Better Community Engagement Demonstration Pilot in Moray

Development of a learning programme to support and improve practice in engaging with communities in Moray

Background information Pack and Action Plan For Community Planning Partners

December 2009

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1. Background information

In April 2008 the Scottish Government (SG) and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) issued a joint statement of commitment to community empowerment. In that statement community empowerment was defined as:

"a process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them."

Since issuing the statement the Government and CoSLA, working with the third sector (eg community and voluntary sectors), have been developing a community empowerment action plan. The plan covers several broad areas of work including:

- Highlighting examples of community empowerment
- Providing direct capacity building investment to community groups
- Investing in an integrated programme to develop skills, learning and networking in relation to community empowerment and engagement
- Developing support to help communities own assets
- Investing in improved support for community capacity building
- Working with Audit Scotland to agree how to assess progress on empowerment.

As part of the investment in an integrated programme to develop skills, learning and networking in relation to community empowerment and engagement, learning materials and programmes based on the Better Community Engagement Framework will be developed to meet the needs of those delivering community engagement in local areas. This will bring national coherence and ensure quality in training and learning around community engagement practice across Scotland.

"*Better Community Engagement: A Framework for Learning*" (Learning Connections, Communities Scotland, 2007) sets out a framework of competencies designed to enable the planning of learning in community engagement. The framework was developed to build the capacity of practitioners in community engagement and complements the *National Standards for Community Engagement* (Communities

Scotland, 2005) and *The Learning in Regeneration Skills Pack* (Scottish Centre for Regeneration, Communities Scotland, 2005) by focusing on the key area of community engagement and providing a resource specifically for curriculum development. As part of the Scottish Government's investment, it is the intention to develop a range of learning materials based on the *Better Community Engagement Framework*.

As outlined in *Better Community Engagement: A Framework for Learning*, the main purpose of community engagement practice is "*to develop, influence and promote policy and implement practice which engages communities as partners in change*". Nine primary elements which contribute to achieving this purpose were identified. These cover foundation elements and developmental elements.

Foundation elements

- Recognising diversity and designing inclusive ways of working
- Enabling communities to access resources and deliver services
- Working in partnership with agencies, organisations and communities
- Involving communities in planning services.

Developmental elements

- Negotiating with communities and partners
- Addressing conflicts and supporting change
- Using participatory evaluation
- Being a leader and encouraging leadership
- Supporting people and organisations to learn together.

In addition, the framework sets out the core skills and competencies that are relevant to community engagement practice including communication skills, process skills and planning and evaluation skills.

The framework as a whole represents a statement of high level and diverse competencies that would enable effective practice across the range of types and contexts for community engagement. The Scottish Government want to use the framework to support a programme of work that will contribute to building the capacity of the public services workforce by:

- Developing, implementing and evaluating models for effectively improving competencies and skills in community engagement
- Building an evidence base for further development.

2.   Project Aims

The aims of this project are to:

- Establish one or more working models of effective learning for community engagement across Scotland
- Evidence how structured learning could impact on or improve community engagement practice
- Provide an evidence base for future development of learning for community engagement.

3.   Project Delivery Model

The model for delivery of this project is a national development programme which will operate through a small number of local demonstration projects. There will be distinctive, but closely linked, national and local roles in developing and delivering learning materials and programmes.

At a local level, to better enable strategic development of the local demonstration project, it is expected that there will be input from local stakeholder organisations such as the Community Planning Partnership, Community Health Partnership or Community Learning and Development Partnership. It is expected that such

partnerships would have a sponsorship role to support development of the local demonstration project. This would facilitate shared ownership of the project aims.

To support national level involvement in the project an Advisory Group has been established with representation from relevant stakeholders. The Advisory Group will provide advice and support to the strategic development of the project. The project will involve:

- Developing training programmes and materials
- Working with local stakeholder organisations to plan, develop and oversee the local demonstration projects
- Supporting the delivery of learning, working with local learning providers
- Establishing a range of delivery models across the local demonstration projects
- Evaluating the progress and impact of all aspects of the project
- Disseminating learning and conclusions by a range of appropriate methods to stakeholders across Scotland in order to inform and stimulate learning, leading to improved practice in community engagement.

4.   Local Demonstration Projects
4.1   What are they?

It is anticipated that the Local Demonstration Projects will include local partnerships, agencies or projects, which currently provide community engagement training for staff, who would be interested in working with the Scottish Government to develop a range of learning products and tools, specific to their local needs, but that could be used or adapted for use on a national basis.

The number of local demonstration projects participating in Scotland will be limited to 10. The Scottish Government are keen to ensure as wide a representation as possible, for example, to cover:

- A mix of urban and rural areas
- A mix of big urban and smaller urban

- Whole partnership approaches and smaller scale, more local work
- A third sector, community-led piece of work
- Perhaps some multi agency work and some single agency work.

4.2   Expectations of Local Demonstration Projects

Whatever the focus of community engagement of the proposed project, a specified member of the Better Community Engagement Delivery Team will ensure that work taken forward as part of the overall project:

- Provides experience that will contribute substantially to continued improvement of learning to support community engagement across Scotland
- Promotes and enables continuing development of learning for community engagement in the Community Planning Partnership area concerned
- Contributes to tackling the inequalities in Scottish society through improving community engagement to enable people to have more influence over decisions and services that affect them.

5   Equalities

No-one should be denied opportunities because of their race or ethnicity, their disability, their gender or sexual orientation, their age or religion. This principle underpins all the work of the Scottish Government and is particularly important for the *Better Community Engagement Framework*. Equalities practice is an essential requirement for the implementation of the Framework and for the development of learning materials.

6   What the programme involves
6.1   Identifying and establishing local demonstration projects

Ten local demonstration projects have been established across Scotland and will form the local aspect of this programme.

The local demonstration project will work with the specified Better Community Engagement team member to establish and develop an action plan including, as a minimum:

- Aims and objectives
- Targets and key deliverables
- Schedule of activity, including meetings with local demonstration projects
- Roles and responsibilities of the Better Community Engagement team members and the local demonstration project.

The specified Better Community Engagement Team member for Moray is:

David Allan
Head of Programmes
Scottish Community Development Centre

6.2   Advisory Group

An Advisory Group for this project has been established by the Scottish Government with representation from relevant stakeholders to offer advice and support. It is expected that this group will meet twice a year until 31st March 2011.

The appointed Better Community Engagement Team member for Moray will provide an update to the Advisory Group at these meetings. This update includes a presentation on the progress of the work and a short written report for each local demonstration project.

6.3   Shared ownership

Engagement, shared ownership and partnership working with stakeholders at both local and national levels will be crucial to the success of this project. At a local level this will involve working with the local demonstration projects and local stakeholders

such as the local Community Planning Partnership. At a national level engagement with umbrella organisations such as CoSLA will be essential.

Moray Local Demonstration Project Steering Group

In Moray, a local steering group has been established to develop the activities of the local demonstration project. The membership of the group includes representatives of:

- Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Group (Cllr Eric McGillivray)
- Moray Community Councils
- Moray Area Forums
- Moray Equalities Forum
- Moray Village Hall Committees
- Moray Voluntary Services Organisation (MVSO)
- Moray Volunteer Centre.

Direct Support locally in Moray

- Moray Council Community Support Unit (Ian Todd, CSU Manager)
- Scottish Community Development Centre (David Allan, specified Better Community Engagement Team member)

Ian Todd, CSU Manager will co-ordinate and support the Moray Local Demonstration Steering Group members on a day to day basis. This will include facilitating meetings; ensuring steering group members are kept abreast of developments including distribution of minutes of meetings; providing reports to the Community Planning Partnership Community Engagement Group, Moray Council Communities Committee, and Moray Community Learning and Development Partnership, Moray Area Forum and Moray Joint Community Council and others. Other key Community Support Unit staff may be called to facilitate and support local pilot project activity in specific geographic areas in Moray alongside Community Planning Partnership

agency staff. This support role by Community Support Unit staff is in line with work activity which is already being progressed as part of their day to day responsibilities in supporting communities.

David Allan, the specified Better Community Engagement Team member has provided a communications brief which gives an outline of the project and specific details on the local demonstration projects activities. This brief has been provided to both local and national stakeholders. He has also supported the Moray Local Steering Group to assess the need and to develop an Action Plan for the programme. Further work will involve implementation of a series of local pilot activity projects that highlight and evaluate engagement practice leading to sustainable practice beyond the completion date of the Demonstration Project in Moray and also contributing to best practice nationally (Appendix A).

Better Community Engagement Team member Support Time for each Demonstration Site:

- Initial Meeting – 1 day
- Action Planning – 2 days
- Training Needs/Resources Analysis – 3 days
- Development of training materials – 5 days
- Delivery of training materials – 8 days
- Sustainability of learning opportunities – 5 days
- Monitoring and evaluation – 4 days

Engagement and progress

Working with the specified Better Community Engagement Team member and the Community Support Unit Manager, the Moray Steering Group will develop and implement an action plan for local level engagement with relevant stakeholders and training providers, to ensure shared ownership of the programme. It is essential that local stakeholders are included in the project from the beginning.

It is also essential that national stakeholders are kept up to date with progress on this project, including CoSLA, relevant voluntary sector intermediaries, the Improvement Service and other national groupings with a particular role in supporting community engagement, such as the Community Development Alliance Scotland (CDAS) and Community Learning and Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS).

A national engagement plan will be developed by the Scottish Government and an appointed contractor for the demonstration projects in Scotland to ensure shared ownership of the project with these national stakeholder organisations.

The Scottish Government will lead in engaging with the national stakeholders, issuing communications, arranging meetings including 2 national level events, and providing secretariat as required. This is to ensure that they are kept up to date with progress on this project and kept abreast of wider community engagement and community empowerment policies.

6.4   Development of learning and training materials

David Allan and Ian Todd, in conjunction with the Moray Steering Group members, will liaise with relevant local partners to develop learning and training materials for the Moray local demonstration project which will be based on the *Better Community Engagement* framework.
It is expected that this will include as a minimum:

- Conducting a needs analysis, working with the local demonstration project members and their stakeholders to:
    - Assess the existing range of training and learning materials and the current knowledge and skills of users
    - Identify learning and/or training needs.

- Developing learning and training materials which, where appropriate, build on existing resources in use locally and working in partnership with local training providers to develop these

- Ensuring that training providers liaise with the local demonstration project and with local stakeholders to ensure the appropriateness of materials and programmes.

6.5 Delivery of learning and training programmes

The specified Better Community Engagement Team member will work with training providers and local stakeholders to develop and implement a plan to facilitate the delivery of learning and training programmes for each local demonstration project. This plan may include assisting the local partners to develop learning programmes, utilise existing tools and materials and / or signposting to other organisations and services available.

6.6 Sustainable learning for community engagement

Based on the needs analysis and development of learning and training materials outlined above, the specified Better Community Engagement Team member, working with the local demonstration project members, will develop a plan to build local capacity to support learning for community engagement to ensure that learning for community engagement continues within the local demonstration project areas on a sustainable basis beyond the duration of the contract period.

It is anticipated that staff from partner agencies involved in the pilot engagement will cascade the engagement experience learned to their respective organisations and thus share the knowledge gained from the pilot project with colleagues.

6.7   Monitoring and evaluation

A two-tier monitoring and evaluation process will be conducted by the appointed contractor: one for the programme as a whole, and one for each local demonstration project.

6.8   Final report

The appointed contractor will produce and deliver a final written report on the programme which will include findings, conclusions and learning from the experience. This report will be issued to all stakeholders with an interest in and responsibility for community planning, community engagement and community learning practice, Community Learning and Development Partnerships and learning and training providers.

6.9 Moray Demonstration Action Plan November 2009

Overall Aims and Outcomes - Moray
Statement of need

There is a need to change the culture / understanding amongst agencies and community organisations in relation to community engagement. Community engagement needs to be second nature to statutory, voluntary and community based voluntary organisations and become embedded in their practice and activity where appropriate.

What needs to change and what will this change look like?
(Local Outcomes and Indicators)

Outcome 1
- Community Planning Partners and community based groups and organisations will engage more effectively with local residents and groups who face additional barriers.

- There will be a better understanding amongst Community Planning Partners and community based groups and organisations of who these residents and groups are.
- Frontline staff of Community Planning Partners and others, including community representatives will be better equipped to engage with local residents and groups who face additional barriers.

Outcome 2

- Community Planning Partners and community based groups and organisations will develop better shared understanding, skills and knowledge of community engagement.
- Frontline staff of Community Planning Partners and community based group representatives will have a better understanding of community engagement principles, tools and methods.
- Frontline staff of Community Planning Partners and community based group representatives will have improved and developed their skills, knowledge and learning for community engagement.

Outcome 3

- There will be a wider shared ownership of community engagement in Moray.
- Community based groups and organisations such as Community Councils, Area Forums, Village Hall Committees, Equalities Forum etc will make a greater contribution to community engagement processes locally.
- Community based groups and organisations such as Community Councils, Area Forums, Village Hall Committees, Equalities Forums etc along with Community Planning Partners and others will have been involved in shaping and guiding the development of the Better Community Engagement programme in Moray.
- Community Planning Partners and others will recognise and actively promote the valuable contribution by community based group members and will promote the value of joint working with local communities.

Outcome 4

- There will be an improved flow of communication between statutory, voluntary and community based groups and organisations in Moray.
- Opportunities for developing shared understanding of terminology, systems and structures will be established through the programme.
- Community Planning Partners and community-based groups and organisations will develop an increased understanding of, a shared respect for, and a mutual recognition of the roles, responsibilities and contributions of everyone involved in community engagement.

Programme Activities

The programme has 5 main areas of activity:

1. Action Planning – this has been undertaken in partnership with a range of local workers and community based representatives from across Moray. The final action plan will be overseen by a Community based / Community led Steering Group which will report regularly to the Community Engagement Strategy Group, Communities Committee, Joint Community Council, Area Forums and others within Moray Community Planning Partnership.

2. Identification of agency partners who will be carrying out community engagement / community consultations / initiatives during the Better Community Engagement project period who have an interest in developing skills and exploring better community engagement methods.

3. Training needs analysis – this will be carried out with programme participants to identify starting points and what areas of learning will be most useful and important.

4. Programme delivery – this will form the main element of the programme and will focus on the Action Learning Programme described in the next section.

5. Establishing systems and structures for sustaining the learning and the work of the programme beyond the programme end date (March 2011). The overview of the programme by the Moray Steering Group and the links into Community Planning via the Community Engagement Steering Group and Communities Committee will be particularly important in ensuring that the work of the programme is able to be sustained in the long term.

Outline Programme

Programme participants: It is proposed that the programme should be targeted at:

- Frontline workers, (with the support of line management) from Community Planning Partners eg. Council Departments, Health Board, CHCP, Police, Voluntary Sector, etc. who have a responsibility for community engagement as part of their role
- Community representatives from a range of forums / organisations / community councils / associations etc who have a role in engaging with their own communities.

Proposed programme content and structure

The programme will be an Action Learning Programme which will take place leading up to the start of and during 2010. In other words the main learning from the programme will be generated from planning, implementing and evaluating pieces of community engagement activity. This will be complemented by structured input around key targeted community engagement themes identified by participants (for example engaging with traditionally hard-to-reach groups, using participatory methods, etc).

It is proposed that those involved in a particular pilot project activity would form into an action learning group which would be responsible for planning, delivering and evaluating a piece of community engagement activity - 'the pilot project'. These pilot

projects would be aimed at tackling one or more of the outcomes as previously identified.

There will be a number of fixed shared learning sessions delivered where all participants will come together to share their experience, critically analyse the progress of their pilot projects and take part in structured learning around key themes/issues which have arisen.

The Moray Steering Group will have the responsibility of overseeing the programme. The Steering Group comprises of community representatives from a wide variety of local community groups / forums; the chair of the Community Engagement Strategy Group and Communities Committee; the Community Support Unit (Ian Todd); and the specified Better Community Engagement Team member (David Allan, Scottish Community Development Centre). This group will liaise with the Community Engagement Strategy Group, Communities Committee and others providing regular reports on progress over the duration of the programme.

The precise detail of the programme (as of December 2009) has yet to be decided but may look something like this:

Shared Learning – Session 1 (February 2010)
What is Good Community Engagement? Developing a shared understanding of what we mean by community engagement. Identifying need, planning your engagement, analysis of local context, the purposes of engagement, how to plan your engagement.

Project Work (Feb/March 2010)
Undertaking an analysis of need, identifying who should be involved and what are the purposes of the engagement. Developing draft action plans.

Shared Learning – Session 2 (April 2010)
Update on analysis and planning stages. Tools and Methods – what works best in different situations and with different groups. Initial methods of engagement?

Project Work (April/May 2010)

Putting it into action – the first stages of implementing the planned engagement activity.

Shared Learning – Session 3 (June 2010)

Update on first stages of engagement. Working together and working with others – how to conduct good engagement in a partnership.

Project Work (August/September 2010)

Continuing the engagement process and developing wider partnerships.

Shared Learning – Session 4 (October 2010)

Update on engagement process so far.   Reviewing your engagement – methods, principles and frameworks.

Project Work (October/November 2010)

Reviewing the engagement process with participants in the local projects. What has happened, what needs to change, what have we learned so far?

Shared Learning – Session 5 (December 2010)

Final review and evaluation of local engagement activities. Identification of key learning points and what now needs to happen.

7.   Further information

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Appendix A

Moray Better Community Engagement Demonstration Pilots

Framework Structure for Pilot Projects

Step 1

1. Ensure at an early stage that agency management / senior managers have been consulted with and agree to their staff / organisation participating in the Better Community Engagement Pilot Project.

2. Establish local working group consisting of Better Community Engagement Steering Group members.

3. Clarify role of the local Better Community Engagement working group in the Better Community Engagement Pilot Project area.

4. Identify Community Support Unit staff member as key contact / liaison between local agency staff and Better Community Engagement local working group members.

Step 2

Local agency staff / Better Community Engagement local working group members agree intended outcomes.

Step 3

Visioning outcomes in Community Engagement (VOICE)

Deliver mini training seminar to agency staff / Better Community Engagement local working group members prior to planning and implementation of local Better Community Engagement Pilot Project. Using VOICE as a toolkit to:

   a) Plan engagement activity

   b) Conduct effective engagement activity

   c) Monitor and record the process

   d) Evaluate the outcomes.

Step 4

Overall Engagement Report (OER) and Summary Report (SR) produced, using VOICE programme, agreed and submitted by local agency staff / Better

Community Engagement local working group members to Better Community Engagement Steering Group.

Step 5

Key learning points from each Better Community Engagement Pilot Project will be drawn together and will feed into and influence subsequent projects rolling out in Moray during 2010.

When will the Better Community Engagement Pilot Projects take place?

Feb - Dec 2010.