



PARTNERS SEMINAR FEEDBACK REPORT

THURSDAY 27th MARCH 2014, 10PM-12PM

The Big Local project in the CELL area is now well underway. The first stage of **community engagement** work is now complete, focusing on the residents' vision and priorities for the future. A comprehensive household survey has also been completed.

At this stage, residents are very much aware that the funding they have available needs to be 'stretched' and that they need to work closely with external agencies to help deliver the priorities which are eventually included in their **Big Local Plan**.

The purpose of this Partner's Seminar was to share the outcomes of the initial community engagement work and have an informal discussion about how external organisations might help realise the community's vision for the future of the CELL area. The session brought together senior representatives from the various service providers who already have an interest in the area's future with members of our Planning Group who are leading the Big Local process.

32 representatives from agencies and 9 resident members of the CELL Big Local Steering Group attended the seminar. The two hour session involved a short presentation about Big Local, the progress made by residents so far, the outcomes of the engagement process and survey and the community's vision for the CELL area. External agency representatives were then invited to join facilitated discussion groups to establish how they might work with residents to achieve their vision.

6 facilitated discussion groups took place around the room, each focusing on one of the key themes that residents want to see Big Local focus on:

1. Better local transport
2. Creating and sustaining local jobs
3. Improving and maintaining our environment
4. Meeting the needs of young people
5. Tackling poverty
6. Other Big Local Priorities



CELL Big Local Partners Seminar, 27th March 2014

The main discussion and action points going forward are outlined below:

Better Local Transport

Round the table

Jan Chisholm Northumberland County Council (NCC)

Kirsten Francis NCC

Margaret Robinson NCC

Max Cairns CELL resident

John McCann CELL resident

*Apologies from:

Liz Prudhoe (Adapt), Mary Dowson (Sustrans), Martin Podevyn (Sustrans)

Main discussion points

- Transport, especially to and from work, is an essential topic for many CELL residents. A significant % of respondents feel the current service is a hindrance to the quality of life in the area. However, this service is quite typical for rural Northumberland and could be seen by some other areas as quite generous by comparison. The key to improving transport services will

always be to have a thorough understanding of the real demand. A survey to discover this data will be needed. The NCC website has templates for such surveys.

- We also do not really know whether residents fully understand the existing services. The current bus timetables could be displayed on the CELL Big Local website.
- There are a number of community transport schemes in the area and these too are on the NCC website. We need to talk to these organisations. The NCC 'Getting Started' fund can link communities such as CELL with community transport operators. Scooter hire is also an option to be considered.
- There are also 'Action Travel' initiatives to help with developing issues around footpaths and cycle ways.
- Being able to contribute to surveys could help us get action on Footpaths quickly
- NCC can consider positioning bus stops nearer to the Lynemouth sheltered accommodation

Action points

- We need to arrange contact with a relevant person from ARRIVA, from Sustrans, Adapt North East, and WATbus to develop our understanding of these issues and NCC can help us do this.
- A temporary Transport Task Group (Jan Chisholm, Margaret Robinson, Max Cairns and John McCann) will meet on 3rd April to take things forward.

Creating and sustaining local jobs

Round the table

Tony Kirsop Social Enterprise Northumberland

Lucy Moore Smiths Gore on behalf of Crown Estates

Michael Orde Smiths Gore on behalf of Crown Estates

Alan Mackay Ashington Development Trust

Michael Wright MKM Engineering/CELL resident

Andrew Gooding Lynemouth Development Trust

Main discussion points

- Subsidy of transport to bridge the gap between individuals leaving their current situation and getting into better paid work
- Who are the role models with the lack of Alcan? What is the attraction of the CELL area? How can other businesses be encouraged to give external investment? Attracting new businesses is very competitive. Should CELL try to invest and grow what we already do?
- Can we identify a skills gap and met the transport issues?
- Solar Panels – can CELL work with local businesses and provide affordable finance to customers?
- How can the cash flow from south east Northumberland be used to match against the European grants to benefit CELL?
- The confidence of children in school needs raising

Action points

- Expand existing businesses in CELL area
- Fill training gaps with opportunities
- Utilise unexploited skills in the area
- Stimulate demand through finance incentives
- Make local authority contracts attainable to local small businesses
- Confidence raising – recruit business ambassadors
- Create a new culture of enterprise in the area

Improving and maintaining our environment

Round the table

Kay Bradshaw Groundwork NE
Steve Bucknall NCC Environmental Services
Bill Thornton NCC Environmental Services
Mike Pratt Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Liz Stobbart CELL Resident
Barry Mead CELL Resident
Kevin Hindmarsh CELL Resident
Jean Gardner CELL Resident
Laura McCall SRC

Main discussion points

- The group discussed development of the Dene. In order for this to really work, long term involvement and support from local people is required
- There seems to be an issue of land ownership in the CELL area. The Dene is currently under multiple ownership, and there are lots of smaller areas and horse paddocks in between which are left to deteriorate. It looks like nobody cares about these areas. Once these issues are resolved, the local community can upgrade these areas.
- Cycle paths: There was strong commitment from the group to upgrade cycle paths in the CELL area. This would be a good opportunity for young people to get involved/volunteer, which could act as a CV enhancement also.
- The group discussed the quality of the general environment and the need to tackle issues like dog fouling. Steve Bucknall explained that clean up 'action days' could be arranged where NCC Environmental Services provide the equipment for local people to clean up their own streets (high visibility jackets/litter pickers/bin bags etc). However, it is unlikely that any funding will be available through the county council to support this.
- Combining education and enforcement was also discussed as an option for improving the local environment. There is scope for reporting and teaching about environmental issues to improve conditions i.e. in schools.
- Kay Bradshaw outlined some of the work Groundwork will be offering from September 2014, when young people will be required to stay in school or training until they reach 18. Groundwork offer training to improve young people's skills so there is potential for this to be delivered in the CELL area if there is a demand. Groundwork also offers NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) programmes and they are currently looking for locations and young people to deliver these to.
- The group discussed the possibility of obvious and visible hits to improve the local environment. The Scotland Gate project was used as an example, where there has been investment in replacing bus shelters, more frequent grass cutting etc. Could this model be extended to the CELL area, but perhaps run by local people? Could there be Parish Council input?
- At the moment there is also a £25 million street lighting modernisation project happening throughout the County. LED lights will replace existing street lamps; anyone interested to contact Steve Bucknall at NCC.

Action Points

- Mike Pratt agreed to raise the issue of land ownership with Crown estates in the CELL areas which are deteriorating green spaces.
- The group will need to contact other organisations such as Sustrans for further advice about upgrading cycle paths.
- Kay Bradshaw was very interested in joining the Big Local Partnership Board – contact her when appropriate to arrange
- CELL Big local steering group to contact Steve Bucknall at NCC about street lighting campaign with requests.

Meeting the needs of young people

Round the table

Hayley Brown NCC Youth Service
Nathan Rogerson Active Northumberland
Rachel Adam BAIT, Woodhorn Museum
David Weston Northumbria Police
Pat McCann CELL resident
Guy Nokes Big Local Rep

Main discussion points

- The group discussed existing Strategic / Operational Plans of the partners, many of these could support CELL priorities for meeting the needs of young people
- Active Northumberland & BAIT could help Big Local via their existing project work coming into the area and engaging with CELL Steering group / Partnership. This could include providing advice and signposting
- Northumbria police could feed in views and experience when requested / invited. David Weston would like to receive Newsletter when produced and or hear via Parish Council meetings
- Active Northumberland could provide advise and support in getting in additional money for Big Local e.g. via SITA as well as personnel support such as 'Coaches / deliverers'

- BAIT is running a 'Creative Connector' programme plus Apprenticeship opportunities which could help young people in the CELL Big Local area.
- The group acknowledged that 9 (10year olds) and younger have a lot of enthusiasm which needs to be captured. Young people have bespoke needs, as they grow older their interests change. CELL needs to understand and reflect this as well as to not homogenise the young people across the villages.

Action Points

- Hayley Brown to talk to JIGSAW (consortium of projects that meet and discuss activity and opportunities)
- The group also decided it would be beneficial to talk to 'Generator' for music project development YMCA (Ashington for outreach)
- Keep talking to young people, see what interests they have and get them to contribute to the process. Their needs are always changing.

Tackling Poverty

Round the table

Tom Dunn CELL Resident

Gillian Mason CELL Resident

Cllr Millburn Douglas NCC

Geoff Crow Wansbeck CAB

Mike Willis Wansbeck Valley Food Bank

Fiona Wardshaw Credit Union South East Northumberland (CUSEN)

Keith Whitehead Credit Union South East Northumberland (CUSEN)

Anne Lyall Wansbeck CVS

Pauline Thompson Wansbeck Valley Food Bank

Graham Cook Northumberland Credit Union

Yvonne Probert SRC

Main discussion points

Food bank

- There is a need for a food bank in the area as currently people are having to walk into Ashington
- Numbers accessing Ashington food bank from the CELL area are increasing
- Wansbeck Valley Food Bank could provide a service in the CELL area, but they would need a venue to store food parcels discretely

Wind turbines

- Could CELL own a turbine in order to provide cheap electricity to the community/residents? Planning issues would need looking into as it is not that simple.
- CUSEN have qualified home heating staff who could support residents to reduce bills and provide energy debt advice

Credit Unions

- Loan sharks are active in the CELL area. One loan shark in particular, lent a resident £300 and they ended up paying back £1,120
- CUSEN have a dedicated officer and volunteers who could start up a credit union in this area. CUSEN can provide volunteer training (NVQ) and reimbursement for basic volunteer expenses
- If a venue could be provided at no charge CUSEN could start a credit Union in CELL area quite quickly
- New financial products are coming through for Credit Unions as part of the re-branding process

Housing

- Residents are struggling to pay rent in private houses within the CELL area. Could there be a license scheme or some legislation to stop over charging?
- Shared ownership could be a way forward for some people
- CUSEN have a landlord scheme
- Through localism could the “right to buy” empty properties be used in the CELL area? CELL could buy a property and set up a social enterprise to employ local people to refurbish them, and then rent them out to local people – a sustainable project.
- People who bought houses are now trapped in negative equity

Community enterprise

- Reliance needs to be on the residents and the community to do things themselves
- Wansbeck CVS operates a grant scheme for people who want to set up in business – grants of between £500 and £1,000 are available to individuals
- People need to be inspired
- Community allotments – grow your own food? Those involved could exchange their time for produce

- Wholesale partnership – Buy in bulk from a wholesaler and split between individuals/houses
- Volunteering is difficult because most people feel like they don't have the time
- Wansbeck CVS can offer outreach support on volunteering and funding advice in the CELL area if a free venue was available
- White goods (e.g. fridges, washing machines) breaking down are an issue for residents – could a recycling enterprise be set up? CUSEN provide a saver box loan scheme that purchases new white goods on loan and only charge 1.5% interest. In addition, could clothes and baby/children's items be exchanged too?

Transport

- Villages are isolated and the bus fare is expensive (£5 to get to Ashington) – all services are in Ashington (e.g. Shops, Job Centre Plus, CAB, food bank, hospital)
- Examples from other areas – ADAPT, Watbus, wheels to work and Parish Council's sponsoring community transport
- Transport impacts immensely on poverty and access to health services

Jobs

- Employment support is needed
- Many people have real fears as benefits sanctions are being extended which will increase poverty – flexibility is needed within the state system
- Internet access is an issue, especially for those who are trying to achieve the Job Centre Plus log-on twice a day to avoid sanctions

Action points

Jobs

- VCS Assembly to discuss and voice the concerns about benefit sanctions

Food Bank, Credit Union and Community enterprise

- **Joint initiative Action** – CUSEN, CAB, Food Bank and CVS to provide a single half day (2 hours, ideally on a Monday or Tuesday) drop in, in the CELL area, if a venue at no cost can be found. This initiative could start with the Food Bank to gauge interest; then to establish interest/footfall for the other 3 partners to follow up on. Appointments only could be used to see if there is

demand too. Advertising will be needed – on the CELL website, CELL Facebook, leaflets and posters as it will take time to establish a service.

Other Big Local priorities

Tracey Collins Lynemouth Day Centre

Brian O' Doherty Isos housing

David Francis Community Action Northumberland - NALS

Michelle Fawcett Northumberland Adult Learning Service

Bill Tarbit Lynemouth Development Trust

Gillian Thompson Chair, Lynemouth Parish Council

Julia Aston Amble Development Trust

Pete Duncan SRC

*Apologies from:

Jon Twelves (Isos Housing), Carla Keegans (NCC Housing), Eddie Peat (AMP Technology)

Main discussion points

David Francis asked how Big Local priorities had come about and how fixed they were. Pete D explained that they were based on a mix of the survey outcomes and the Big Chat sessions. Although the broad priorities were unlikely to change, the individual projects suggested almost certainly would. It was still work in progress.

Housing

- Problem households moving from the city/large towns has changed Lynemouth and Linton significantly in the past few years
- Isos and Bernicia have taken over the former Castle Morpeth Council stock in Lynemouth
- Reluctant private landlords don't know how to manage their rented houses; many are empty in Lynemouth.
- Housing Associations have housing management standards to work to, but private landlords don't
- Could Selective Licensing be introduced for private landlords in the CELL area? It has been done elsewhere, but will private landlords abandon properties if licensing is introduced? What would happen then? Perhaps Homes for Northumberland could come in and buy them up, then let them out through a choice based lettings scheme.
- Evicted tenants from Housing Association properties usually go into private rented and the problems worsen. So it is important to keep them in a place where it is possible to combat or monitor their behaviour.

- If there was to be a local maintenance squad to help bring empty homes back into use, Northumberland Adult Learning Service (NALS) offers training and qualifications up to Level 3 in labouring, painting, carpentry etc. These courses offer pick up and drops off to the course in Ashington. NALS work with Northumberland County Council to provide apprentices too.
- Lynemouth needs new housing to diversify the housing offer and to provide a better mix. Private house builders will come in but will want to look at the infrastructure

Older People

- Age UK have volunteer led exercise sessions across the County and at their main building at Ashington (Roundhouse). There is funding available for Age UK to provide classes in the CELL area.
- Can the Big Local Fund be matched to tackle social isolation? As Age UK currently provides a friendship programme via the telephone which could be extended but it is funded by the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund. Initial advice was that matching two different Lottery funds was possible.
- Dementia support, lunch clubs and day care were discussed. Lynemouth Day Care Centre provides services to the CELL area and beyond. These are paid for through social services and private monies. Costs are £28 per day from 9.45am to 3.30pm and currently this is provided to around 30 people. Keeping buses on the road is the key to accessibility of the services.
- Lynemouth Day Care also run the Revive centre café which is great for social interaction and provides activities

Community Development

- There is an annual festival in Amble – this is a free event which 1000s of people come to. There are workshops and a torchlight procession of lanterns with music. In addition the “Mary Portas” money support gives a 2 week long event in Amble. Could something smaller but along the same lines be done in the CELL area?
- In Lynemouth there is an annual gala with running races, costume prizes etc. It could be bigger as it once was but it needs updating – there is an opportunity here as it's important to build on what's happening already. People could come from across the 4 villages if expanded but it would require the community travelling.
- Most community development things can happen with support from existing agencies and don't need a lot of cash

Jobs

- Lifelong learning is the key to getting people job ready and for local job creation
- Community based learning is free for those who are unemployed

Action points

Housing

- Accredited schemes for private landlords can work with selective licensing (e.g. Newham) whereby landlords are fined if they don't comply. Northumberland County Council could introduce selective licensing with no government approval. This would help to stabilise communities. This needs Northumberland County Council's support to make it happen.
- Changing lives (ex-Cyrrerians) in Newcastle and North Tyneside – worthwhile talking to them about setting up a business to buy and refurbish properties in CELL area. Also utilises local labour and apprentices. Isos would be interested in facilitating and supporting this.

Community Development

- Expand Lynemouth Gala and explore how other communities hold events. Contact Lynne Burns (Chair of Portas Scheme).

Jobs

- NALS can offer job based training and adult learning courses – these need better publicity in the CELL area but there is no centre to deliver them in – can tutors come to the Lynemouth Resource Centre? Worthwhile exploring

**Social Regeneration Consultants
April 2014**