



How Newcastle Healthy City (NHC) intends to create and develop a Standing Assembly in Newcastle.

I INTRODUCTION

- I.1 NHC has a history of excellence in supporting and developing community led initiatives. A core part of our work is encouraging partnerships and participation from hard to reach out to groups. We are the hub of a network of networks – real relationships built over time with citywide groups and communities through existing Newcastle Healthy City projects (Deaflink; HAREF; Carers Centre; Quality of Life Partnership; Banwaste; Community Food Initiative; Action for Health; Community Empowerment Network). We have an inclusive and engaging approach to our work, building collaborative relationships with stakeholders with effective communication and information sharing. We propose to bring the strengths of the NCEN work into the core of NHC and build on these sturdy foundations.
- I.2 We were involved in developing the Infranet, which involved four infrastructure support organisations (NCVS; EEDCA; WECDC and NCEN), working together. Each of these partners, whilst sharing key principles, developed in a way which was responsive to the communities they served. The Infranet provided training and development opportunities, local consultation events; support to community voices; information and representation support. A crucial aspect was to ensure that the LSP had access to the views of the community sector and vice versa.
- I.3 NCEN has helped to create a more vibrant community sector in the city where representatives from the community sector were supported to participate in the LSP and other central and local government initiatives. NCEN and the Infranet Partners fulfilled and exceeded all their targets agreed through the LSP and funded by NRF. The Infranet perhaps failed to communicate the value and successes of their work.
- I.4 A decision was made in 2007 to review the involvement of the Voluntary and Community Sectors resulting in the Langley Report. The Langley Report identified three areas where the voluntary and community sectors can engage in the local partnership arrangements. These are through Ward Committee's; s/election as a Voluntary and Community Sectors Representative administered by NCVS and through a Standing Assembly (SA). A key role for the SA would be to involve, inform and engage with communities. The recommendation was that NHC, with the CDU, convene a SA in Newcastle.

- 1.5 The SA has a significant potential for development. The White Paper *‘Communities in Control: real people, real power’* sets out an agenda to *”enhance the power of communities helping people up and down the country to set and meet their own priorities”* (Foreword by the Prime Minister)
- 1.6 We see the SA as a significant mechanism to assist the LSP and the Council take forwards the agenda set out in *‘Communities in Control’* including implementing the new *‘duty to involve’* stressing the need to provide information, consulting and involving citizens.
- 1.7 The White Paper highlights the importance of recognising that every place is different and that local communities need to be able to set their own local priorities and promote local innovation.
- 1.8 We believe that NHC is well placed to provide the skills and experience needed to develop the SA and provide good infrastructure support to enable and empower the voice of the community through encouraging widespread participation and involvement. Equally, we acknowledge that this can only be achieved by working in true partnership with the communities concerned.

2 THE ROLE OF NHC

- 2.1 Whilst it is our view that NHC is best placed to take on this role we accept that we will need to extend and deepen our community engagement work and make better use of our existing programmes strengthening our role as the hub of a network of networks. This will require additional resources. The rest of this paper sets out how we would envisage doing this and the resources that we will require.
- 2.2 Externally
NHC will provide an infrastructure to *‘manage’* the convening of an SA. This is a continuous process of sharing information and co-ordination that will include:
- Collecting and disseminating information
 - Raising awareness of the SA and its role and promoting engagement in it
 - Working with the Community Development Unit to prepare and convene the meetings of the SA
 - Co-ordinating work carried out with the SA partners
 - Developing and managing systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the SA and the partners
 - Working with partners to identify issues for the SA to address
 - Developing a partnership with the NCVS staff to share information and resources and ensure effective co-ordination of the input to the LSP from the voluntary and community sectors
 - Ensuring there is an effective process for collating contact details (with the CDU and NCVS)
 - Serving the SA –, developing the agenda’s, writing reports, taking forward action from the SA etc.
 - Newsletter/communication updates
 - representing the views of the community sector where appropriate
 - Providing clear responses to consultation

- Ensuring that the SA links effectively with other engagement mechanisms in the City e.g. LINKs

2.3 Internally

We have a strong foundation to develop upon – a network of networks. Each of our current programmes work within many networks and forums in Newcastle and reaches many different communities. For example the Quality of Life Partnership is engaged with the older people in many forums and heavily involved in developing the older people’s strategic plan. NHC will extend our existing work to promote engagement in the SA through these programmes. .

This will require additional resources which will allow us to develop the capacity of existing programmes, share ideas, the wider policy context of our work and strategic joint planning and so make a more effective contribution to the work of the SA and the LSP.

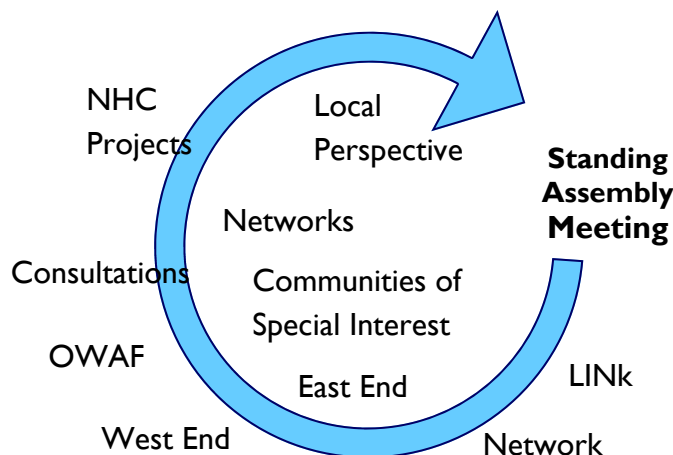
2.4 The management team at NHC will establish systems to ensure management support, clear communication and information sharing with these projects and their wider membership. The NHC will:

- Gather intelligence from all of its projects.
- Share our intelligence widely
- Utilise the knowledge and experience of all of the projects and their membership to inform the work of the SA.
- Involve wider partnerships/stakeholders.
- Foster growth in civic society.
- Provide a contact point for information and signposting regarding involvement in the LSP – the role of, and access to Ward Committee’s; V&CS Representatives etc through our promotional work.
- Develop and support new initiatives

2.5 This will require funding to increase the capacity of our core management and support of existing projects and the creation of two new posts - Community Engagement Manager and a Network Co-ordinator.

3 WHAT IS A STANDING ASSEMBLY?

3.1 Work is going on through the existing CEN to develop the concept of the SA and set out how it could operate. Therefore the following sections only describe with a broad brush what we believe a Standing Assembly could be.



3.2 A SA will be a citywide event open to anyone who lives or works in Newcastle and there will be a minimum of three citywide events each year.

3.3 To ensure engagement with the community the SA must be credible. It must have an issue led agenda and

incorporate the views, issues and concerns of local communities, especially groups of special interest.

3.4 We believe that the SA should build upon current structures and partnerships identifying the issues of the local communities can be achieved by attending events, reading consultation documents, understanding developments within the LSP, gathering local intelligence and listening.

3.5 We consider that the groundwork is essential to ensure that a SA is effective and able to demonstrate that it is an inclusive body that incorporates a wide range of views and perspectives. At the same time it must be able to ensure that it is able to put forward views that are based upon a consensus of views rather than representing only the views of a small minority.

3.6 It has the capacity to fulfil many functions, such as:

Act as a sounding board	Influence Decisions
Mechanism to monitor and evaluate	Provide an impetus for change
Publicity & Awareness Raising	Provide and disseminate information
Influence priorities for the LAA	Involvement
Raise Issues (Local, City Wide and Regional)	Identify community priorities
Provide accountability and scrutiny e.g. V&C Sectors reps on the LSP Strategic Board	Co-ordination (events, information, actions etc.); potential to contribute ideas to the Innovation Group
Contribute to and provide measurement of increase satisfaction in communities and individuals feeling involved and having an influence on decisions (National Indicator 4)	Consultation, Feedback and Updates; potentially engaging in Participatory Budgeting; develop a role within the Comprehensive Area Assessment

3.7 As agreed at the Strategic Board in September the Community Voices and CEN will present a paper to the December Meeting on the proposed principles and function of a Standing Assembly. We are working with them to develop this. We will consult with a wider focus group before this is taken to the Strategic Board. This document will identify:

- Aims
- Functions
- Organisation
- Membership
- Structure

4 TAKING AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

4.1 Area Based - We believe that it is essential to build partnerships with area based community programmes and projects to ensure that we involve people within their own areas of Newcastle. The INFRANET provides a base upon which we can build and we have an

agreement to work with a number of partners (Network North; Outer West Forum; West End Community Development Consortium and the East End community Development Alliance). This will allow a co-ordinated approach involving partners with specific expertise and knowledge of their areas.

- 4.2 These partners have indicated that they will require financial resources to ensure that they are able to contribute to the development of a SA. They have expressed a commitment to work with us and be involved in the development of the SA however the exact level of involvement will need to be negotiated when funding levels are confirmed.
- 4.3 Depending upon resources they will recruit staff to develop work within their community. These could be utilised to attend or encourage attendance at Ward Committee's, run events, consultation, provide information about community involvement and issues in their area, encourage people to attend and have input to the Standing Assembly. We envisage that there will be monthly meetings with the agencies co-ordinated by NHC to share and bring together our work.
- 4.4 By working together we believe that we can show the value of this partnership approach with a view to increasing resources for area based work. This proposal includes a request to resource £30,000 to each of these key agencies to resource their work and share information.
- 4.5 There will be people from minority groups who are integral members of existing geographical groups and networks, and there will be some people who want to take part in local networks rather than groups of identity. It is important to recognise that communities of special interest or difference such as Black and Minority Ethnic communities; Gay, Lesbian and Bi-Sexual groups; people with Disabilities need to be involved and included in the SA. This will involve ensuring barriers to access are addressed and work to overcome them. Several NHC programmes already work with communities of special interest, e.g. DeafLink works with the Deaf/ Deaf Blind and Hard of Hearing; HAREF works to address the inequalities in BME communities' access to health services and the CEN has been developing the BME Support Group and Network. We plan that the Network Co-ordinator would have a primary role in building links with other groups such as people with physical or learning disabilities.

5 HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST?

The anticipated costs are set out in two elements. Direct costs that would be incurred by NHC and costs to support the work of our area based partners.

5.1 NHC Costs

These would be additional costs on top of our existing core funding from the City Council and PCT and funding for existing programmes.

Earlier this year we had a review of the NHC, looking at aims, objectives and structure. It was recognised that NHC needed to increase the management and support capacity to the current programmes. The additional work from the development of the SA and the involvement and participation of all of our programmes requires an appropriate infrastructure.

	Amount
50% of CEO salary To provide leadership, direction, strategic work and representation at the highest level.	£26,500
50% of Deputy CEO To provide support, capacity building and co-ordination to NHC projects	£20,000
Community Engagement Manager Working with CDU and NCVS to plan and co-ordinate the SA. Information and Policy sharing. Representation, Networking, Planning. Based on Point 38-40 (inc. on costs and pension)	£36,559
Network Co-ordinator Working with Delivery Partners, co-ordinating information, Networking with groups of special interest. Monitoring and Stats and Administration. Based on Point 32-34 (inc. on costs and pension)	£31,146
Newsletter, Publicity, Website, Reports	£17,000
Rent, Rates, Heating & Lighting	£13,500
Running Costs – stationery, postage, audit,	£8,000
Total	£152,705

5.2 DELIVERY PARTNERS, 4 x £30,000 = **£120,000**

6 ACTION PLAN

6.1 We believe that provided the resources available to support this work can be agreed by the end of November 2008 it will be possible to get the SA up and running by the first quarter of 2009/10, so ensuring a relatively smooth transition from the current arrangements.

6.2 Phase I – November 2008 to April 2009

Recruitment of Staff

This will involve the NHC personnel sub committee planning the recruitment of the staff, including the NHC Chief Executive Officer (3-6 months).

Developing the model

1. Work with CDU to agree the sharing of resources and way of working together¹.
2. Negotiate and Confirm arrangements with delivery partners².

¹ working closely with the Community Development Unit to agree a way of working to deliver a SA. We would look for secondments from the Unit to help develop the SA. We would clarify access to resources such as administration and printing support to assist in the SA work.

3. Develop links with NCVS with a plan to work together e.g. share information on policy and strategies in a user friendly manner.

6.3 Phase 2 – March – June 2009

Running the SA

We will establish a SA Steering Group³ who will work with partners to develop the concept for the SA including:

- Conducting a mapping exercise⁴ looking at how it will work with existing partnerships and forums.
- Developing a marketing strategy for the SA
- How it will be delivered i.e. reflective and proactive sessions, speakers
- Sub groups to research and develop ideas, which could feed into forums within the LSP.
- Planning and scheduling of meetings to ensure that it is inclusive and involving
- Ensuring the SA fits into the strategic Board cycle of meetings.
- Identifying a clearly defined role and relationship within the LSP structure (Reporting mechanism from the SA to be submitted to the Strategic Board; Representatives from the Strategic Board would attend the SA; Mechanisms for monitoring and engaging with the Local Area Agreement Themes and Challenges).
- The SA's role in highlighting issues, gaps in service with relevant agencies and decision makers, how will the views of the SA will be channelled and presented to the Partnership and other bodies?

- 6.4 We do not suggest that the SA work will be linear and there will be involvement and overlap with other aspects for example working to encourage the Community Sector to engage with the NCVS and the representation of the V&C sector through this route and providing information and encouraging attendance at Ward Committee's, ensuring people are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

7 CONCLUSION

This proposal outlines the vision for the development of the SA in Newcastle. It is an interesting and exciting way forward with the potential to grow. Our involvement with partners such as the CDU and NCVS will encourage collaboration and communication. The vision of what can be achieved with further resources could lead to significant innovation and assisting Newcastle in its vision of community empowerment champions.

Heidi Jobling
Acting Chief Executive
October 2008

²We envisage that the established organisations will enter into a 'Venture Agreement', the contract used by Newcastle Futures with their partners, with NHC. The less developed area work can be 'hosted' at NHC.

³agreeing the Agenda and developing the work programme. Membership of this group will be inclusive of our Delivery Partners; CDU representatives; NHC Board Members and other community sector organisations. It will be chaired by a member of the NHC Board in the first instance.

⁴to explore and agree the functions and delivery of a SA ensuring that they are inclusive and responsive to individuals and agencies needs and expectations.