

CONFEDERATION OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 - 2015



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Introduction

We have produced this plan to prioritise the work of the Confederation and the use of its resources for the period April 2010 – March 2015.

Our aim is to ensure that the CCG meets the needs of its members, communities and individuals, Funding bodies, tenants and all other stakeholders that we will come into contact with throughout the period. This plan has been formulated after a lengthy process by the Board and Staff of CCG and there will be a formal review annually. Operational plans will then be produced to minimise mission drift, to take account of any significant changes and to ensure we deliver our services strategically.

Over the 5 year lifespan of this Strategic Plan there will undoubtedly be many changes within the sector and the wider society and we have therefore incorporated a degree of flexibility so that CCG can be pro-active and responsive to these changing and emerging needs.

CCG Background

The Confederation was established in 1973 as an organisation to facilitate networking, co-operation and support for local community associations. It continues to be a strong and vibrant organisation that has worked hard over its 37 years to make Newry a better place to live and more importantly a place where its citizens are well placed to play their part in the civic and cultural life for which Newry and Mourne is well known.

In 1997 CCG relocated to Ballybot House, Cornmarket. This is a centrally located multi-purpose Resource and Information Centre and provides subsidised office accommodation and daycare facilities for approximately 20 Community & Voluntary organisations. Rental revenues received and development of our facilities, including the replacement of the Annexe building, contributes to the overall sustainability of the Confederation and to its work.

The services we provide to the local community have grown and developed and the community and voluntary sector now benefits from greater visibility and recognition of the valuable work that it undertakes.

The Confederation conducts its business in an open and transparent manner and our strict adherence to Good Governance and Accountancy practices has been recognised by the Department of Social Development. Our work is governed by a democratically elected Board of Trustees who themselves are representative of our membership. The Board sets the Strategic direction for the CCG, approves policy and ensures the accountability of the Chief Executive and staff in the work carried out.

Projects & Services

Currently the CCG's work focuses on a number of key services areas, delivered through its projects:

Information & Advice Services; we provide information and advice to a wide range of community and voluntary sector organisations and groups and aim to develop BBH as a one-stop shop for local communities.

Community Development ; we provide a team of CD workers (some located in local housing estates) who support & mentor local community associations, provide wide ranging programmes and courses with the objective of improving services and facilities in the area and build capacity within the community association.

Volunteering; We provide support to Volunteers through recruitment, training and placement within our own projects and promote and support the benefits of volunteering through our partnership with Volunteer Now and other volunteering organisations across Newry & Mourne.

Conference, meeting, office & retail accommodation; Through our Ballybot House headquarter premises, the CCG offers a range of excellent facilities primarily directed at the local community and voluntary sector.

Finance & Services; We provide financial, administration and human resources management and support to the CCG for the effective operation of its services and projects and to the wider Com/Vol sector.

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The Wider Environment

We cannot isolate ourselves from the impact of the environment in which we operate nor can we respond to all community needs resulting from an ever changing world . In developing this plan CCG has reflected on the many changes faced by the sector and have targeted our energy and resources in a constructive way to achieve maximum benefit for all our stakeholders. Below are those issues we feel are pertinent to our membership which we hope to address through our strategic aims and objectives.

Political Context

The NI power sharing government has demonstrated positive political development and this has coincided with social and economic changes. The pressure for change at all levels is increasingly being felt with the Community and Voluntary sector. Progress has been made in terms of the Government's relationship with the sector and a number of policy documents and reports have shown that the sector has an important contribution to make in terms of policy development. The "Taskforce" recommendations have been broadly engaged in the "Positive Steps" and "Compact" documents and there is currently a consultation on the "Concordat for Relationships with the Voluntary & Community sector"

Review of Public Administration (RPA)

Full implementation of RPA has been deferred (possibly until 2015) however it is likely that some powers may be devolved to local councils in advance of the 2015 time-table when it is planned that the current 26 local councils will be amalgamated into 11 "super councils". Newry & Mourne District Council is likely to be amalgamated with Down District Council. These new councils will have a much wider geographical and operational remit including roads, urban regeneration, rural development, community development, community relations and some aspects of planning , housing , economic development and tourism. They will also be responsible for developing community plans and for managing the development of the community planning process to create those plans.

We are also emerging from a conflict situation into a future which supports good relations regardless of differing religious beliefs and political backgrounds. The Shared Future agenda strives to create a society where people are more integrated, diversity is viewed as strength and where people have a common vision for the future

Economic Context

CCG welcomes the improvements in the economic prosperity of the Greater Newry area however there is considerable poverty among the low waged and part-time workers who are central to Newry's regeneration yet are often not real beneficiaries.

The downturn in wider the economy, impending cuts in funding to Statutory and Community and Voluntary sectors and the current recession are bound to have a significant impact on the CCG and on all of our stakeholders.

The problem of short term funding continues to blight the sector. There has also been significant changes to the funding environment where traditional grant funding is being replaced by partnership and collaborative working and where Letters of Offer are replaced with contracts and service level agreements. While offering opportunities for CCG and the sector in relation to income diversification and collaborations it also creates significant challenges and financial burdens.

Social Context

Alienation and isolation among and between communities is a major social problem in modern communities. Property prices have put home ownership beyond the reach of many resulting in a large private rental sector and often affecting community action. There has also been a significant increase in the numbers of people from BME and Irish Traveller communities residing in local areas and these differences in culture and understanding present challenges and opportunities for all.

Community development combats isolation and tackles misconceptions. Recognition by government to support community networks such as CCG to carry out this important work within local neighbourhoods is welcome.

The Volunteering agenda has had unprecedented support from Government and consultation on a Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland is underway. CCG encourages and supports voluntary action and aims to create active and responsible communities that are better placed to contribute to civic society.

Community Networks like CCG have a vital role to play in the provision of local support and encouragement in community development, working with local partnerships, and through various fora to tackle disadvantage.

Technological Context

Over the last number of years there have been unprecedented advances in IT and in methods of communication.

It is important to keep up with these changes to communicate with our stakeholders, improve our services and increase operational efficiency but it is also important to remember that these advances can also bring challenges to some stakeholders. Digital Exclusion is seen as a major contributor to social exclusion and for some this may reinforce and deepen existing disadvantage. Those who are most deprived socially are also least likely to have access to digital resources such as internet based services. It is therefore essential that access to these services is made available to all our stakeholders and that a range of communication and education methods is adopted.

The establishment of the Charity Commission will bring about significant changes within the structure and operation of the Community / Voluntary sector. Increasing emphasis will be placed on Good Governance at all levels for groups and organisations with charitable objectives and/or charitable status.

Strategic Aims & Objectives 2010 - 2015:

<p>Aim 1: To Advance the Community / Voluntary sector agenda through partnership with all sectors in a range of roles and levels</p>	
<p>Strategic objectives: Maintain and develop inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaborations.</p>	<p>Objectives to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding and shared vision among key local agencies through greater partnership and team working at all levels. • Meaningful engagement and interaction with NMDC, DSD, SHSCT, Chamber of Commerce, Trades Council, Community & Voluntary sector. • Active participation in Community Planning, Community Safety, Neighbourhood & Economic Renewal and Policy development.
<p>Aim 2: Engagement with Local communities to identify, assess and influence issues of concern and to achieve positive outcomes</p>	
<p>Strategic Objectives: Facilitate a number of general fora in Newry Facilitate Focus groups in relation to particular issues of concern.</p>	<p>Objectives to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge of Social and Economic Issues contributing to an agreed City, South Down and South Armagh Action Plan. • Greater participation by groups on issues affecting their communities. • Promote active participation in consultations, advocacy, and campaigning and policy development.

Aim 3: Provide Community Work Support to designated disadvantaged areas of Newry City, other areas of Newry City, South Down and South Armagh.	
<p>Strategic Objectives: Assist local groups with planning and implementation of Community Audits.</p> <p>Support the development of active Community groups by encouraging and Supporting good practice</p> <p>Assist Community & Voluntary groups in the development and implementation of programmes relevant to local areas.</p> <p>Promote the development and understanding of volunteering in local communities services to their communities.</p>	<p>Objectives to provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant research to identify local needs and to formulate an Action Plan to meet those needs. • Open and accountable community groups demonstrating good governance and best practice .Support and training on the roles and responsibilities of Management Committees, advice re Funding and strategic planning. • Access by local people to a broad range of programmes which improves their quality of life. • Increase participation by local people by providing support and supervision for volunteers. • Through best practice, recognition and training increase the the confidence and skill of volunteers to enable them to assist in the delivery of services to their communities

Aim 4: Promote and provide Community Education & Training to build the strengths and independence of Local groups	
<p>Strategic Objectives: Assess and meet the training needs of local groups on an on-going basis and ensure emerging needs are identified and catered for</p>	<p>Objectives to provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A planned, co-ordinated and facilitated comprehensive and flexible training programme.Training calendar published bi-annually and a training database maintained. • Continuous improvement of the knowledge and skills of the Community & Voluntary sector

Aim 5: Promote and develop Community-based Health & Well Being Initiatives.	
<p>Strategic Objectives: Collaborate with SHSCT in the delivery of a range Of health promotion programmes in the N&M area. Co-ordinate and manage the CCG's Older People's Community Project including: Good Morning & Good Neighbour Services Co-ordinate and manage the REACH programme in partnership with SHSCT across N&M area.</p>	<p>Objectives to provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier lifestyles through physical activity and raising awareness of issues that adversely affect our health. • Reduce social isolation, aid independent living, reduce fear of crime, improve health and well being of older people in our communities. • Improved capacity of individuals, family and communities faced with inequalities in health through disadvantage, ethnicity or disability to improve their health and wellbeing through interaction with and improvement of their environment.

Aim 6: Provide a range of services to promote a greater understanding of Community Development and the work/services of the CCG.	
<p>Strategic Objectives: Create and maintain a comprehensive database of all community & voluntary groups operating in the N&M area</p> <p>Design and development of IT systems as a tool for effective communication with members including an electronic community newsletter.</p> <p>Establish an electronic central information Hub to service the needs of C&V groups.</p>	<p>Objectives to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date contact details for all groups for the effective dissemination of information. • Communities can access a directory of groups for partnership work, sharing experiences, best practice and cross community work. • Effective distribution of current information and news provided on a regular basis to all groups on CCG database

<p>Ensure CCG is recognised as an organisation that delivers quality and effective services and that Ballybot House is seen as a centre of excellence.</p> <p>To engage with users at a wide range of levels and to continue to build an active membership.</p> <p>Staff and organisational development and training and review of roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Continuous improvement in Financial Management and contribution towards CCG sustainability by identifying funding opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sharing facility for local community groups. On-line learning opportunities for groups and community members. • Reduction in digital exclusion for disadvantaged communities and cost- savings in relation to IT hardware and software • Appropriate and cost effective use of IT to improve efficiency. • Monitor & Evaluate CCG and Ballybot Services, CCG systems, policies and procedures and ensure compliance and implementation of same. • Securing and identifying a range of funding options including income generation to finance the work of the CCG. • Maintain and develop a highly skilled staff team and Board of Management providing induction, development and training opportunities. • Promote the work of CCG and Ballybot House via local and regional media. • Provide suitable, comfortable and affordable office, retail and conference facilities. • Provide high quality “back-office” and Resource Centre support.
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Appendix 1 : Company Information

Registered Office	Ballybot House 28 Cornmarket, Newry Co. Down BT35 8BG
Auditors	Malone Lyncehaun, Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors 12 New Street, Newry, Co. Down BT34 1ED
Solicitors	Ciaran Rafferty 98 Hill Street, Newry BT35 6JD
Bankers	Bank of Ireland Trevor Hill, Newry
Company Registration No.	NI 22294
Inland Revenue Charity Reference:	XR 40558
Telephone	(028) 302 61022
Fax	(028) 302 60929
Email	info@ccgnewrycommunity.org
Website	www.ccgnewrycommunity.org

Appendix 2 : C.C.G. Board of Trustees (Executive Committee)

Chairperson:

Mr David Cunningham, Ballinacraig Community Association

Vice Chairperson:

Mr. Mark Crossey, Martin's Lane Community Association

Treasurer:

Mrs Mary Mc Camley, Carrivemaclone/ Lidrumliska Community Association

Executive Committee:

Brendan Cranney, Meadow / Armagh Road C.A.
Gerry Fay , Shopmobility
Jim Foster ,Mencap
Oliver Casey, Greater Linenhall C.A.
Ewan Morgan, Community Restorative Justice
Darren Thompson, Barcroft Community Association
Martin Kearns, Lisdrumgullion Cross Community Association
Rosemary O'Donnell, Citizens Advice Bureau
Annette Hughes, Ti Chulain

Newry & Mourne District Council Representatives:

Councillor Charlie Casey (SF)
Councillor Andy Moffett (UUP)
Councillor Gary Stokes (SDLP)

Co-opted Members :

Conor Patterson. Newry & Mourne Enterprise Agency
Bernard Boyle, Boyle & Co. Accountants
Mickey Brady , MLA
Gerry O'Reilly, GOR Software
Damian McKevitt, Newry Rainbow Community

Appendix 3 : CCG Vision, Mission & Values:

Vision

To create a powerful and inclusive community that will influence positive change

Mission

To support and encourage the development of voluntary action by communities and individuals and in so doing contribute to the creation of a powerful and inclusive community that will influence positive change

Values:

Respect

The CCG is committed to treat all associated with it with respect and dignity at all times.

Independence

The CCG will operate independently of political or religious influences and will maintain a non political and non sectarian stance at all times.

Open & Accountable

The CCG will carry out all its work in a spirit of openness, honesty, integrity and trust.

Excellence

The CCG strives to be a professional, caring and effective organisation and will work for the continuous improvement of its activities and services.