

## Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service – Regeneration News

### In This Issue

- Environment and Housing Partnership
- New Third Sector Skills Body
- Regen Election Results
- Learning Revolution
- Sustainable Communities Act
- Local Spending Reports
- Regen Forum LSP Representatives
- Regeneration Governance Review
- Delivery Partnership Round Up
- Regen Reference Groups
- WNF Employability Package

### Environment and Housing Delivery Partnership

**The Environment and Housing Partnership is one of the five Delivery Partnerships of the Newcastle Partnership.** Chaired by David Slater, the City Council's Executive Director of Environment and Regeneration the Partnership has identified a range of priorities for housing and the environment, some of which will be delivered as part of the Local Area Agreement. The Partnership has also expanded its remit recently to take in transport although its focus will be on local transport issues.

Amongst the Partnership's strategic priorities for the environment are *carbon reduction* and *landfill reduction*, *fuel poverty* and *environmental quality*. For housing its priorities include *preventing homelessness*, *addressing vacant private sector homes*, *accelerating house building*, *increasing affordable housing* and *improving the condition of council housing*.

Transport priorities focus on traffic management issues and include initiatives such as *green travel plans*, *no car lanes* and *prioritising buses*. The Partnership is responsible for delivering and monitoring twelve Local Area Agreement targets all of which, apart from three, are classified as green using the council's traffic light reporting system where green denotes good performance. The three exceptions are all

**(Continued on page 2)**

If you have any difficulty reading this newsletter, please let us know and we will try to make arrangements to help you.

Tel: 0191 232 7445 Fax: 0191 230 5640  
or email [information@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:information@cvsnewcastle.org.uk)

## Environment and Housing cont

housing related targets; NI 154, (net additional homes provided) and NI155 (number of affordable homes delivered) are both 'red' and NI187a (Percentage of households on income related benefits living in homes with low energy efficiency), is amber.

Officers have put in place actions to improve the performance against these targets and all three are amongst those Local Area Agreement targets, which the Council and Newcastle Partnership have proposed new targets for as part of the LAA annual refresh, which was agreed with Government Office North East and signed off by ministers in April.

The Regen Forum representative to the Environment and Housing Partnership Executive Board is Peter Stafford from Norcare. Lionel Hehir from Groundwork South Tyneside/Newcastle is also a board member and Maurice Condie from Byker Bridge Housing will soon join the Board as a voice for registered social landlords in the city. Community Empowerment Network representatives have been invited to continue attending the Board meetings.

To manage its large and diverse agenda and to make sure there is appropriate focus on delivery the Housing and Environment Partnership has agreed that certain existing partnerships and groups, such as the Climate Change Partnership will begin reporting to the Partnership Board. Where there is no suitable group the Partnership has begun setting them up as is the case for the priority to reduce the amount of waste going into landfill. A Waste Minimisation Group held an initial meeting in January to begin considering how partners, including voluntary and community groups can become involved and contribute to waste minimisation targets.

Another new group that the Partnership Executive Board has recently agreed to

establish is a Housing Partnership Group, which aims to provide a means for partners and stakeholders to influence and shape emerging housing policy and strategy in the city. The Housing Partnership Group will have a multi-sector membership including Your Homes Newcastle and Bridging Newcastle Gateshead along with registered social landlords, voluntary and community sector groups and the private sector and will have a wide and flexible agenda in order to be able to respond to specialist interests as well as general issues.

A major event in the Housing Partnership Group's diary will be an annual Housing Forum which will provide an open forum for stakeholders and partners and offer a consultative mechanism for the key stages in the housing strategy process.

For more information about the Housing Partnership Group contact George Mansbridge, Head of Housing Development and Partnership Management at Newcastle City Council, 0191 232 2580.

During the course of 2009 the Regen Forum will be setting up an Environment and Housing Reference Group, specifically for voluntary and community sector groups and which will sit alongside our existing reference groups for the other Delivery Partnerships. The Environment and Housing Reference Group will offer an opportunity for the voluntary and community sector to engage directly with the Delivery Partnership and its lead officers.

For more information about the Environment and Housing Partnership or if there are issues you think should be raised with the Partnership contact Martin Gollan, Policy Officer (Regen).

## New Third Sector skills body launched

The Office of the Third Sector has announced the setting up of a new third sector skills body to identify and address skills shortages and gaps amongst third sector organisations.

With a budget of £2.5 million over three years the new Skills Body is expected to open up learning opportunities for workers and volunteers in the third sector and see that workers needs are properly reflected in the development of a set of national occupation standards, apprenticeship frameworks and qualification strategies.

Ensuring skills development in the third sector is properly met was one of the recommendations in the Future Role of the Third Sector in Economic and Social Regeneration, published in 2007 by the Office of the Third Sector. The Government had expected that third sector

skills needs would be met by about half of the existing 25 Sector Skills Councils, which are employer led organisations set up to meet the skills needs of particular industries and services (for example health, learning, culture and creative services). However the 2007 review found that the third sector workforce was too small to have sufficient influence on the skills councils and that a dedicated body was required.

The Third Sector skills body will be jointly funded by the Office of the Third Sector and the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills. Skills for Justice will act as an incubator for the new skills body until it is fully established. An interim Chair and Project Director were appointed in December 08 and the third sector skills body is expected to begin operating by September.

## Regen steering group election result

Congratulations to Lewis Atkinson, Chief Officer of CITA, (The Community IT Academy), on his election to the Regen Forum Steering Group. CITA provides IT services to the voluntary and community sector, including advice, technical support and planning and websites.

Lewis joins the Steering Group at a time of change for the Regen Forum. Following last years by the Newcastle Partnership of voluntary and community sector representation and engagement in the local strategic partnership, the Regen Forum is now responsible for voluntary *and* community sector representation to the LSP.

Steering Group members and Regen Policy Officers are keenly aware that

partners on the LSP will be looking to Regen Forum representatives to be able to speak for local grassroots groups as well as the medium and large voluntary organisations that make up most of the Regen Forum membership.

One of the ways we will be doing this is through Regen Forum Reference Groups, which are open to community groups but also by developing closer ties with our VCS partners that are working in specific areas of the city.

Finally we bid farewell to colleagues from the Newcastle Community Empowerment Network, which closed in March. We will however be working with community sector partners on the emerging Citizens' Assembly.

# The Learning Revolution!

The Learning Revolution is the Government's new White Paper that seeks to promote informal learning for adults. The White Paper cites examples such as book clubs, online research and blogging which along with adult education classes, museum going and public lectures make a huge contribution to the wellbeing of the nation.

The publication is timely, coming against a background of increasing unemployment and economic woe but while the White Paper touches on the contribution of informal learning to developing work place skills it clearly states that informal learning is about learning for its own intrinsic value.

The White Paper includes a Learning Pledge, which around 66 organisations have already signed up to including the Workers Educational Association and the National Trust. Signing the Pledge means that organisations will use their influence and resources to create and sustain an informal learning culture and act as ambassadors for informal learning.

Other proposals include holding a Festival of Learning in autumn 2009 and development of an 'open space' movement, which aims to broaden the choice of learning options available by making it easier to organise learning opportunities. Local authorities are singled out as having a major contribution to make by providing funding but also by making available its assets and offering low cost space for holding learning sessions.

The Government will be launching a £20m Transformation Fund which will be flexible enough to give 100% funding to a local community group or

provide match funding for major projects. Ideas will have to be innovative (of course!) and increase the ways in which adults can learn. There are no details yet about when the Transformation Fund will open but look out for further information in NCVS e-inform.

The Government is keen to see increased learning opportunities for older people and people living in disadvantaged communities describing its own role is as providing the framework within which the voluntary and community sector and others will provide learning opportunities. The White Paper even suggests the prospect of an increase in voluntary and community groups as individuals are encouraged to set up their own informal learning groups. The White Paper lists a number of principles for implementing adult learning that includes the development of a shared vision and values across the public, private and voluntary sectors

There is a view that the Government's recognition of the importance of informal learning is rather late in coming; an estimated 1.5 million adult learning places have been lost during the past two years due to national funding and policy changes. On 1 May 2009 the Workers Educational Association are hosting at the Centre for Life, Newcastle, Beyond the Soundbite: the Future of Adult Learning in the North East, which will offer a chance find out more about the White Paper and to debate what it means for the North East.

For more information about Beyond the Soundbite contact the WEA on 0191 212 6100 or [northeast@wea.org.uk](mailto:northeast@wea.org.uk)

## Sustainable Communities Act

Last November Newcastle City Council agreed to opt in to the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 following a notice from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to all local authorities which invited them to submit proposals under the new Act.

The Act aims to promote sustainability of communities through improving the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of local areas. It begins with the principle that it is local people who know best what needs to be done for their area; they may however need central Government action to enable change to happen.

A local authority must decide to opt into the Act. Once it has decided to do so it must set up, or recognise, one or more panels of representatives of local persons which it can consult with on proposals. In Newcastle existing networks, such as the Regen Forum have been suggested as

panels. The scope of the Act is broad and providing panel proposals do not involve something councils already have the power to do, they can be submitted to an independent body called the Selector, which acts as a broker between councils and Government and which will agree and publish a short list of approved proposals.

The Act has been described as offering a wholly new way of decision making and a shift away from top-down government. An example of how the Act could work is of central government agreeing to introduce a levy on out of town retail car parks (currently free from non – domestic rates) and using the money raised to help local businesses. Councils have until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009 to submit proposals to the Selector

For more information and a guide to using the Sustainable Communities Act visit [www.localworks.org](http://www.localworks.org)

## Local spending reports

One of the features of the Sustainable Communities Act is the introduction of Local Spending Reports. Local authorities and other bodies such as Primary Care Trusts and Police Authorities are under a new duty to produce Local Spending Reports listing how much is spent on the services delivered by that agency.

The aim of having information about the level of public spending in a local area is that it will help agencies and local people to plan and promote the sustainability of local communities. Arrangements for producing the first round of Local Spending Reports had to be finalised by April 23 2009

however the Sustainable Communities Act itself is light on detail and the Department of Communities and Local Government is conducting a two part consultation on the format and content of the spending reports.

The first part of the consultation has now closed, but the second part runs until May 15 and is asking how local spending reports will help and how the information could be used; specifically which bodies and expenditure should be covered and what areas should reports cover and over what period.

For a copy of the consultation paper visit [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk) and click on consultations.

## Voluntary Sector Representation to the Newcastle Partnership

The Voluntary and Community Sector is represented on the Newcastle Partnership through the Regen Forum. Representatives to the different tiers of the Newcastle Partnership are all Regen Forum members and are each supported in their role by the Regen Policy Officers. If you would like any information about the Newcastle Partnership or if there is an issue you think comes within Newcastle Partnership's remit that needs raised in the first instance contact the Regen Team.

Strategic Board	Delivery Group	Innovation Group
<b>Janet Hunter</b> Northern Learning Trust	<b>Sue Pearson</b> Age Concern	<b>Ruth Abrahams</b> Disability North
<b>Chris Knights</b> St Margaret's Church & Parish Centre	<b>Maurice Condie</b> Byker Bridge Housing	<b>Sead Masic</b> North of England Refugee Service
Theme Groups		
Children and Young People*	Aileen Gilbert	Action for Children
	Jeff Hurst	Fairbridge
Wellbeing and Health - Health Improvement Board	Ruth Abrahams	Disability North
	Chris Drinkwater	West End Health Resource Centre
Wellbeing and Health Executive	Barbara Douglas	Quality of Life P'ship
	Ann McNulty	Newcastle Healthy City Project
Economy, Work, Skills and Learning	Janet Hunter	Northern Learning Trust
Housing & Environment	Peter Stafford	Norcare
Safe Newcastle	Rob Bailey	Byker Bridge Housing
	Ollie Batchelor	Tyneside Cyrenians
Advisory Groups		
Area Based Grant Working Group	Ruth Abrahams	Disability North
	Sue Pearson	Age Concern
Older People's Strategy Group	Rani Svanberg	Dementia Care Partnership

\*Voluntary sector representation to the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board is split between the Regen Forum and the Newcastle Voluntary Youth Sector Forum

## Area based regeneration review

The City Council has recently undertaken a review of governance arrangements of area based regeneration schemes. There are five major regeneration schemes in Newcastle, which the Council calls, Strategic Commission Areas which are **Walker Riverside; Scotswood Benwell; Elswick Discovery Quarter; North Central; Byker Ouseburn**

In a report to the Council's Executive Committee in March officers set out a new model of governance which would see **Project/Programme Teams**, consisting of council officers, take responsibility for project delivery and work alongside **Area Delivery Partner Groups**. The Partner Groups will have an advisory role and include strategic and commercial delivery partners. Both the Project and Partner Groups will report to an **Area Programme Board**, again an officer group, which will provide a link into the City Council's internal decision making structure.

To provide a means for consultation and engagement with residents, voluntary and community groups and others **Area Regeneration Forums** will be set up. The Forums will be chaired a member of the Council's Executive Committee with a local resident as vice-chair. The Forums will not have any decision making powers but will be expected to guide and inform the decisions of the **Area Programme Board**. Ward committees will provide scrutiny of local regeneration programmes and sitting above all of this will be an **Area Based Regeneration Programme Board**, chaired by the Council's Executive Director for Environment and Regeneration. The Programme Board will be accountable to the Council Executive but also report to the Newcastle Partnership.

The new area based governance arrangements are intended to provide a clearer distinction between decision making and advisory roles, separating strategic and operational governance and moving regeneration towards a more holistic and inclusive approach. Council officers acknowledged, in a separate report to the Executive on Walker Riverside, that governance arrangements for that area were not working well and have been a source for confusion and frustration proving counterproductive to the sort of partnership arrangements the council wanted.

The new model clearly identifies community involvement as one of three components (the others are strategic and operational delivery) necessary to successful schemes. The emerging Newcastle Community Empowerment Framework and Neighbourhood Management Plans must also inform regeneration activity. Important too is the leadership from councillors and council officers, to ensure consent from and engagement with the wider community.

The Council's Executive have approved the reviews recommendations and views from the Newcastle Partnership and others will now be sought as the new arrangements are rolled out over the coming months. A governance guide, fully explaining the new arrangements is expected to be available by summer 2009.

The new arrangements will be subject to an annual review and the Regen Policy Officers will be exploring with council officers how the voluntary and community sector are able contribute to the review.

## Safe Newcastle

The Safe Newcastle Partnership, the city's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, recently completed a review of the Safe Newcastle Strategy, updating it to cover 2009 to 2012. The review is part of a new requirement on CDRPs to annually update their community safety plan, using the findings of an Annual Strategic Assessment.

The Annual Strategic Assessment involves analysis of data collected by the Council, Police and other partners, which along with consultation exercises build a picture of community safety and drug issues in the local area. Safe Newcastle's Annual Strategic Assessment endorsed the four current strategic themes for the Partnership

- Acquisitive and opportunistic crime
- Preventing offending and reducing re-offending
- Safe, cohesive and healthy communities
- Vulnerable people and communities

The Safe Newcastle Strategy is available at [www.safenewcastle.org.uk](http://www.safenewcastle.org.uk)

## Safe Newcastle review

The Safe Newcastle Partnership has always been one of the strongest performing parts of the Newcastle Partnership. However, this notwithstanding, the Safe Newcastle Board took the decision in December to undertake a thorough review of the Partnership during 2009 to ensure Safe Newcastle can strike an appropriate balance between its strategy, governance, use of resources and delivery.

The voluntary and community sector is an important part of the Safe Newcastle and Regen Policy Officers will be working with Safe Newcastle staff to ensure that the sector has the opportunity to contribute fully to the review.

## Wellbeing and Health Partnership

The Wellbeing and Health Partnership have appointed Helen Wilding as its new co-ordinator. Helen joins the partnership from Safe Newcastle and since January has been scoping the range of partnership working that contributes to the Wellbeing and Health Partnership's seven priority outcomes

- Be Healthy
- Have a good quality of life
- Be free from discrimination or harassment
- Make a positive contribution
- Exercise choice and control
- Have economic wellbeing
- Maintain personal dignity

As part of her role and to make sure the voluntary and community sector can be fully informed and contribute to the work of the Partnership, Helen expects to regularly attend the Wellbeing and Health Voluntary Sector Reference Group, dates for which are given on page 9.

## Partnership round up cont.

### **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 introduced a duty on local authorities and primary care trusts to produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The JSNA is to be the process by which the statutory agencies will understand current and future health needs for the local area.

The JSNA should inform Local Area Agreement targets and commissioning of services. Newcastle's JSNA been produced as a web based resource which allows the user to find out what is known about a particular topic, such as obesity, older people or domestic violence and what that information tells us about effectiveness of local services, what are the gaps and what is on the horizon. Newcastle JSNA is free to use; visit [www.newcastlejsna.org.uk](http://www.newcastlejsna.org.uk) to find out more.

## Regen Forum Reference Groups

The Regen Forum's voluntary and community sector reference groups have been set up to give VCS groups a way to get involved in the Newcastle Partnership's Delivery Partnerships and provide a means for Regen Forum representatives on the Partnership to report on what is happening in the LSP and to understand the views of the sector. The reference groups are open to any VCS members of the Regen Forum or other NCVS forums. To find out more contact the named Regen Policy officer.

### **Children and Young People Voluntary Sector Reference Group**

The Group meets at 10.00am on the second Tuesday of every month at MEA House. For more information contact Martin Gollan

### **Safe Newcastle VCS Reference Group**

Meeting dates for 2009 are May 7, September 3 and November 5; all meetings start at 10.00am at MEA House. For more information contact Martin Gollan

### **Health and Wellbeing Voluntary Sector Reference Group**

Meeting dates for 2009 are May 6, June 22, September 14 and November 23; all meetings start at 2pm at MEA House. For more information contact Roger Mould

### **Employability, Work, Skills and Learning Voluntary Sector Reference Group**

Dates for this group will be circulated shortly, in the meantime for more information contact Roger Mould

### **Environment and Housing VCS Reference Group**

We will be setting up this reference group later this year. In the meantime contact Martin for information about the Environment and Housing Delivery Partnership

## Working Neighbourhood Fund

Procurement of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund Employability Package has recently concluded. We understand that the response from voluntary and community organisations to the procurement process was good and that all of the successful tenders were from VCS organisations. In Newcastle this approach to procurement and the use of contracts is still relatively new for funding like WNF; previously such funds would more likely to have been managed as grant aid, for example SRB or NRF .

At NCVS we seek to work with the Council and other public sector agencies so that we can all be sure that new methods of procurement don't, however unintentionally, disadvantage voluntary and community groups. Last year the Funding Code was revised by the Compact Review Group and there is now agreement between the Council and the voluntary and community sector on use of contracts.

If you took part in the WNF Employability Package procurement process we would like your views on it; what was good, what was bad, what could be improved? We would also welcome your views on the WNF Enterprise and Prevention strands .

To let us know what you think email [regen@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:regen@cvsnewcastle.org.uk) or ring Roger or Martin on 0191 323 7445.

Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) provides a range of services to the voluntary and community sector. If you would like to know more, or for details on membership, contact:

**The Information Section** at the address given below, ring **0191 232 7445**, or email **[information@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:information@cvsnewcastle.org.uk)**

or visit our web site: **[www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk](http://www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk)**

### Published by Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service

*re:gen* is funded by the  
Working Neighbourhoods Fund

Policy Officers (Regeneration)  
Roger Mould, Martin Gollan

MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Tel: 0191 232 7445

Fax: 0191 230 5640

e-mails:

[regen@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:regen@cvsnewcastle.org.uk)  
[roger.mould@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:roger.mould@cvsnewcastle.org.uk)  
[martin.gollan@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:martin.gollan@cvsnewcastle.org.uk)

Every care is taken to produce accurate information. NCVS accepts no responsibility for any error or omission in, or complaint arising from, items in this publication.

Registered Charity No. 226263