community Engagement

- 6.20 The Dundee Partnership was involved in piloting the National Standards for Community Engagement in the Dundee North West area. The ROA makes a commitment to implementing the Standards in regeneration activity.
- 6.21 Awareness of the Standards among community planning partners was relatively high, although one partner had not heard of the Standards. The Standards are not currently used to assess or monitor performance. But there is some interest in developing this approach. This may be taken forward in the future as part of the process of developing 'Community Engagement Frameworks'. These are being introduced to set out how communities will be involved in community planning at a local level. The Frameworks will draw on the National Standards for guidance, but will not 'slavishly' follow the principles identified.
- 6.22 The Community Learning and Development Service within Dundee City Council is currently making use of the Standards. They are being used to assist with supporting the Local Community Regeneration Forums in their training and development activities. This means that it is likely that training will focus on different Standards in each area, as required. To date, the Service has tended to use the 'How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development?' guidance produced by HMI as assessment tool, rather than the Standards.
- 6.23 Among community activists, awareness of the Standards was low. Of the nine participants, only two had heard of the Standards. Their view was that they were based on common sense things they were already doing in Dundee. This was echoed by a number of other participants.

Engaging equality groups

- 6.24 Dundee Partnership states that it is *"committed to equalities and the prevention of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social*

origin, or personal beliefs or opinions.” In order to take this commitment forward, the ‘Dundee Equality and Diversity Partnership’ was established. This Partnership is responsible for ensuring that equality is considered across all of the community planning themes.

- 6.25 As part of its remit, the Partnership is responsible for encouraging and developing consultation on equality and diversity, and encouraging community involvement. Several participants made reference to the contribution of the Partnership. The work of the Community and Voluntary Sector Alliance was also thought to have contributed in this area.
- 6.26 Local level participation through the Local Community Regeneration Forums has resulted in a certain community profile becoming involved in community planning. Representatives were elected onto the Forums through open election at local public meetings. This has resulted in a slightly skewed gender balance – with 60 per cent of representatives being male. The vast majority of representatives are of retirement age, and those who are not tend to be in their 50s. A handful of young people are involved. In one area there is a high minority ethnic population, at seven per cent. This area has elected one representative from a minority ethnic community.
- 6.27 The Health Service and Dundee City Council have worked closely together in engaging with equalities groups. There is a general view from the statutory agencies that progress is being made here, although this is mostly quite recent. For example, the use of ‘Equality Impact Assessments’ - to explore impact of policies and procedures on equalities groups - as a matter of course is acknowledged to be a fairly new practice.
- 6.28 The Community Learning and Development Service has introduced equalities indicators such as the availability of childcare, timing of meetings, accessibility and so on. They are not yet in a position to assess how effective this has been.

6.29 Discussions have also taken place with Oxfam with a view to undertaking an analysis of gender and poverty in one Community Regeneration Area.

Measuring effective community engagement

6.30 The effectiveness of community engagement processes is measured using the HMI standards 'How Good is Our Community Learning and Development?' Dundee Partnership is also discussing whether the National Standards for Community Engagement could be used for this purpose.

6.31 In discussing how community engagement activity could be measured, many consultees focused on the methods which could be used to gather people's opinions, rather than the indicators or outcomes which could be used. Suggested methods include:

- asking the person in the street/in the community what has changed
- assessing the number of people involved in engagement
- assessing the scale and reach of community engagement activity
- community representatives' perception of how they are treated by other agencies
- communities' awareness of what is going on

6.32 Evidencing and measuring the impact of community engagement was generally seen as more challenging. Measures suggested for this, although not currently used, included:

- level of uptake of services from those who don't traditionally use them
- evidence that partners are adapting the way they allocate resources as a result of community engagement
- evidence that service design and delivery is changing in response to community engagement

Key points

- Community engagement in Dundee City occurs through local involvement and city wide structures

- The decision to delegate authority for allocating the Community Regeneration Fund to communities at a local level was welcomed and local engagement was seen as effective
- Links between local and city wide level were seen as less effective, with agencies seen as dominant and a lack of clarity about relationships
- Communities expressed a desire to have an influence over mainstream budgets and how they are allocated
- However, the responsibility to make decisions about allocating funding put pressure on some community representatives – both in terms of time and knowledge
- The National Standards for Community Engagement were seen by all as useful, but in some ways simply common sense
- Community engagement structures have so far resulted in a certain section of the community being over represented in community planning – predominantly older men
- An 'Equality and Diversity Partnership' has been established to address this
- A range of measures for community engagement were suggested, including:
 - Uptake of services among non traditional service users
 - Evidence of changes in resource allocation
 - Evidence of changes in service design and delivery

7 Glasgow (focusing on North Glasgow)

Introduction

- 7.1 Glasgow Community Planning Partnership is the strategic forum responsible for the development and co-ordination of community planning across the city. Local Community Planning Partnerships have been established to focus on local service delivery. There are ten Local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) across Glasgow.
- 7.2 A company - Glasgow Community Planning Ltd – has been set up to support community planning across Glasgow. Glasgow Community Planning Ltd has a network of local offices across the city, which provide support to Local CPPs. Staff are organised into five Area Teams, each supporting two Local CPPs. These Area Teams match the boundaries of the five Community Health and Care Partnerships which have been established across the city. The five areas are:
- East Glasgow
 - North Glasgow
 - South East Glasgow
 - South West Glasgow
 - West Glasgow
- 7.3 This case study focuses on the North Glasgow area, which covers:
- Maryhill, Kelvin and Canal Local CPP
 - Springburn and Glasgow North East Local CPP

Community engagement structures – The ROA

Involvement in the Regeneration Outcome Agreement

- 7.4 Glasgow's Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA) sets out how community engagement was sought in the development of the ROA, and how future activity will take place across the city. In developing the ROA, communities were involved through:

- **Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs)** – community representatives involved in the SIPs examined existing programmes of activity and made recommendations about future activities in their area. A wider survey of people living in SIP areas was also undertaken.
- **Public events** – nine events were held across the city, targeting those living in the most deprived areas of Glasgow (according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). These events specifically focused on areas of deprivation which were outwith the existing SIP areas, to make sure that new priority areas were involved in developing the ROA.
- **Survey of voluntary organisations** – a survey was distributed to voluntary and community groups through the Glasgow Council for Voluntary Services.

7.5 In the North Glasgow area community engagement in developing the ROA followed the above format – *“attempts were made to standardise community engagement across Glasgow.”* Guidance was provided by the central Community Support Team, which gave each Area Team instructions on how to undertake community engagement in their area. In particular, detailed guidance was provided on how to organise a public event to ensure that events were accessible. A number of measures were put in place to ensure that people were able to attend the public event:

- Events were promoted through existing community groups, with a focus on involving equalities groups
- Participants were briefed in advance
- Venues were accessible and supported transport made available
- Translation services were available
- Crèche facilities were offered.

7.6 One roadshow was held for the North Glasgow area. Approximately 80 people attended the event, which the Area Team believed was a good turnout. At the roadshow, the five themes for community planning in Glasgow were presented. Two

target outcomes – which had already been agreed by public agencies – were presented and the community asked to commit to these. One agency admitted, however that *“they were already agreed – if people had not agreed to these outcomes they would still have been kept.”* Attendees at the event were, however, given the opportunity to identify a third priority outcome for each of the five themes. In North Glasgow, communities identified a range of other priorities. These priorities were then compared with those identified in other areas, and outcomes agreed for the whole of Glasgow based on these views.

Community engagement structures in the ROA

- 7.7 When Glasgow was developing its ROA, it had not yet established clear structures for community planning across the city. Although it had been decided that there would be Local Community Planning Partnerships, the boundaries and structures had not yet been agreed. Interestingly, communities involved in the development of the ROA at a local level were not consulted on their views on boundaries and structures.
- 7.8 As a result, the community engagement structures set out within the ROA were relatively vague. Although the ROA was clear about the processes which each service provider had in place to encourage community engagement, it was less clear about how communities could become involved in community planning as a whole.
- 7.9 Glasgow Community Planning Partnership believed that the position in Glasgow was complex. This was due to the wide range of active community engagement structures in Glasgow, the difference in activity in various parts of the city, and the need to ensure that equalities groups were effectively involved. As a result, the Partnership commissioned consultants to undertake two studies:
- An audit of community engagement processes across the city
 - The development of a Community Engagement Strategy for Glasgow.

7.10 Both the audit and the Community Engagement Strategy had a strong focus on community involvement. A series of focus groups were held with community activists, equalities groups – such as young people, other community planning partners and service providers. This resulted in a series of recommendations about how community engagement activity should be taken forward across the city.

7.11 Based on these recommendations, 'Engaging our Communities' – a community engagement strategy for Glasgow – was launched in August 2005. This strategy set out proposals to establish ten 'Community Hubs' – one for each Local Community Planning Partnership. These would bring together existing community engagement mechanisms at a local level. In addition, one thematic 'Equalities Hub' would be established for the whole of the city. The Hubs would facilitate local community engagement activity through a range of activities, including:

- Setting up a database of local community organisations keen to be involved in community engagement activity
- Promoting awareness of the National Standards for Community Engagement among communities and service providers
- Passing on information to communities about community planning
- Encouraging involvement of equalities groups and thematic communities
- Supporting agreement of local priorities for community engagement
- Supporting communities to become involved in the Local CPPs
- Facilitating development of community engagement structures.

7.12 The strategy specified that these Hubs should be community led networks, but with some form of dedicated staff support.

7.13 Interestingly, discussion with community planning partners at North Glasgow level demonstrated very little awareness of the

priorities contained within the ROA in relation to community engagement. None of the individuals who were involved in North Glasgow stated that they had been directly involved in ROA development, with this generally having taken place at a more strategic level. There was a perception that this was because “community planning in Glasgow feels very centrally driven.”

Community engagement structures – North Glasgow

7.14 At the time of this case study – summer 2006 - the local Hubs for community engagement had not yet been established. Meetings of Local CPPs in North Glasgow had only recently begun. As a result, the community engagement structures remained uncertain. However, the Glasgow Community Planning Area Team anticipated that community engagement would take place in two main ways:

- **Local CPP Boards** – there are two Local CPPs in North Glasgow. Each Board will have four community representatives. There will also be four substitutes, who can attend in place of the representatives. One representative will be elected to each CPP Board from - the former SIP structure; the Community Council; a Tenants and Residents Group; and equalities groups. As at summer 2006, only one meeting of the Local CPPs had taken place (in May 2006). Community representation had not yet been fully identified. By summer 2006, the Community Forum and Tenants and Residents Groups had identified representatives. However, the Community Councils were having their own nomination process across Glasgow, and had not yet identified community representatives for North Glasgow. An equalities group representative had not yet been identified.
- **Community Hubs** – at present, it is not clear whether there will be one Hub for each Local CPP, or one for the whole North Glasgow area. It is likely that the Hub(s) will replace the North Glasgow Community Forum, although this has not been formalised. The Forum was established in 1997 to provide independent support, resources and information to community groups and representatives to enable them to fully participate in regeneration activity. At present, the

Forum has eight Strategy Groups in communities across North Glasgow. These groups aim to encourage community led regeneration of local areas.

At the time of this case study, the role of the Community Hub(s) in Glasgow North had not yet been established. However, consultees anticipated that the introduction of the Hub would result in less community development activity, and more work channelling community planning partners to contact and consult with appropriate groups.

One of the reasons that the Hubs had not yet been established across Glasgow is that a decision had not yet been made about who will manage these. The Joint Forum Network, which brings together the Community Forums across Glasgow, has expressed an interest in running the Hubs.

Community engagement in Glasgow North – perceptions

7.15 Discussion with community planning partners identified that to date there has been very little community engagement activity in the North Glasgow area – *“we have been taking it very slowly.”*

7.16 Community activists consulted felt that, so far, all of their energy had gone into understanding and establishing community planning structures. They did not feel involved in how these structures had developed in North Glasgow:

“It’s a classic example of the professionals deciding what’s good for us, and going ahead with it without involving us – I don’t know why we couldn’t stick with the SIP structure. It was working well for us.”

7.17 Some community planning partners also felt that the transition had resulted in a negative impact on partnership working:

“I’m very keen to work closely with the other partners, I’m used to being very involved through the SIPs. So far, this level of joint working has not continued through the transition to community planning.”

7.18 Community activists felt that decisions had been taken on a Glasgow wide basis, by senior staff within the community planning partner organisations. However, this had not been communicated to the local areas – either to staff or communities:

“No-one knows what is happening with community planning in Glasgow – not the communities or the staff. The Community Forum staff don’t even know how long they have jobs for.”

7.19 As so much time was dedicated to trying to understand structures, communities felt that there was no community engagement activity at present. In addition, the lack of clarity was having an impact on the ability to address the real issues facing local neighbourhoods:

“In the past, I knew where to go if we wanted to set up a project and needed support or funding. Now everything is in limbo and we don’t know what is happening. The past two years has been a shambles”

7.20 There was a strong perception that the way in which the Local CPP had been set up meant that it was very much led by professionals. It was felt that this meant that “community representation is tokenistic” and “people are terrified of community planning.” Discussion with the Glasgow Community Planning Area Team identified that to date, only one meeting of the Local CPP had been held. This meeting had involved just one community representative (as others had not yet been identified).

7.21 Both communities and other partners raised some concerns about the way in which community representation in the Local CPPs had been organised. Community activists felt that the structures for community representation were not strong. In some cases, individuals had become involved simply because they were the only people to turn up at meetings held to elect community representatives.

7.22 Despite the problems raised in North Glasgow, community activists felt that community engagement and regeneration was

working well in other areas of Glasgow. They felt that if the communities and professionals could work together to deliver something tangible through community planning – with the “wow factor” – this would demonstrate the value of community engagement and help get more people involved.

7.23 Community activists pointed to the valuable work of the Community Forum and the Social Inclusion Partnership in North Glasgow, which in the past had demonstrated clear results in terms of regenerating communities. The Local Strategy Groups established by the Community Forum are seen by communities and partners as working well – “relationships have developed between professionals and community representatives.” Community activists did recognise that when the SIP and Community Forum were established, relationships had to be built and there was a lot of confusion about structures. They hoped that these relationships could eventually also be developed through community planning.

7.24 Overall, however, community activists had a real sense of lost opportunity – “Community planning is new and should have been even better than the SIP.” This was echoed in many ways by the views of other partner organisations. But, partners were keen to stress that “it is early days.”

7.25 Community activists identified four key ways of improving community engagement in North Glasgow:

- **Support staff:** The group agreed that the biggest change could be made through employing more support staff within the Community Forum. At present, there are many vacancies and the Forum has been told not to advertise at present as their future is not certain. The role the staff play in supporting community engagement activity and providing training for board members is invaluable – “like gold dust.”
- **Better balance between professionals and community:** The group felt that both professionals and community activists need to be involved in regeneration. But at present they believed that community planning was very much geared towards professionals.

- **Involvement structures:** The group agreed that the structures for community representation were not strong. In some cases, community representatives had become involved in community planning simply because they were the only people to turn up at a meeting held to elect community reps.
- **Make documents easy to understand:** Some community activists mentioned how important it was to produce information about community planning in simple language. Community representatives don't always have time to go through complex documents. Community Forum staff spend a lot of time simplifying documents and pulling out the main issues. It would save time if those producing the documents did this in the first instance.

National Standards for Community Engagement

- 7.26 The Glasgow Community Planning Partnership has formally adopted the National Standards for Community Engagement. Discussion with partners in North Glasgow identified that as there has been little engagement activity, the standards have not been used in community planning activity.
- 7.27 Some partners had done work internally to ensure that staff were aware of the importance the National Standards. For example, the NHS had a one day session to focus on the Standards, going through each of them in detail and applying them to their activities. Generally, there was a feeling that the Standards are “common sense” but “useful as a framework and checklist.”
- 7.28 None of the four community activists consulted during this case study had seen or heard of the National Standards. They believed that the Standards were a very good idea – “it is good to measure performance and hold people to account.” The group felt that there were two main issues which should be emphasised in the standards:
- Are people actually listening to us?
 - Do community representatives get feedback?

7.29 This was echoed by the Community Planning Area Team, who stressed that feedback must be provided in innovative ways. Practical support for communities participating in community planning was also seen as essential.

Engaging with Equalities Groups

7.30 It was generally felt that in the past, community representation has not been good in terms of equalities – “You can get the same people all the time.” While it was seen as positive that people were willing to dedicate their time to regeneration activity, there was a concern from some partners that:

“We do get a certain profile of the community – aged 55 plus. We are working to attract younger people – anyone under 40!”

7.31 The Local CPPs were seen as a positive opportunity to improve engagement with equalities groups. There will be an equalities group representative on each Local CPP in North Glasgow. In addition, the Community Planning Area Team is working to co-ordinate the activities of equalities groups across North Glasgow. For example, there is ongoing activity to develop Youth Stakeholder Groups in each Local CPP area. These groups will mainly involve professionals working with young people. In the longer term, Youth Forums will be established to enable young people to have a direct link with community planning processes. There are similar plans to strengthen links with minority ethnic groups and asylum seeker networks.

Defining community engagement

7.32 The community activists consulted had a very clear view of what community engagement should mean:

“To me it’s really simple: Getting communities involved in decisions about the area they live in – whether it’s housing, safety or any other issue.”

7.33 However, they felt that in North Glasgow, there was no clear agreement about the purpose of community engagement – “there

are differences between what communities want from community engagement, and what professionals want.”

- 7.34 In addition, the issue of defining a ‘community’ was important to the group. It was felt that there is a need to involve a wide range of people to ensure everyone has a chance to influence decisions – “inclusion is a really important part of engagement – we need to involve people who normally wouldn’t get involved.”

Measuring community engagement

7.35 As yet, there are no systems in place for measuring the effectiveness of community engagement activity in North Glasgow. Community planning partners had a number of ideas about how community engagement activity could be measured:

- **Think of ultimate aims** – communities felt that measuring community engagement could be very simple and focus on three issues related to regeneration activity:
 - What do we know about the needs of communities?
 - What are we doing to meet these needs?
 - How successful have these projects been?
- **Measuring capacity of individuals** – one partner felt that a key measure would involve looking at the skills, capacity and experiences of community activists from the start of the community engagement process. This would enable measurement of what people personally obtained from involvement in community planning.
- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation** – one partner had previously been involved in using this evaluation method successfully. Each SIP funded project was able to develop their own indicators and report on performance in their own way. Each project was offered support from consultants to develop a good monitoring framework. This had resulted in an interesting range of reporting methods, including videos, art, reports, treasure chests and quilts. But it was acknowledged that with this kind of monitoring “*it is difficult to manage the information once it comes in*” – and would be particularly difficult for Communities Scotland on a national scale.

Key points

- When developing the Glasgow ROA, the community planning and engagement structures across the city had not yet been formalised
- An effort was made to involve local communities in the development of the ROA
- A community engagement strategy was developed based on consultation with local communities
- At the time of this case study, summer 2006, community planning in North Glasgow was still in development
- There has been very little community engagement activity in community planning in the North Glasgow area
- Community representatives in North Glasgow are disillusioned about community planning due to:
 - Confusion about structures
 - Dominance of professionals
 - Lack of community engagement activity
 - Lack of real action to address regeneration issues
- Although Glasgow Community Planning Partnership has adopted the National Standards for Community Engagement, these have not yet been used in the Glasgow North area
- It is hoped that community planning can improve engagement with equalities groups, and work is ongoing with young people, minority ethnic communities and asylum seekers to create links with community planning
- Community engagement was defined as *“getting communities involved in decisions about the area they live in”*
- The effectiveness of community engagement could be measured through:
 - Focusing on regeneration objectives – what are needs and how are these being met?
 - Measuring the capacity of individuals – what have individuals gained from involvement in community planning?
 - Participatory monitoring and evaluation – allowing each CPP to develop its own targets and report in its own way.

8 Orkney

Introduction

- 8.1 The Orkney Community Planning Partnership produced the 'Orkney 2020' Community Plan in 2003. The Orkney Community Planning Partnership has the benefit that three of its main partners have coterminous boundaries (Enterprise Orkney, the Orkney Isles Council and NHS Orkney). One of the primary concerns of the Community Planning Partnership is how to address population decline and create sustainable island communities.
- 8.2 The Partnership has three advisory groups:
- the local economic forum
 - the environment partnership
 - the communities advisory group.
- 8.3 Each of these groups has sub groups. As an example, the communities advisory group has sub groups which focus on community safety, cultural, educational and health related themes.
- 8.4 The community planning decision making process is led by the Community Planning Steering Group to which the three advisory groups report. The membership is drawn from the convenors and chief officers of Orkney Council, NHS Orkney and Orkney Enterprise. The Steering Group is supported by a Senior Officer Group whose members are drawn from the main statutory and voluntary organisations providing services in Orkney. The Senior Officer group can make recommendations to the Steering Group.
- 8.5 This structure was considered by the participants to be effective and not overly cumbersome. All of the officers explained that they knew each other well and were very used to joint working arrangements. As one person put it '*we are all working for Orkney PLC*'. This statement was supported by the extent to which the officers from the different partner organisations appeared to be in regular formal and informal contact.

- 8.6 Orkney has four islands designated as Initiative at the Edge areas (a programme established by the Executive in 1998 to support remote Highland and Island communities). These areas are supported by development workers and are considered for prioritisation of funding support by grant funding bodies.
- 8.7 There was a period in 2004 when it appeared that no CRF would be made available by the Executive to support the Orkney CPP but in January 2005 it was announced that funding for three years (up to 2008) was being provided. The Community Planning annual budget is £130,000.

Community engagement

- 8.8 In September 2004, the Community Plan Senior Officer Group prepared a report on community engagement for consideration by the Steering Group. The report identified that the community engagement process required a clearly defined structure with the objective of improving the planning and delivery of services by making them more responsive to the needs of the community. It recommended that the community engagement process should start with the most fragile areas and identified these as being the areas where population decline was worst. It was planned that the process should run over a full two year period.
- 8.9 At this time there was discussion of the options to support and facilitate the community engagement process. The choice was either to use Council staff or to let a contract to Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) to undertake the work. VAO is a member of the Community Planning Partnership representing the interests of voluntary organisations and is mainly funded by the Scottish Executive. The option of using Council staff was rejected on the basis that it would not attract the full available funding and that it ran the risk of the engagement exercise being seen as a Council rather than a Community Planning initiative. The Community Planning Partnership therefore decided to contract Voluntary Action Orkney to undertake the work. In relative terms the scale of the funding support to the CPP to conduct community

engagement is small. The value of the annual VAO contract is £10,000.

- 8.10 In the first year the target was to engage residents on 9 islands (those considered to be most 'fragile' in terms of population decline). In the second year, the target was to conduct the engagement process on the remaining 6 islands, the Mainland and the south linked isles (linked to the mainland by causeway).
- 8.11 VAO developed a structured framework for the engagement, based on community meetings. The nature of the engagement process recognised the different stages the islands had reached. In particular community engagement was more likely to be already underway where there was a Development Trust in place or Initiative at the Edge support been made available.
- 8.12 Development Trusts have been established in 8 island communities and this is expected to rise to 10 by 2007/08. Their aim is to develop economic, social and cultural sustainability. The process of establishing the trusts requires a full local consultation process and the creation of a local island development plan. Westray (where we conducted our community consultation) is considered to be the most developed of the Trusts. It was formed in 1998 and employs a support worker and has 12 elected directors and 120 island members. Its aim is *'to develop the economic, social and cultural sustainability of our community by harnessing the quality of our resources, people and island environment.'* On other smaller islands the development trusts are not as well developed, although as they gain strength, they are developing as the main drivers of community participation and capacity building on the islands.
- 8.13 VAO used the Community Councils and Development Trust networks on each island (where these were in place) to promote information about the community meetings and the engagement process. The meetings were promoted on the islands and arrangements were made to provide transport for people to attend where this was required.

- 8.14 The general format of the engagement meetings involved an explanation of the community planning process and a description of how issues raised at the meeting would be fed back to the Partnership. VAO then used a process to assist in prioritising three main issues and recording the rest of the comments made during the meeting. VAO also arranged for written feedback from people unable to attend the meetings.
- 8.15 VAO produced a feedback report from each island meeting. The reports are distributed to the three community planning partnership sub groups for consideration.
- 8.16 VAO provides an annual report on progress to the CPP. In their annual report to the CPP for the first year, VAO advised that nine islands had been visited (as planned). After the first year some of the lessons VAO had learned about ways to improve the engagement process were reported back to the Partnership. The key issues were:
- the importance of structuring a process of feedback to the community
 - the benefits of developing a structured action plan in response to the issues raised from the engagement meetings
 - using local radio to highlight the importance of the meetings and what they could achieve
 - the value added by use of the National Standards for Community Engagement.
- 8.17 Among the partners we interviewed there was agreement that the community engagement process appeared to have worked well. It provided a structured framework which used the same approach for each community. It was also considered that although VAO was a member of the CPP, they acted as an independent agent when conducting the engagement process. VAO staff said that they thought this encouraged people to be more open during the engagement meetings as the main service providers were not present.

- 8.18 It was recognised that there was a risk that the process of conducting community engagement using a ‘third party’ on behalf of the CPP partners could result in the community planning partners not developing ongoing structures for their own engagement with communities. VAO suggested that the main partners had been engaged with communities for some time in the delivery of their services. For example, Orkney Enterprise supported regeneration through the fostering of Development Trusts and this provided an ongoing level of engagement with communities. The CPP also provided £2,500 funding support to the Trusts as part of their budget allocated to community development.
- 8.19 In spite of this, there was a sense that the CPP partners had delegated the structured community engagement process to VAO and not considered the next steps for the CPP or how their organisations would contribute to this. One of the issues identified after the first year was that although reports from the island engagement meetings were provided to each of the CPP sub groups for consideration, there was not clear agreement on how issues raised should be progressed.
- 8.20 VAO stated that there was some concern among the partners that the engagement process would raise expectations within communities by encouraging them to identify and prioritise issues that could not be resourced. The public organisations in Orkney consider that on a per capita basis they are substantially underfunded in comparison with other rural and island areas in Scotland. The engagement process conducted in the first year by VAO had identified a number of linked themes which included issues involving transport infrastructure and health issues such as the retention of doctors or other health facilities on outer islands. The CPP partners felt that these expectations were very difficult to support in the context the funding constraints. For example, Orkney NHS had conducted a consultation on Primary Care in 2004 and the Chief Executive stated that this was the main source of information they used in relation to their services. She

recognised that issues about the retention of GPs on islands would re-emerge during the VAO engagement process but that this would be covering ground that their earlier consultation had already considered.

8.21 The CPP and the Council have identified that following the first year of running the engagement process that they needed to become more effective in providing feedback to the communities and to develop a more coherent process to manage the issues raised by communities. They identified some 'quick wins' which could be actioned relatively easily and agreed that efforts should be made to progress these. There remains a concern about how more difficult issues were to be managed. There required to be some mechanism to acknowledge within the community planning process the issues raised by the community even if these could not be supported or funded by it. This is still being given consideration. The importance of this was that community feedback should not be lost or simply ignored even if the CPP partners did not agree with it.

8.22 A consultation process is now underway (also being managed on a contractual basis by VAO) to update the community plan. The process of updating the plan covers many of the same issues as the VAO community engagement process.

The National Standards for Community Engagement

8.23 When the National Standards were published, Orkney Council issued them to all of the community planning partners. The Standards were integrated into the approach used by VAO in conducting their engagement process and are referenced in their reports to the CPP. VAO staff said that the Standards were helpful as a baseline and provided a framework for engagement.

8.24 In May 2005, the Partnership used the funding available from Communities Scotland to support the development of the National Standards and engaged a consultant who ran a seminar for partners and later returned to audit how effectively the Standards

were being used. The focus was on the VAO engagement process and the feedback was positive. The only weakness was in relation to the provision of effective feedback to communities.

- 8.25 The consultant only considered the Community Planning engagement process through the work of VAO and did not look at how the partners were using the Standards. The Partnership has considered the need to provide more effective feedback and has agreed that a small news sheet will be provided as a follow up to each meeting arranged by VAO. This will give details of the outcomes of the engagement meeting and the issues identified. The feedback sheet will also provide details of the next steps. In relation to developing a structured approach to managing follow up actions, the CPP is still considering how this will be developed.
- 8.26 The Chief Executive of Orkney NHS was aware of the Standards but said that they had not used them within the health service. She intended to consider how they would be used. NHS Orkney had not developed any performance or indicator framework for community engagement.
- 8.27 The Area Commander for the Northern Constabulary was also aware of the Standards in a community planning context but had not developed them within his direct management remit.
- 8.28 Orkney Enterprise were also aware of the Standards and said that, as they provided support for setting up the Development Trusts and funding which contributed to the employment of the trust development workers, they had a close contact with local communities.
- 8.29 The feedback from these community planning partners about the Standards identified awareness, but not a practical response within the partner organisations, as to how the standards would be used or developed. In most cases, the Standards were recognised as being a valuable support or checklist.

Feedback from community representatives

- 8.30 The focus group with community representatives formed part of a community engagement meeting run by VAO on Westray which has a population of 600 and is the second most populous of the Orkney islands. The Westray Development Trust was the first to be established in Orkney and has a membership of 120. Westray is considered to be an island which is in the process of reversing its population decline and is seen to have a vibrant community.
- 8.31 VAO conducted their community engagement exercise on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership with a group of ten. The meeting was also attended by the Trust's Development Worker. The process identified the Trust's wide range of achievements and then discussed the needs and aspirations of the community.
- 8.32 The individuals at the meeting were not aware of the Engagement Standards and their primary focus was on the work of the Development Trust rather than on the role of the CPP. They considered that having a funded development worker based on the island was a significant element in the successful outcomes they had achieved. They also valued the extent to which the Trust provided an independent framework for the island to manage its own regeneration. This included the establishing of limited companies developing renewable energy and bio fuels.
- 8.33 The community representatives at the meeting felt that they had opportunities to contribute their ideas and that they were consulted. They were critical of the level of feedback they received from organisations which did not have staff based on the island. For example, in the case of a consultation conducted about the air ambulance, it was felt that decisions had already been made and that the outcome provided the island with a poorer service which could have the effect of discouraging new settlement on the island.
- 8.34 There was also a sense of frustration in relation to transport and health issues. Consultations were described as being

predetermined and the outcomes were based on priorities which were shaped to meet needs elsewhere. It was recognised that Orkney Islands Council had supported the island on a number of issues but that the decisions had been made by other bodies (for example the Scottish Executive) and the extent to which these external (off island) bodies were accountable was questioned.

- 8.35 One issue which was referred to by some of the CPP partners was the campaign run by the Westray community to get their own Care Centre on the island. The rationale was to provide residential support for elderly people and also to create jobs for young women who experience higher levels of unemployment than young men. The Kalisgarth facility was opened in 2006 after an extended campaign but it is not being fully used and therefore it has not created the number of jobs which were planned. The CPP partners identified that the problem was that the target client group (elderly people on the island) had not been effectively consulted and although the wider community thought that the building of the centre was a good idea which could potentially solve two issues (creating employment and providing good quality care), older people living on the island did not want to use the centre. Another officer commented that they had been too willing to agree with the community as it was at an early and important stage in the life of the Development Trust and a refusal to support the project would have been seen as a major rejection.
- 8.36 It was not clear if this was a temporary difficulty and what role the CPP partners actually played in consulting about need but it was referred to as an example of one part of a community making a strong and effective case on behalf of another group who then failed to use the facility.
- 8.37 The CPP partners and VAO explained that the community engagement experience on the islands could vary very considerably as some have very small populations. Some are very independent but wish to see no change and others are more reliant on services being provided to them.

Engaging with equality groups

- 8.38 The CPP had identified that it will focus on disability and mental health as specific communities of interest and plans are being developed to engage with these two groups. The detail of how this will occur has not been developed.
- 8.39 An Island Youth Development Project started under the SIP and funding for youth workers on three islands has been continued by the CPP and the Community Regeneration Fund.
- 8.40 There was a recognition that no actions had been taken to develop engagement with LGBT people or minority ethnic communities. The police stated that they had attempted to develop a sub group of the Partnership to focus on equality issues but this had not been supported.
- 8.41 VAO was aware of the gaps in engagement with equality groups and discussed the barriers which they considered existed in the islands. One of the concerns was that on some islands the target equality group may be one or two people (or households).

Establishing a baseline for community engagement

- 8.42 There was a strong feeling within the community planning partners that the process of community engagement had been successful and that the decision to contract the process to Voluntary Action Orkney had provided significant benefits. The benefits included the development of a consistent process that provided a way of identifying issues for the partnership to focus on. It was considered to have encouraged community participation, as the main service providers were not present at the meetings and the community could therefore be more open in their comments. The CPP were provided with a written report containing feedback from each island meeting and this was seen as a positive indication of consultation about community aspirations and as a way of setting priorities.
- 8.43 The CPP are working with the Enterprise Company to kick start

the new Development Trusts on islands where they have not been established. The VAO meetings will be a catalyst for this process on some islands and therefore they bridge the engagement process with establishing a framework for self help which is one of the key approaches being developed by the partnership.

- 8.44 All of the partners are aware of the limited capacity which many communities have for consultation and engagement and there was a recognition that the community engagement process needed to be coordinated. There has been some discussion about a data sharing protocol or an agreed basis for conducting consultations and engagement but this has not been developed.
- 8.45 The Council had recognised that there may have been a gap in the range and level of indicators which existed for the community planning process and engaged a consultant to provide assistance. The outcome of this exercise was not considered successful, as the work volume relating to the collection of data was viewed as excessive, particularly in the context of the Council's limited resources and the small scale of the community planning process.
- 8.46 A draft of the annual ROA report is in preparation and the process of completing it was described as *'OK but cumbersome, we are expected to provide the same level of information about our activities as a partnership which gets £10 million.'*
- 8.47 In relation to identifying a baseline level of community engagement, Orkney has developed an approach which recognises the diversity of its communities and their geographical separation and the relative isolation which some experience. Communities are being encouraged to develop their own self sufficiency and to a large extent this forms a part of island life. Support has been provided to the Development Trusts and their development workers.
- 8.48 It appears that allowing for the nature and scale of the CPP activities in Orkney, one way to measure the level of the

community engagement is to identify a range of process indicators such as number of people attending meetings, number of meetings and the range of activities undertaken by the development trusts but the requirement to produce the data should be proportionate to the scale of the partnership activities.

Key issues

- Orkney had no previous experience from the SIP programme in community engagement in regeneration – indeed it was thought at one time that it would not receive money from the CRF fund.
- The voluntary sector has been contracted to undertake community engagement on behalf of the partners. This is seen to have advantages – ‘independence’ from service delivery agencies encourages more open discussion – and disadvantages – the service providing agencies may not take ownership of the outcomes of the community engagement process.
- A commitment was made to begin the community engagement process in the most fragile areas (rather than starting on the mainland and ‘working out’).
- In small communities the links between local organisations are crucial. The Development Trusts are important local community led catalysts for change.
- Monitoring and evaluation needs to be proportionate to the resources involved.
- The National Standards for Community Engagement have been well integrated into the community engagement process – but have not been ‘mainstreamed’ into the work of the statutory agencies.
- There has been little consideration yet in how to engage with a range of equalities groups.

9 West Dunbartonshire

Introduction

9.1 The West Dunbartonshire Partnership oversees community planning on West Dunbartonshire. The Board is strategic and sets the policy direction, monitors programmes and agrees resource allocations. The Regeneration Group links the strategic and operational aspects of the community planning partnership and has responsibility for co-ordination; building partnerships; delivery; sustainability and the worklessness theme. There are five thematic groups covering:

- young people
- employment and business growth
- health improvement
- safe, attractive communities
- communities.

9.2 The Communities Thematic Group has responsibility for community engagement.

Community engagement structures – community planning partnership

9.3 The ROA stresses that community engagement is fundamental to achieve sustainable regeneration. It is acknowledged that local people should be involved at every level of the Partnership – and that training and support should be provided to enable this. There is a commitment by all partners that there should be 50 per cent community representation on the core Partnership structures.

9.4 At the start of the process of developing the ROA, there were three well established area-based community forums which put forward representatives to the SIP board. However, concerns were expressed by partners that this arrangement would not meet 'equal opportunities responsibilities and other legislative requirements'. As a result, a new arrangement has been put in place. This draws 12 community representatives from specific

interest community groups to the Board, which is made up of 24 people. The area-based community forums no longer exist.

Community engagement structures – neighbourhood level

9.5 Three areas were identified as priorities based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. These were communities in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven. About one third of the total population of West Dunbartonshire lives in these areas. There is an activity plan for each area, based on its regeneration needs. Each plan is supported by a local stakeholder group including community representatives.

The Civic Forum

9.6 The Civic Forum is seen as the main community engagement mechanism in the new structure and met for the first time in October 2005. It is open to all residents and meets four times a year. The attendance at the first three meetings has been around 100 people. Meetings are advertised in the local newspapers and there is additional promotion of the Forum in the three regeneration areas – Clydebank, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven. A leaflet advertising the Forum states *'The Forum is open to everyone in West Dunbartonshire although the work of the Partnership will be targeted at the areas and groups that need it most'*.

9.7 The Forum is principally about information sharing. There was some criticism that more time than had been planned was given to the formal speakers and that this shortened the time available for the community to express their views. It was also felt by community participants that the Civic Forum did not get involved in issues in the same depth that the community forums did in the past.

9.8 The first Forum identified the issues that were important for the community – and full sessions on community safety and health improvement have taken place. The format is presentations in a plenary session; workshops and report back.

- 9.9 The Citizens' Panel, which is boosted from the regeneration areas, asks questions on the theme that will be discussed at the next Civic Forum and this information is fed into the discussions.

Understanding of community engagement

- 9.10 There has been a strong history of community engagement in West Dunbartonshire. A network of three area based community resource centres, linked to community forums was established. These resource centres, which are still in place, are staffed (typically with a community support officer, a social inclusion officer and a community work assistant); provide library facilities; meeting facilities; internet access and photocopying services. The resource centres were highly valued by community representatives.
- 9.11 There has undoubtedly been a significant impact caused by the move away from the community forums. Those involved in the community forums see the new arrangements as being a move away from community engagement and empowerment – and to a more controlled system of information provision. They believe that the council was determined to introduce a new arrangement because the community forums had become powerful over a five year period and were seen as a threat. Concern was expressed that much of the training and development that built the skills and confidence of community representatives from the community forums has been wasted – with valuable people being lost to the whole process. Community representatives were frustrated that the council believed that it was the only organisation with a democratic process – they viewed the community forums as democratic organisations, representing over 300 community organisations.
- 9.12 There was a view that the term community engagement meant different things to different people. Community representatives believed that some service providers consulted on issues when they had already made up their minds. Others believed that some service providers believed that providing information was

community engagement. There was cynicism about whether service providers would ever give up power – and engage communities effectively in the real decisions that affected them. It was acknowledged that financial pressures or guidance from superior organisations (like the Scottish Executive) could reduce the options available – and a plea for honesty about what was possible. There was also a demand for feedback following consultation and other community engagement exercises.

9.13 One of the community participants wondered why the phrase ‘engagement’ was used at all – *‘When I meet people I know we don’t say that we are engaging with each other – we say that we are speaking to each other, and listening to each other’*.

9.14 There are different views of what had changed as a result of community engagement in West Dunbartonshire. Some points are:

- uses of language – agencies were better at avoiding jargon – and would get pulled up by community participants when they used it
- small neighbourhood approaches – community activists were generally less interested in the whole of West Dunbartonshire and more interested in their immediate neighbourhood. This had led to intensive local approaches, such as the Full Employment Areas
- environmental improvements and sustainability – community activists had raised this up the agenda for the CPP
- safe play – as a result of community activists’ interest in this, the Environmental Trust had been established to develop and improve local play spaces
- community consultation – there was an increased awareness of what works (and what doesn’t) and how to follow through
- awareness raising for agencies – SCDC had run two information and awareness raising sessions on the National Standards for Community Engagement for agencies. One was aimed at senior managers (as their commitment was seen as essential) and one for operational front-line staff

- published guide to community engagement – a user friendly, practical guide on issues like venues, transport, catering and childcare for community consultation events
- barrier free communication – the council's 'Communicating Effectively' standards have been adopted by all partners. This covers format and design issues to ensure that all materials are accessible to all (from font size to minority ethnic community languages).

National Standards for Community Engagement

9.15 West Dunbartonshire Partnership supported the National Standards for Community Engagement – and is developing 'West Dunbartonshire Standards' from these. The West Dunbartonshire Standards for Involving the Community are in final draft form and will be published in the summer of 2006. They complement the National Standards and have been developed by community representatives working with representatives of the partner agencies. They focus on practical issues and provide a checklist for anyone involved in community engagement.

9.16 Of the eight community participants at the focus group, only one remembered seeing a copy of the National Standards.

Equalities

9.17 The West Dunbartonshire Partnership sees the engagement of young people as a central issue. There are good structures locally, including three Youth Forums, Pupil Councils across all schools and a youth service (Y Sort It) led by a management committee of young people. Services are developing, including a new youth fund. A youth-led Youth Strategy has been prepared and launched at a fun event for young people – including an 'It's a Knockout' competition. A Youth Outcome Agreement (on the same format as the ROA – but shorter!) and a Youth Charter have been developed to support the implementation of the Youth Strategy.

9.18 In relation to the engagement of other equalities groups, less progress has been made. For example, it was acknowledged that

little progress has been made in relation to minority ethnic communities. The minority ethnic project is going to be 'revisited' to try to re-invigorate it. There is one representative of one of the minority ethnic communities on the CPP (but no effective structure to support this).

Measurement of effectiveness

9.19 The ROA contains an outcome to 'increase the participation of the community', which will be measured using three indicators:

- Number of individual representatives & groups represented – with an aim to increase the number of representatives by 5% from the 2004 level of 112
- Number of volunteers and community groups – with an aim to increase the number of volunteers in community groups by 10% from the 2004 level
- Number of individual representatives reporting 'fairly' or 'very skilled/confident' – with an aim to increase the number of skilled/confident representatives by 10% from its current level, yet to be determined through a local survey in 2005.

9.20 In our discussions in West Dunbartonshire, a number of additional suggestions for measures were made. The first possible indicator was **participation and membership**. There had been full attendance and active participation by community activists at every CPP board meeting.

9.21 The second possible indicator was **feedback**. For example, the service providers feed back to the Civic Forum on the actions that they have taken following the comments from the previous Civic Forum meeting.

9.22 The third possible indicator was **change at neighbourhood level**. This was based on being clear about local priorities and joining up activities to meet these priorities. It was important to deliver improvements that people could see – for example, the Environment Trust's work impacted directly and visibly on the local neighbourhoods where they were working.

9.23 The fourth possible indicator was **community perceptions** of the effectiveness. This would be collected in the next household survey.

9.24 The fifth possible indicator was the **partners' perceptions**. A survey of board members was undertaken on a regular basis.

9.25 The self assessment of the effectiveness of community engagement for the ROA Annual Report would be completed with the involvement of all board members.

Key points

- West Dunbartonshire has a long history of community engagement – and there is a commitment that there should be 50% community representation on the core Partnership structures.
- Strong community organisations can be seen as a threat by other partners – and by councillors. This highlights the tension between representative and participative democracy.
- The Civic Forum is seen by longer standing community representatives as a method of information sharing rather than community engagement.
- The term community engagement can mean different things to different people.
- When communities are being consulted, the parameters of the consultation should be made clear.
- There have been changes as a result of community engagement in West Dunbartonshire – particularly relating to neighbourhood activities and the way that partners work.
- The National Standards for Community Engagement were supported – and local standards have been developed.
- In the equalities area, greatest progress has been made with young people.
- There is a wide range of ways that effective community engagement might be measured.

10 West Lothian

Introduction

- 10.1 The West Lothian Community Planning Partnership oversees community planning in West Lothian. The Board sets the strategic direction and monitors progress. It is supported by a Partners Group. The West Lothian Youth Congress feeds into this structure. There are three thematic groups – covering economic development; health, wellbeing and learning and community safety. At a local level, there are nine locality planning areas based on the secondary school catchment areas and covering the whole of West Lothian.
- 10.2 There are well established arrangements for partnership and joint work between the agencies in the area, with many service delivery offices including a wide range of partner organisations under the one roof. For example, the ‘jobs centre’ in the main Livingston shopping centre is a one stop office including Job Centre Plus; West Lothian Council; NHS; Customs and Revenue and West Lothian College.
- 10.3 The council was praised by Audit Scotland (in their audit of best value and community planning) for its good work with partners in delivering ‘joined up’ services.

Community engagement structures – community planning partnership

- 10.4 West Lothian CPP sees the community as an essential partner in community planning. The CPP has learnt from the approaches taken by the West Lothian SIP and built community engagement into the structures for community planning.
- 10.5 There are a number of Community Planning Group Forums which provide inputs to service delivery and planning. The Community Care Forum has been particularly active and influential in involving service users and voluntary and community organisations in decisions about services. The West

Lothian Youth Congress has allowed partners to engage with young people in decisions about services and issues relevant to young people.

- 10.6 As well as direct involvement, there are a range of methods of structured community consultation. These include:
- **Citizen’s Panel** – this is made up of a representative sample of 1% of West Lothian’s citizens (refreshed every two years). Panel members are asked their views on important issues – from quality of life to accessibility of services. Its views have led to co-location of services and the establishment of Neighbourhood Environment Teams.
 - **Public meetings** – now used less frequently than in the past – but has been used where appropriate.
 - **Community councils** – the Community Council Partnership has representation on the CPP and consults with Community Councils.
- 10.7 There is a community engagement ‘Champions Group’ made up of senior staff from the partnership agencies. There is a sense that much progress has been made in recent years. Community engagement was no longer seen as ‘a bolt on’ – but an integral part of work. But there was still a requirement to ensure that all senior managers in partnership agencies reinforced its importance, and that mainstream resources were still not always moving to meet the priorities identified.

Community engagement – local level

- 10.8 The main focus for community engagement at the local level is locality plans. There are nine locality planning areas in West Lothian – each covers about 20,000 people. Locality plans will be developed for all areas – and the initial focus has been on the three areas with the greatest concentrations of deprivation. These will replace the council’s existing service plans.
- 10.9 Locality planning involves a process of the major public sector organisations working with local communities and community organisations to:

- work out what local communities need and want
- change the way that service providers work to deliver services that meet the communities needs better
- argue the case for additional resources, where important priorities are not being addressed.

10.10 The locality plans include:

- a community profile
- details of community engagement
- main findings – what people said
- immediate actions taken
- priorities for future action
- measuring progress
- outcomes (for next two years)
- action plan.

10.11 Those involved believe that there are now good shared statistics across all agencies about each area. This has been linked well to the community engagement process. This has allowed shared priorities for the localities to be agreed – *‘but we have a way to go in ensuring that ‘mainstream’ budgets follow these priorities’*.

10.12 Arts have been used as a medium for community engagement in West Lothian. *‘Things that are visual attract and retain people’s attention’*. The element of play and fun is also important – *‘many adults in poorer areas have never had a childhood’*.

10.13 The first locality planning area in West Lothian was Inveralmond, an area of varying levels of deprivation and prosperity. An initial priority in this area was parents and their children. Various techniques were used to engage them. Initial consultation was undertaken by community members – who had been trained to use a questionnaire to survey the views of the community. This gathered information on the good and bad things in the area as a parent (and as a child) and what services were being used. The initial information was taken to people – in the shopping mall and at local nursery and the drop in centre. *‘We took the message to*

people, rather than making them come to us'. Art work about the good and bad things was prepared by parents and stitched into duvet covers – which were displayed in the shopping mall. The outcomes of the exercise were discussed with parents – while their children attended a Christmas party.

10.14 More broadly, the exercise also involved:

- mapping services – and identifying gaps
- focus groups of front line workers
- consultation with service users
- developing local groups
- street surveys
- involvement in gala days and youth festivals.

10.15 As a result of this, the Inveralmond locality plan gives priority to early years and young people – along with jobs and the environment.

10.16 The production of the Inveralmond locality plan has resulted in the development of new services, based on the views of local people. An existing centre for parents and young children has been further developed to include parenting programmes for parents of young children, crèche services, youth activities and trips for parents and children.

10.17 Parents now believe that the range of services available for young children has vastly improved in recent years. This has had a significant impact on the everyday lives of many parents:

“the parenting group for young parents makes a big difference. You trust everyone else there, and everything you talk about is confidential. It really helps”

“I feel happier... its something to look forward to”

Parents believe that their children have also benefited from the new services:

“my kids are more confident now. I can leave them at the drop in centre and go into the parents group. That would never have been possible until now”

National Standards for Community Engagement

10.18 The National Standards for Community Engagement were piloted in West Lothian and the partnership is committed to their use (although not all partners were aware of them).

The Regeneration Outcome Agreement said that the Standards would be used:

- to assess proposed approaches to community engagement
- as a planning tool
- to monitor and evaluate progress.

10.19 Those involved felt that the Standards were a useful prompt – *‘it makes us consciously think about each element of the Standards – even though the general principles were ones that we were all aware of before the Standards’.*

10.20 All the Standards were ‘kept in mind, although three were receiving particular attention at the moment:

- The Support Standard – especially child care and transport. The ROA now funds a ‘creche bank’.
- Working with others – training is ongoing amongst partners to try to break down any barriers to joint work.
- The Feedback Standard – which is crucial, to maintain the interest of communities. It is costly – materials are posted to all members of the community. There is little prospect (in the short/medium term) for email to be used, because of lack of access to IT.

10.21 There is a ‘challenge’ for agencies in making sure that the Standards are understood – and used – right through each partner’s organisation.

10.22 Discussion with parents involved in influencing service delivery in West Lothian raised an interesting issue about the Standards,

and how these are used. The parents involved in this case study had no awareness of the Standards. But, they pointed out that the focus on the needs of parents and very young children in the Inveralmond area meant that there was a high turnover of involvement. As children grew up, parents moved on and became involved in other activities. This meant that initial work building awareness of the process of locality planning and the National Standards for Community Engagement was very quickly lost as parents moved on and new parents became involved.

Equalities

- 10.23 There has been a particular focus on involving young people. The West Lothian Youth Congress is an arm of the CPP. It allows CPP partners to involve young people in decisions about services and issues relevant to young people. The Youth Congress can ask community planning partners to attend the Congress. The Congress is based on the secondary schools and also involves youth forums, special education units, the colleges and individual young people.
- 10.24 The council has purchased a community engagement tent, which is used at gala days and local festivals. The tent provides a focus for innovative community engagement. It was used at a youth festival, organised by a multi-agency working group and local young people. It attracted 1,500 people – and confirmed the need for youth facilities and youth workers in the area.
- 10.25 One very good example is ‘Having our Say’ which has engaged ‘looked after’ children. They were asked to identify the main issues that they wished to change in the way that services were delivered. This led to a series of recommendations. These were then contained in a drama (working with the Youth Theatre) which was presented to managers in departments and agencies providing services to ‘looked after’ children. This led to service changes locally. But it was realised that changes would also be needed at national level to deliver all the recommendations. The group made a presentation to the Scottish Parliament, which was

well received and has also led to change. A DVD was made, which was launched at the local cinema (complete with an 'Oscars' ceremony). One example of change is that there is now 'buddying' of children in care as they move from primary to secondary school. All those involved in this exercise were between the ages of 6 and 16.

10.26 In relation to other equalities groups, progress has been slower. Capacity building is being undertaken with the minority ethnic community through the West Lothian Multi Cultural Forum. One reason for this is that activities have been focused most strongly in the areas of greatest disadvantage – and there are proportionately smaller minority ethnic communities in these areas.

Measurement of effectiveness

10.27 It was acknowledged that, in their measurement to date, there had been a greater discussion of inputs (number of events; level of feedback; rate of response) rather than outputs (far less outcomes). It was acknowledged that measuring the outcomes of community engagement was difficult. In addition, it was easier to measure the effectiveness of individual interventions – rather than a wide ranging programme of interventions.

10.28 Community engagement was seen as the start of a process of change. As a result of community engagement, the delivery of services should change and the capacity and confidence of members of the community should grow. Both these changes should lead to an improvement in the life situation of members of the community.

10.29 Some thought the questions that should be answered were:

- What difference has this made to the community?
- Does the community now have greater capacity?
- Are partners and the community enthusiastic about the process?
- Do people feel that they are being listened to?

- Are people more satisfied with services?
- Has the quality of life risen?

10.30 More generally, there was a view that community engagement was tied up in the (elusive) notion of **citizenship**. Perhaps the measure might be ‘We have no concerns that people are excluded – or choosing to exclude themselves – from active citizenship’. One measure might be turnout at elections (why shouldn’t local elections have higher turnouts than general elections, since they are about issues of immediate interest for neighbourhoods?).

Other issues

10.31 The CPP supports the outcome based approach to their work. West Lothian Council is embarking on the preparation of an outcome agreement for all council services – and believes that this will give the best possible return on the investment of Scottish Executive resources.

Key points

- West Lothian demonstrates an innovative approach to community engagement – within a strong culture and practice of partnership and joint work.
- Locality planning has provided the main focus of community engagement. It is replacing individual organisations plans (such as council service plans).
- The arts (music, drama and visual arts) have been important in community engagement – and have had an impact.
- Community engagement has ‘gone to people’ rather than asking people to come to the service providers - using local events and going to places that people congregate (like shopping centres and gala days).
- There has been a considerable focus in young people.
- The National Standards of Community Engagement are useful to ‘remind’ people of good practice.
- There is no clear view of how the effectiveness of community engagement should be measured – it may impact on the wider issue of citizenship.

11 National stakeholders

11.1 As part of our work, we spoke to a range of people who could provide an overview at a national level. These included staff from Communities Scotland (and the Scottish Centre for Regeneration); staff and community members from Community Voices; staff from SCVO and staff from the Scottish Community Development Centre.

Community planning and ROAs

11.2 A number of those we interviewed (particularly those from outwith Communities Scotland) expressed the view that community engagement in the previous regeneration structures (particularly the SIPs) had been better than in the current community planning structures. Among the reasons given for this were:

- the pace of change meant that communities were often not involved in deciding the priorities in the ROA
- the SIPs focused on clearly defined neighbourhoods – and people knew the ‘characters’ that were involved, while the community planning partnerships cover the whole of a local authority area
- it is much easier to engage people in their own neighbourhood rather than in a larger area
- partners operating at a community planning partnership level seem less prepared to engage with communities
- there has often been a gap between the creation of the CPP and the establishment of more localised community planning structures.

11.3 In general, the outcome based approach was seen as helpful – provided that all partners including the community took part in developing and agreeing the outcomes. It was acknowledged that the preparation of ROAs had been difficult - particularly where there was no history of a targeted area approach (like the SIPs) or of an outcome based approach (like BNSF). It was

hoped that it would prove significantly easier to develop and improve the ROAs than to prepare them from scratch.

- 11.4 It was felt that the ROAs generally had not (yet) said a great deal about the specifics of the engagement of communities in the planning and delivery of services. In turn, the links with other strategies were not always made and the targeting of mainstream budgets to ‘Closing the Opportunity Gap’ was seldom made explicit. Indeed, it was suggested to us that in some areas (perversely) the targeting of the CRF in certain areas was being used as an argument for directing mainstream budgets to the areas that did not ‘benefit’ from CRF.

Community engagement

- 11.5 The focus on engagement ‘in the planning and delivery of local public services’, as set out by the Minister for Communities in the Ministerial Foreword to the National Standards (and by Communities Scotland) is recognised by others. But there was a view that the phrase ‘community engagement’ meant different things to different people in the community and that it was not a phrase that was generally understood by the ‘person in the street’.
- 11.6 It was stressed by many of those we spoke to that community engagement was a means to an end (not an end in itself) – and that it was very important to be clear about (and have community support for) the underlying local priorities that would benefit from community engagement. But to be able to do this, it is essential that there is greater support for community capacity building. Community engagement was said to be hard – *‘because it is really about changing cultures rather than structures’*.
- 11.7 Communities are very varied and there is a need to be careful not to assume that a community consensus exists. There is also a need to provide opportunities for wider engagement through methods that go beyond formal structures based on meetings.

The National Standards for Community Engagement

11.8 The National Standards were seen as a very useful framework.

They were (variously) said to be:

- a description of best practice
- a universal starting point
- aspirational
- *'great to have – but difficult to read'*
- a benchmark.

11.9 But there were some drawbacks. A few of those we spoke to felt that they should have been 'mandatory' for all community planning partners – and that there should be a complaints process for community members who are unhappy that an agency has breached the Standards. Others felt that they had on occasion been applied in a 'top down way' and that they were less used by community members – *'I have only seen paid workers using them'*. Another felt that organisations could respond to the Standards without changing their basic cultures.

11.10 The Standards are felt to be well known (and used) by the partner agencies and by many of the community members directly involved in community planning partnerships. They were (understandably) thought to be less well known by community members who were more distant from the formal structured meetings of the CPP.

Equalities

11.11 There was general agreement that the current engagement of equalities groups in regeneration was 'patchy'. There were signs that this was becoming a more central issue for a number of CPPs. One key issue which was raised is how the community engagement in the targeted regeneration areas is interweaved with community engagement of 'communities of interest' – and it was felt that more effort needed to be given to this issue.

Measuring the effectiveness of community engagement

11.12 There was some agreement that any measurement of

effectiveness would require to include the views of the community. This was put in different ways:

- the community should be able to say whether they have seen a difference in service provision
- does the community think that public sector agencies are listening to them?
- measure the satisfaction of service users
- provide examples of where the community has achieved a positive result because of community engagement.

11.13 But all this requires to be put in a wider framework. An important pre-requisite is that each community should make clear its priorities for change. Unless there is a clear understanding of what the community wants, it is not possible to check whether it has been delivered. One person suggested that this would be easier to do in relation to single issues (like jobs or safety) rather than for the broad range of community regeneration.

12 Measuring effective community engagement

- 12.1 In our discussions about community engagement, a wide variety of views was expressed about the features of **effective** community engagement. It was generally agreed that effective community engagement should lead to change. Its impact might be an improvement in local services (through better planning and delivery); it might be an increase in the skills and capacity of the community (and individuals within the community); or it might be more general – leading to an improved quality of life, a greater sense of pride in the community or a stronger sense of citizenship. And it would often be a combination of these.
- 12.2 It was generally agreed that effective community engagement required:
- the community to be involved in the decisions about the services that they used
 - service providers to listen to service users – and to demonstrate that they took these views into account in planning and delivering services
 - the opportunity for everyone to be involved (if they wished)
 - the active inclusion of all groups within the community – including the equality groups
 - a resolution of (potential) tensions between councillors and community activists – valuing both representative and participative democracy
 - a good approach to process – where the National Standards were seen to play a valuable role.
- 12.3 But it was also stressed to us that effective community engagement needs to be fit for purpose. It needs to be conditioned by the local situation and local aims and objectives. No single measure – or series of measures – can be used in every case. Given this, it is important that the expectations of community engagement are clarified and agreed in each area – and that local measures should reflect this local agreement.

- 12.4 At present, each community planning partnership has to submit an annual report to Communities Scotland by the end of June each year. The first round of annual reports was required by June 2006.
- 12.5 Communities Scotland asks each CPP to self assess their performance on community engagement against a number of qualitative indicators, adapted from the National Standards for Community Engagement by Communities Scotland. This provides an eight point self assessment checklist. The checklist is to be completed by each CPP and included in their annual report on the ROA. CPPs are asked to provide evidence to support their assessment. While some of the CPPs have provided useful evidence, in many cases the evidence is patchy.
- 12.6 The aim is to encourage a greater level of scrutiny by CPPs of their community engagement activity. It is made clear by Communities Scotland in the guidance to CPPs that all partners, including communities, should be involved in the assessment process – ‘It will not be sufficient to present the assessment of one, or some, of the partners.’
- 12.7 By October 2006, 28 of the 32 CPPs have completed the checklists on community engagement provided by Communities Scotland for the ROA annual report. A wide variety of approaches has been adopted. A few clearly asked a range of those involved in community planning to complete the checklist and aggregated the information. However, some responses appear to come from a single officer completing the checklist.
- 12.8 The scoring is (of course) subjective. One CPP scored themselves a maximum ‘5’ for seven out of the eight standards, even though the evidence which they provided was broadly similar to other CPPs that scored themselves significantly lower. Generally there was a poor correlation between the scores and the evidence. This was partly because no detailed guidance was given on the standards that were to be achieved for each score.

- 12.9 The ‘averaged’ scores for individual CPPs ranged from 1.3 (Western Isles) to 4.8 (East Ayrshire). The most common score in every category was ‘3’ – right in the middle of the range.
- 12.10 Communities Scotland makes clear that they are ‘looking to CPPs to demonstrate how their support for community engagement shows an impact on the way in which services are delivered and not merely provide details of a variety of funded activities and outputs’. In fact, many Annual Reports talk of the difficulty in making the link between community engagement and improved services – and a number describe their engagement processes rather than the impact that these have had on services. A minority of CPPs report on improved services as a result of effective community engagement.
- 12.11 It is important that Communities Scotland and the community planning partnerships develop a shared understanding of the features of effective community engagement. This will greatly assist the future measurement of community engagement activity, and help to ensure that the achievement of Communities Scotland’s corporate targets relating to community engagement can be evidenced.

13 Summary of findings

13.1 There is certainly a great deal of activity being undertaken by community planning partners with the community. Structures, which are intended to facilitate the engagement of members of the community, are being established at the CPP level and, increasingly, at a local level; varied and (sometimes) innovative methods are being used to find out the views and priorities of the community; training is being delivered to develop the capacity of communities and individuals in the community – and to improve the capacity of public agencies to engage communities. But, despite all the activity, there is little evidence of any major transfer of power and decision making from agencies to communities or of a significant change in the culture of most of the agencies. It is not clear (yet) whether the activity is bringing about a lasting change in the effective engagement of the community in the planning and delivery of the public services in their area.

13.2 Those areas that had SIPs before (particularly area based SIPs) had an experience of community engagement to build on when developing their ROAs. This made the ROAs stronger in terms of community engagement. However, many of the community members involved in the SIPs felt that they now had less opportunity to be involved in community planning. This could be because:

- the geography had changed: instead of operating within a clearly defined neighbourhood, there was an expectation that the community members should play a part across the whole community planning area
- the power balance had changed: with a view from many community members that local authorities (and other agencies) exerted greater control in the community planning structures
- the local structures were established after the community planning wide structures: at a time of considerable change,

- priority was often given to structures for the whole community planning area, with arrangements for local community planning areas coming some time later
- the outcome based approach: generally partnerships found it difficult to move to an outcome based approach and, in many cases, the community was not engaged in the decision making processes about the outcomes in the ROA.

- 13.3 The National Standards for Community Engagement have been adopted by a substantial majority of CPPs. There was almost universal support for the Standards as a document, which was seen to provide a helpful framework for good practice in community engagement, which could be adapted to reflect the stage of development in different areas. The training and support provided on the Standards was valued – although it was acknowledged that this had only ‘scratched the surface’. If there was any criticism of the Standards, it related to the fact that agencies could pay ‘lip service’ to them and that there was a lack of enforceability by the community.
- 13.4 Community engagement needs to be fit for purpose. It needs to be conditioned by the local situation and local aims and objectives. No single measure – or series of measures – can be used in every case. Given this, it is important that the expectations of community engagement are clarified and agreed in each area – and that local measures reflect this local agreement.
- 13.5 Equalities issues relating to community engagement are not reflected strongly in many ROAs – although the engagement of young people is included most often. There are some signs from the Annual Reports that equalities issues are now being taken more seriously (in part as a result of prodding from Communities Scotland), but this is an area which will require significant further development in the future.
- 13.6 Generally the approach to monitoring and evaluation is patchy.

There are often no clear outcomes for community engagement activity. Where there are ‘targets’ for community engagement, these tend to relate to the numbers involved, rather than to the impact of the engagement on the quality of services (or, more widely, the quality of life).

13.7 The case studies that we have undertaken have identified great variety and diversity in the approaches to community engagement. It should be borne in mind that the ROAs have been in place for less than two years and that the arrangements envisaged in the ROA for community engagement are often not yet fully in place. The transition from the SIPs (which themselves had a lifespan of about six years) to the new arrangements for community planning and ROAs has not always been smooth. But there are signs of progress including:

- the development of strong community engagement structures at both a local and CPP level (for example the Civic Forum in Aberdeen)
- innovative approaches to engagement (for example the use of art in West Lothian and Fife)
- an increasing awareness and use of the National Standards for Community Engagement (for example the translation into local Standards in Stirling)
- the possibility that locality plans, developed by the community, will replace individual departmental service plans (for example in West Lothian)
- an increasing focus on equalities issues (for example the engagement of young LGBT people in Dumfries and Galloway).

13.8 In looking at the position in future years, Communities Scotland will wish to consider the extent to which the good practice that is currently being developed is being replicated more generally. And, most of all, will want to make sure that all the activity and processes relating to community engagement are having a real impact on people’s lives as a result of improvements in the planning and delivery of local public services.

Annex 1

Community Engagement Assessment (from CRF Performance Management Framework)

1	2	3
Each question is followed by some Standards from the National Standards for Community Engagement. Using these will help partnerships complete the self assessment exercise.	Score (1-5)	What evidence is there for the score you have given? You will find the indicators for the National Standards for Community Engagement useful in providing evidence
CPP uses the National Standards for Community Engagement to underpin its work		
CPP engages with a broad range of representative structures within the community including the most excluded groups (Involvement Standard, Working Together Standard, Working with others Standard)		
CPP uses a broad range of approaches to engage communities (Methods Standard)		Include a range of examples for different groups, including covering equalities dimensions and hard-to-reach groups
CPP provides relevant information needed for effective engagement (Information Standard, Feedback standard)		Include, for example, making information available in translations or alternative formats
CPP monitors and evaluates community engagement in the ROA (Sharing Information Standard; Support Standard; Feedback Standard; Monitoring and Evaluation Standard)		

CPP identifies resources for community engagement and continuous improvement (Improvement Standard; Support Standard)		
CPP improves public services in response to community priorities (Planning Standard)		
CPP refers to Community Learning and Development and Tenant Participation strategies to show how it understands these can support engagement		

- a score of 1 indicates that the CPP has little or no evidence to support the statement
- a score of 3 indicates that the CPP has some evidence to support the statement
- a score of 5 indicates that the CPP has strong evidence to support the statement.

Annex 2

Community Engagement Action Plan (from CRF Performance Management Framework)

1	2	3	4
Key barriers to having more effective community involvement in delivering the ROA	Planned action	Partners	How will you judge Success?

Annex 3

Community Engagement Assessment: 2006

	1. Uses the National Standards for CE to underpin its work	2. Engages broadly with community including most excluded groups	3. CPP uses a range of approaches to engage communities	4. CPP provides relevant information	5. CPP monitors and evaluates CE in the ROA	6. Identifies resources for CE and continuous improvement	7. Improves public services to meet community priorities	8. Refers to CLD and Tenant Participation	Average Score
Aberdeen	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	2.8
Aberdeenshire	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.0
Argyll & Bute	3.2	3.9	4.2	3	2.9	3.7	3.9	1	3.2
Clackmannanshire	5	5	3	3	3	4	4	3	3.8
Dumfries and Galloway	3.7	3.4	2.8	2.2	3	3.5	2.7	2.8	3.0
Dundee	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3.0
East Ayrshire	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	4.8
East Dunbartonshire	4	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	3.1
East Lothian	3	2	4	3	3	3	2	4	3.1
Falkirk	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2.5
Fife	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2.9
Glasgow	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2.9
Highland	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3.3
Midlothian	3	3	3	2.5	3	3	4	2	2.9
Moray	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	?	3
North Ayrshire	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	3.5
North Lanarkshire	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	4	2.8
Orkney	4.5	5	4	3	3	5	3	4	3.9
Perth and Kinross	1	4	3	2	2.5	2.5	2	1	2.3
Renfrewshire	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4.1
Scottish Borders	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	2.9
Shetland	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3.3
South Ayrshire	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3.0
South Lanarkshire	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3.5
Stirling	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4.3
Western Isles	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1.3
West Dunbartonshire	3	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	3.4
West Lothian	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3.3
Average Score	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.5	3.0	2.9	3.2
Mean	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	



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