

Inaugural Gathering of the Almond Neighbourhood Network

Wed 15th May 2019, Muirhouse Millennium Centre

Groups & Organisations Present:

G. Wylie	:	Almond Mains Initiative / Forget Me Not Garden
D. Williams	:	Cramond Kirk
K. Malone	:	Cramond Kirk
L. McIntosh	:	Queensferry Care in the Community
A. Ramsay	:	Muirhouse Salvesen Community Council
I. Browning	:	Friends of Granton Castle Walled Garden / Friends of River Almond Walkway
J. Wightman	:	Ratho and District Community Council
J. Davidson	:	Muirhouse Millennium Centre
M. Dhall	:	Edinburgh Diwali
P. Vaughan	:	Gateside Residents

Also in attendance:

Peter Strong	:	CEC North West Locality Manager
George Norval	:	CEC NW Housing Manager
Scott Donkin	:	CEC NW Lifelong Learning Service Manager
Helen Bourquin	:	CEC NW Lifelong Learning Service Manager
Elaine Lennon	:	CEC NW Lifelong Learning Development Officer

Introduction:

The following slides are the points Peter covered on the night, along with additional information.

The discussion has identified some very useful points to be considered and could help to develop the network in terms of how it might operate going forward.

Links are provided where more information or other documents might be helpful.



Almond Neighbourhood Network



Peter welcomed those that had managed to make it along to the newly established Neighbourhood Networks. He explained that the purpose of these gatherings, was to invite all known community groups and voluntary organisations from across the network areas to give them greater opportunity to get involved in this new way of working and highlighted that this was the very first step in the road ahead that will help to develop the Neighbourhood Network. He added that whilst there were interested people present, over 100 individuals had viewed the invitation and none had asked to be removed from any further information. It was suggested this provides a positive platform on which the network could be developed and encourage more participation as it moves forward.



What is tonight about?

The session will cover:

- **Community Planning**
- **Neighbourhood Networks**
- **Next Steps**



The key areas of the session were outlined and Peter asked that any questions could be kept to the end of the presentation as it could be that some might be answered as we move along – although there was a bit of presenting information, the main point of the evening was to discuss what people wanted to get out of the NN so it worked for them.



What is Community Planning?

Community planning is about how public bodies work together, and with local communities, to design and deliver better services that make a real difference to people's lives, especially those that need the services most.

Scottish Government



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Peter provided some background to Community Planning and, how it links to the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#). Community Planning aims to bring together statutory agencies, third sector and communities to work together to identify and improve circumstances for communities, but especially those people furthest removed from achieving positive opportunity. Whether that be around health, access to employment, physical environment, learning, safety, involvement in decision making etc.

Peter stressed that whilst there is a legislative requirement to undertake Community Planning, all partners are fully committed to the process and are actively seeking to be involved. To make the NN work for everyone there needs to be trust between the service providing partners and community organisations.

Across the North West locality, it is known that there are higher levels of poverty and inequality in some areas than others however, the commitment from the [Edinburgh Partnership](#) is that the development of the Neighbourhood Networks needs to ensure that we can identify and tackle issues across all areas. Therefore, based on the old Neighbourhood Partnership boundaries, four Neighbourhood Networks will be established.



- **Single service issues**
- **Individual issues or complaints**



- **Community priorities for improvements**
- **Crime trends and community priorities**
- **Access to health services**
- **Employment, further education and relevant training**
- **Listening to communities and improving services**
- **Tackle poverty and inequality**



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Continuing with what is Community Planning, Peter highlighted that (left hand box) the Neighbourhood Networks should not be a platform for individuals or organisations to raise single issue items e.g. pot holes, concerns with CEC service performance, Police responses to specific incidents etc. It should also not be regarded as a platform to raise individual issues or complaints about specific services as each partner will have their own systems for dealing with this.

The box on the left highlighted the type of discussions and areas for development that should form part of the Community Planning process. Peter spoke through each of the examples to highlight how things could be developed as a result of working closer together, promoting common issues and concerns and then sharing available resources to create improvements.

- Community priorities for improvements:

Peter highlighted that the Council (as one partner) have committed funds in the past to support local priorities for investment which weren't city-wide priorities, and that these decisions had been taken through the (now defunct) Neighbourhood Partnerships. Discussions are underway to continue that commitment to strengthening influence and prioritising capital investment at a local level, and the Council was keen to see if other funds for physical improvements could be decided by those involved with the networks;

- Crime trends and other community priorities:

Work with the police to better understand where known issues are taking place, help build intelligence and create priority areas for action e.g. trends around housebreaking, anti-social behaviour etc. Peter indicated that the Police currently attend Community Council meetings and there is potential for this to be built on in terms of widening connections etc through the networks.

- Access to health services:

When undertaking wider consultation around the development of the Locality Improvement Plan, Health services and improved access, particularly to GP services was highlighted as a key concern across the locality. This type of engagement highlights that whilst the network should not be a forum for individual issues, it does provide a platform to highlight common issues, potentially affecting large numbers of communities that should then be addressed.

- Employment, further education and relevant training:


This can affect all parts of the locality in different ways and it is important that we can work together with as many relevant organisations as possible to provide opportunities for people to access positive outcomes. The networks can help identify new initiatives or issues across the locality and ensure key providers such as colleges can inform communities of opportunities.

- Listening to communities and improving services:

Networks must provide greater opportunities for wider engagement to ensure services are aware of issues that may be affecting large parts of the community. With reducing budgets and resources, services can no longer rely on data and be located far away from the issues and make decisions, they must engage with communities to ensure the services developed or redesigned are fit for purpose.


- Tackle Poverty and Inequality

This is the overall aim of Community Planning and by working better together, co-designing services and adapting to local issues:- communities, organisations and statutory services will help tackle some of the wider issues preventing some members of our community achieving more positive outcomes in life.



Community Planning in Action!

- **Bo'ness Road Pedestrian Crossing, Parking bay in Pennywell gardens, Gateside Hub**
- **Bonfire related crime and ASB**
- **Review GP appointments**
- **MCR Pathways in Craigroyston High**
- **YouthTalk**
- **Funding Ferryfair, Kirkliston Gala, Youth games, North Edinburgh Arts, Millennium Centre's LIFT project**



Peter indicated that Community Planning has been underway in Edinburgh for some time and the previous Neighbourhood Partnerships were the local iteration. Through the Neighbourhood Partnerships and other working groups these examples showed how Community Planning could result in positive local outcomes.

The first bullet point relates to how funding has been prioritised locally to improve physical space and create community improvements. The funding was provided by the City of Edinburgh Council to support Neighbourhood Environment Projects and had two distinct funding sources. The first was provided to support capital projects relating to roads and footpaths and the other was provided via the Housing Revenue Account (CEC Tenant Rents) which was more restricted to improvements in Council housing estates. Discussions are underway to continue these funds to support local priority setting making with networks agreeing projects etc.


The second bullet point highlighted joint working involving a number of agencies and departments to prevent any escalation of the issues experienced in communities in North West during bonfire season 2017. Joint initiatives and resources aimed to prevent anti-social levels of activity and there was work undertaken to engage with large numbers of young people via schools and youth work activity. This meant that 2018 was a well-managed experience and all communities had a safer bonfire season.

Bullet point three relates to some of the outcomes from the development of the [Locality Improvement Plan](#) (Item 7 in link) referred to earlier where Peter went on to explain that whilst all GP surgeries are essentially private contracts, across North West all GP practices had agreed to work closer together to look at appointments practice with a view to identifying what works well to both improve patient experience and to reduce the levels of missed appointments.

Bullet point four highlighted Community Planning in action whereby the process should follow the principles of engage, listen, design, plan and deliver. YouthTalk follows these principles where as many young people (agreed age group) are encouraged to promote their views and concerns around activities and facilities and anything else they feel affects them in their community. This leads to a more detailed dialogue with services, the community and decision makers where young people identify where positive change could happen. These are then established as pledges and are then delivered by the relevant agencies. In Almond this had been supported by identifying funding to take young people's priorities forward.

The final bullet point provided a brief overview of the type of projects and events that can be funded via the Community Grants Fund. This is provided by the City of Edinburgh Council and was managed through the previous Neighbourhood Partnerships. The Council has continued its commitment to the grant and has agreed it should now be managed through Neighbourhood Networks.


The point of all of the examples is that they wouldn't have happened without local Community Planning.



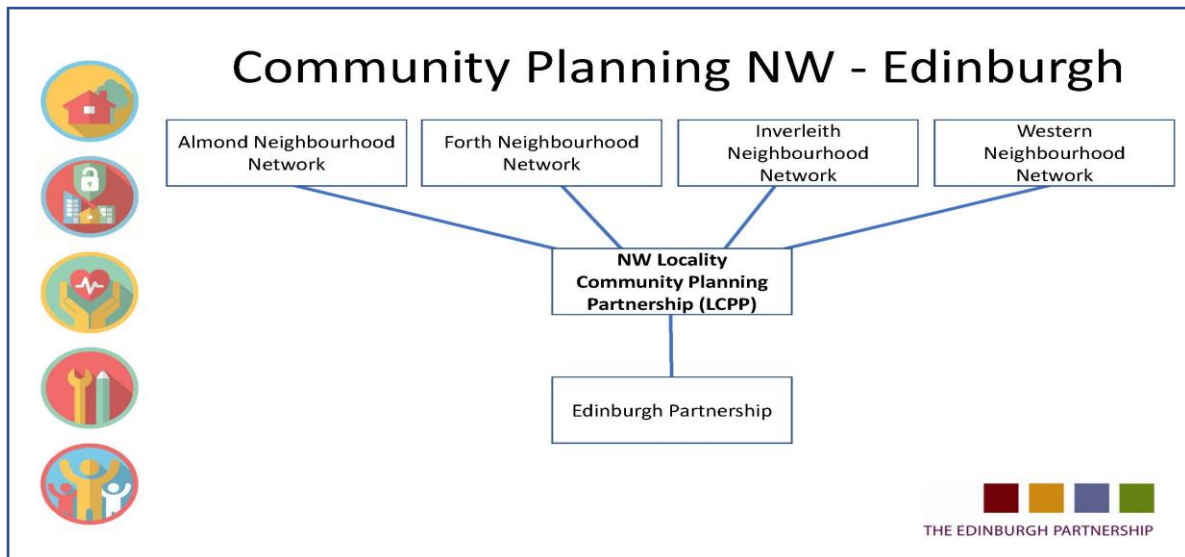
Who needs to be involved?

The participation of and with communities lies at the heart of community planning, and apply in the development, design and delivery of plans as well as in the review, revision and reporting. The 2015 Act and this guidance make it clear that consultation is no longer enough and that Community Planning Partnerships and (community planning) partners must act to secure the participation of communities throughout.

Scottish Government – Community Planning Guidance



Peter explained that alongside the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, [the Scottish Government provide guidance to support how aspects of the act should be interpreted](#) or followed. The slide highlighted the references to how communities should be involved and the Edinburgh Partnership have instructed those responsible for helping to develop the delivery of Community Planning to ensure that community involvement is as wide as possible. Peter was keen to reiterate that the guidance provided clarity that any local organisation whether formally constituted or not could get involved, and that the statutory agencies involved are not just doing it because they have to, but are committed to working with wider communities, including local voluntary organisations and the 3rd sector.

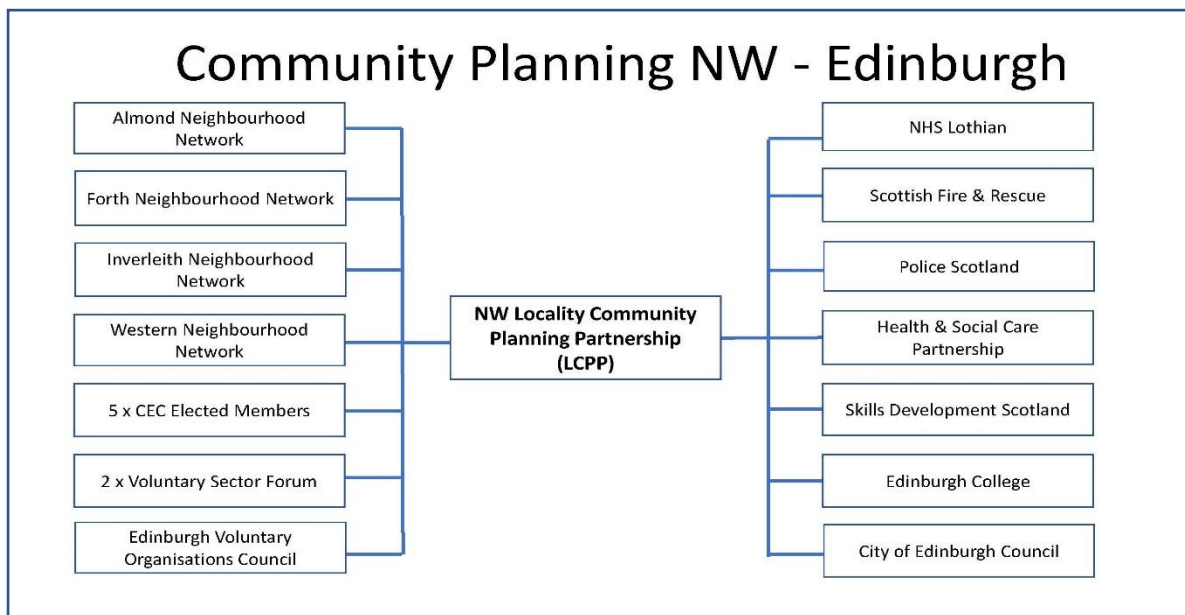


The structure – every process requires structure and it was highlighted that the Neighbourhood Networks link to the Edinburgh Partnership via the to be established Locality Community Planning Partnership (LCPP). Peter had highlighted previously that the Locality would have four Neighbourhood Networks and each would be represented in different ways at the LCPP. (More about this in the next slide). Peter added that the structure has been deliberately inverted to ensure the process recognises the importance of the networks and the role they have in promoting the views of communities in the process, and that the Edinburgh Partnership deliberately hadn't been prescriptive about how Neighbourhood Networks should operate.

Edinburgh Partnership – This is the Community Planning Partnership for the city and involves a wide range of statutory agencies at senior manager level and oversees the delivery of a city wide Local Outcomes Improvement Plan or Community Plan. The main aims of the Community Plan are to ensure people have enough money to live on, access to work learning and training opportunities, and a good place to live.

The Edinburgh Partnership also has three strategic groups that work at a city-wide level to support the delivery of:

- Community Learning & Development Plan;
- Children's Services Plan;
- Community Safety Plan.








The North West Locality Community Planning Partnership (LCPP) will involve a range of organisations and community based organisation.

The column on the right hand side of the slide provides information about the statutory services to be involved. One representative from each.

The left hand column provides information around the 'community' or representative organisations to be involved. This includes 1 community representative from each of the networks, 2 third sector representatives from each of the two voluntary sector forums in North and West of the locality, 1 elected member from each of the Council wards and a representative from the Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC).


The LCPP has yet to meet and the Edinburgh Partnership agreed that it wouldn't meet until such time that the community representative aspect had been completed. The Edinburgh Partnership has asked that one of the first tasks for the LCPP is to review the Locality Improvement Plan with a view to making it more robust in terms of outcomes and delivery.



Developing the Network How should it work?

DISCUSSION

- **Promote issues you feel could be tackled or improved through partnership working;**
- **Help to influence the Locality Improvement Plan and the City LOIP;**
- **Participate in decision making around grants and other funds**
- **Act as a body for local consultations;**
- **Share information and promote best practice**



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Peter indicated that the slides had provided a very quick overview of how Community Planning works and the purpose of establishing Neighbourhood Networks and understood that it was a lot to take in.

The meeting then moved to open discussion around the presentation and how the network could be developed and how it should work. Peter added that clearly there were over 100 people had viewed the invitation and it was important that any discussion is circulated to the wider network mailing list highlighting the suggestions or concerns etc put forward at the gathering.

The discussion areas included:

- **Promote issues you feel could be tackled or improved through partnership working;**
- **Help to influence the Locality Improvement Plan and the City LOIP;**
- **Participate in decision making around grants and other funds**
- **Act as a body for local consultations;**
- **Share information and promote best practice**

1. Attendance:

- How do we get a wider range of groups to attend?
- Community Councils are good focal point for smaller groups looking for info on range of issues such as funding
- Concern that NNs might be too large to have meaningful discussions and make decisions
- Need to rebuild trust in CEC and other Partners which has been damaged by recent reviews and changes. How do we change mindsets and perceptions to stress that Partners really want to make this work?

2. Meeting format:

- Are evening meetings only way? Daytime meetings / lunchtimes with food / early evenings with food might encourage more families and young people?
- Round table best for real discussion
- Themed meetings / events to enable those with interest / expertise to opt in
- Need to use a variety of methods
- Bimonthly?
- Create a template of what info we need at least 2 months in advance of meeting so that Community Councils and other groups can liaise with their members / users etc to feed back

3. Communication:

- Communication is key. Will all households be receiving a simple newsletter outlining changes / key contacts in Partner agencies and key groups such as Community Councils. If this has key dates and themes for year, people can plan and are more likely to attend
- How will Edinburgh Partnership communicate their communications and social media strategies so that they are understood and known to real people?
- Can we send thoughts from this evening round other groups in a simple questionnaire to gauge interest and agree way forward?
- Social media is great but doesn't reach everyone. Focus on us as community groups to reach out as we know our communities
- NP websites have disappeared. Will these be replaced?

4. Miscellaneous:

- Should there be at least two community reps from NNs on the Locality Community Planning Partnership (LCP) rather than only one?
- These networks should enable sharing of good practice on strategic issues and areas of commonality

- How do we prioritise the plethora of issues that may be brought to these meetings?
- How will we tackle cross-boundary issues?



Peter hoped that in the coming months, the Networks will evolve and it is likely that lots of suggestions will come from all four Networks as they meet in the next couple of weeks. All of the discussion, presentation and narrative will be circulated back out to those included on the Network invite list. Peter indicated that every effort has been made to include groups known to us and it would be appreciated if those involved could also help identify other groups that should be involved. Again, it is likely this will build over time.

The immediate action required is that of identifying the community Network representative to the Locality Community Planning Partnership and begin to identify how we work with communities and groups to create the networks in a way that responds to the challenges presented as part of the discussion.

Nomination packs will be circulated to all invited community groups in the last week of May for any nominations to be returned by the end of June. The pack will include details about the process but essentially, if there is more than one nomination, the process will move to an election and all community organisations will be asked to vote for a rep, with the one with the most votes being selected to represent Almond community groups on the North West Locality Community Planning Partnership. If required, voting will take place from 5th July to 16th August with the successful nominee being reported shortly afterwards.

The aim is that LCPPs will meet towards end Aug / start Sept.

Peter closed the session by thanking those that came along for their time and contributions to what had been a very positive session with a great deal of useful feedback.