

Workshop Report: Edinburgh Transformation and Improvement Plan - Session 3: R2

Date & Location

Monday 18 March, 15:00 – 17:00, Chief Executive Board Room, Waverley Court

Attendees

Paul Lawrence, Deborah Smart, Gillie Severin, Michele Mulvaney, Daniel Greig, Paul Wilson, Leah Black, Biddy Kelly, Evelyn Henderson, Anita Aggarwal

Apologies

James Wood, Linda Irvine-Fitzpatrick, Mike Massaro Mallinson, David Happs, Dona Milne, Flora Ogilvie, Bridie Ashrowan

Overview

The session focused on the transformative work of the North Edinburgh Response and Recovery Group (R2), a collaborative initiative responding to community needs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This group represents a network of over 30 third-sector organisations, supported by local and national government bodies, to foster effective partnership working, knowledge sharing, and lasting positive change in North Edinburgh.

Key Objectives of R2

- Enhance operational and strategic collaboration among members.
- Enable earlier identification of issues and trends through shared information and joint reflection.
- Serve as a singular point of contact for local organisations seeking support, benefiting the North Edinburgh community.
- Develop community-led initiatives to tackle poverty and inequality and create "islands of excellence" to showcase successful models and solutions.

Principles

R2 asks its members to commit to serving North Edinburgh's communities' best interests, operating with authenticity, integrity, collaboration, and a focus on learning. The principles emphasise building trust, supporting community-led efforts, and encouraging cooperation over competition.

Current Framework

Discussions highlighted the current operational aspects, including a dedicated R2 Coordinator funded by the Scottish Government's Strengthening Communities Fund.

The network is not currently constituted; however, this is sometimes allowed for agility. The network meets six times a year and collects information from members through “in-form forms” to identify themes. It is supported by a management group that meets every four weeks. Several different governance models, e.g., development trust, are being investigated to understand how the group may operate.

Challenges and Next Steps:

Challenges include navigating complex systems, managing time and resources, and ensuring the network’s efforts to impact the community positively are evidenced. R2 faces challenges such as balancing individual organisations' needs with collective aspirations, resource limitations, and establishing trust and leadership. The group plans to build trust with public sector colleagues, measure the R2 network's impact, share learning across the city, and use this knowledge to influence systemic change.

Key Points for Consideration

- There is an opportunity to adopt a more strategic approach to addressing current needs and future planning. The information gathered from the network has allowed discussions with the public sector about critical issues in the area and helped create a shared understanding of the issues
- The network provides a collective voice representing its members and the broader community.
- The model fosters better connections and understanding among members
- Opportunity to seek collaborative funding opportunities.
- The network may provide opportunities for efficiencies, such as the collective buying power of member organisations in purchasing food
- Significant capacity is required at all levels to participate in the network. There is a requirement for a lead partner to facilitate and “drive the bus.”
- The north of Edinburgh has a vibrant and active community and voluntary sector. The model may not look the same in other areas. It was suggested that a more local neighbourhood model driven by a trusted community member, e.g., the local GP, may be more appropriate depending on the community infrastructure.
- Cross-party political support and engagement were influential in establishing R2
- Most common themes identified from the network were cost of living, mental wellbeing, and housing

This session underscored the vital role of collaborative frameworks like R2 in addressing community needs, highlighting the potential for such models to inspire broader transformation and improvement initiatives across Edinburgh.