

# **NEWCASTLE PARTNERSHIP INNOVATION GROUP**

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 12.30-2.30pm**

**Meeting to be held at Swan Room, Committee Room,  
Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne.**

## **AGENDA**

## **TIME**

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|---|-------|
| 1. Declarations of Interest                       | 12.30 |
| 2. Apologies for absence                          | 12.30 |
| 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2008 | 12.35 |
| 4. Matters arising                                | 12.40 |
| 5. Community Empowerment Framework                | 12.45 |
| 6. Any other business                             | 2.15  |
| 7. Date and time of 2009 meetings                 | 2.25  |



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## Newcastle Partnership Innovation Group

2 December 2008  
(3.00 pm – 4.30 pm)

### Present:

Councillor David Faulkner	- Newcastle City Council (In the Chair)
Steve Whitley	- Community Voice
Anne Mulroy	- Director, Bridging Newcastle Gateshead
Councillor Nick Forbes	- Leader of the Opposition
Sue Kenney	- Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (Deputising for Ruth Abrahams)

### In Attendance:

Charlie Hughes	- Co. Director, Newcastle Partnership
Paul Rubinstein	- Assistant Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council
Paul Gallagher	- Co-ordinator, Newcastle Partnership
Simon Underwood	- Head of Social Exclusion, Newcastle City Council
Elaine Campbell	- Democratic Services, Newcastle City Council

Report	Discussion/Decision	Responsible Officer
1. Declarations of Interest	The process for Declarations of Interest was noted.	
2. Apologies for Absence	Councillor J Shipley, Ifty Khan, Oisin McNamara and John Dallinson	EC
4. Summary of the meeting held on 8 April 2008	<p><b>AGREED</b></p> <p><b>Matters Arising:-</b></p> <p>1. <b>Urban Regeneration Programme</b></p> <p>The Chair queried whether any progress had been made in relation to reporting on the outcomes particularly in respect of engaging communities.</p> <p>2. <b>Regional Participatory Budgeting Event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This had taken place on the 15 May and had been well supported.</li> </ul>	Oisin McNamara

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chair queried where responsibility for taking PB forward lay, in particular the debate around PB and mainstream budgets.</li> <li>▪ A vehicle was required to bring together the relevant agencies to start that debate, and gather views and commitments from those agencies delivering local services, particularly in the context of the duty to involve.</li> <li>▪ The Chair requested that this Group take a lead and arrange an initial discussion between relevant agencies to take place by the end of February 2009.</li> </ul> <p>3. <b>The Joint Response to the Government's Draft National Strategy on Participatory Budgeting</b> - noted</p>	Charlie Hughes
5. Community Empowerment Framework (Draft)	<p>The Head of Social Inclusion introduced the report and invited comment. Subject to the views and/or endorsement of this Group it was intended to submit the framework to the Newcastle Partnership Strategic Board at its December meeting.</p> <p>During the ensuing discussion, a number of issues were raised as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There was agreement to the general approach and whilst it was crucial that the framework was comprehensive there was also a requirement for a shorter/simpler product for circulation to the wider audience. This was acknowledged although it was pointed out that the framework covered a wide range of activity and therefore inevitably would be extensive.</li> <li>▪ The key elements of the framework would include an introductory section, some commonly agreed definitions and the reason why it was considered necessary to develop such a framework – primarily to better empower communities in the city and to improve standards among partner agencies and encourage all partner agencies to sign up to the key principles and standards.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Chair as an initial view suggested the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The framework should clearly state from the community perspective how they themselves wished to be engaged and how they would hold agencies to account.</li> <li>- How performance would be measured in terms of empowerment/engagement.</li> <li>- How effective/efficient governance would be resourced.</li> <li>- Sections of the framework should be removed and attached as appendices.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ A member commented that in his view the framework ought to address how communities (particularly marginalised communities) would be supported to increase their skills/capacity to engage with democratic process. There was a question around the level of resources available in the local system, how these were currently deployed and how they might be deployed in the future.</li> <li>▪ The framework should also provide opportunities for improved communication and co-ordination, not only between statutory agencies but also voluntary and community sector organisations.</li> <li>▪ It was acknowledged that some discussions were already ongoing with NCVS around the concept of a network of networks although additional support may be required.</li> <li>▪ There were also issues around the focus on ward governance, community leadership and the role of elected members.</li> <li>▪ The Chair advised that a report was to be submitted to the Executive in December around community empowerment and neighbourhood management highlighting the linkages between the two and giving a commentary upon the place shaping role of elected members and partners. This was very much an initial scoping</li> </ul>	

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	<p>document but did it did make reference to neighbourhood charters and endorsed the principle that this area of work must be developed to the satisfaction of both the LSP and the City Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="488 479 1252 768">▪ It was confirmed that the issue of the £275k contribution from the LSP to the Community and Voluntary Sectors to maintain capacity in those sectors to engage with LSP structures was mostly resolved. This was however a much wider issue around identifying the wider resources to promote a successful empowerment strategy.</li> <li data-bbox="488 801 1252 1350">▪ Greater clarity was required within the framework around what power was to be devolved, to whom and with what legitimacy and how that would be enacted. There were also issues around accountability. It was suggested that much of what had been discussed thus far was essentially good customer service, although part of the framework must be about knowing who to contact and that contact being respectful and in due course providing feedback. People felt more empowered when treated with respect. What would be the measure of whether an individual or organisation felt more empowered?</li> <li data-bbox="488 1384 1252 1821">▪ There ought to be a reference to the duty to involve, whilst making a commitment to move towards empowerment - with clarity around the who and the what referred to above and giving an indication where resources to support that activity would come from. What model of empowerment would be adopted – how would it resolve conflicts/tensions between communities of geography, interest or identity or competing priorities. The framework must address these issues or at least pose questions that would lead to them being addressed.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It was acknowledged that all these issues could make the framework very complex, again highlighting the requirement for a short, plain english summary which was easily understood. If the framework was too “theoretical” it would lack credibility.</li> <li>▪ There needed to be a greater clarity around the definition of empowerment and what this meant in Newcastle specifically. There was a question as to whether this would indeed result in a true “handing over of power”.</li> <li>▪ The framework should recognise the key principle of a greater personalisation of public services tailored to local needs – greater dialogue around the process. Potentially focusing on the extent to which communities were empowered to influence their local services.</li> <li>▪ The Chair commented that his own personal view over the next five years would be around each neighbourhood having its own decision making powers and resources made available (e.g. deciding upon the allocation of resources around green spaces/parks). However, he equally acknowledged that some communities may be more interested in simply influencing local services and on that basis there had to be an element of flexibility.</li> <li>▪ Another important element was the dissemination of knowledge, empowering through interactive techniques, making greater use of existing web sites for example.</li> <li>▪ There was a need to reference in ongoing work around social capital emerging from the recent Community Foundation event.</li> </ul> <p>In summing up, the Chair suggested that the following issues needed to be addressed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is meant by empowerment? – a clear definition for Newcastle.</li> <li>▪ Why do we want to empower.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Who do we wish to empower.</li> <li>▪ How would that occur.</li> <li>▪ The framework should be developed within the context of the “duty to involve” but recognising that Newcastle wished to go further down the route of empowerment.</li> </ul> <p>Taking all of these comments into account it was agreed that the framework needed to be re-assembled, the language/terminology addressed and the core body shortened.</p> <p>In terms of what happens next and taking into account all the comments made there was a consensus that more time was required and therefore it was:-</p> <p><b>AGREED:-</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the framework be received and revised taking into account the views expressed by the Innovation Group.</li> <li>2. The revised framework be resubmitted to the January meeting of the Innovation Group and the subsequent meetings of the Delivery Board/Strategic Board.</li> </ol>	Charlie Hughes/Simon Underwood
6. Review of Role and Membership of the Innovation Group	<p>The Director introduced the report as set out. A number of comments were made as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There was a general consensus for the approach outlined around the brief and role of the Group – including the potential to be a clearing house – signposting topics to other parts of the partnership structure where appropriate.</li> <li>▪ There was an agreement to the work plan outlined for 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to get the Community Empowerment Framework established</li> <li>- identify specific areas the Partnership particularly wants to concentrate on and act as a Think tank to research best practice, promote innovation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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	<p>- towards the end of the year to review how the Partnerships new structure is working</p> <p>This would need to be subject to the approval of the Strategic Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Strategic Board/Delivery Board and theme leads could be invited to identify topics they consider the Innovation Group could usefully follow up.</li> <li>▪ In terms of membership this required further discussion but the following points were noted:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private Sector representative was required (to be followed up with Neil Barker).</li> <li>- There were opportunities to co-opt individuals for a particular piece of work as considered necessary.</li> <li>- Clarification be sought around higher/further education sector representation.</li> <li>- Future community and voluntary sector representation also be clarified.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>AGREED:-</b> The Director to provide a proposed membership (including Chair) and list potential topics to the next meeting).</p>	<p>Charlie Hughes</p> <p>Charlie Hughes</p> <p>Charlie Hughes</p> <p>Charlie Hughes</p> <p>Charlie Hughes</p>
7. Date and Time of Next Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scheduled for the 19 January 2009 at 12.30 pm.</li> </ul>	All

# **Innovation Group** **Meeting dates 2009**

Meetings to be held at Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne

Monday 19 Jan at 12.30-2.30pm

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2-4pm

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2-4pm

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2-4pm