



SCDN Ayrshire Network Meeting

Tuesday 13th March 2018

Lochside Community Centre, Ayr

Present: Steven Mair East Ayrshire Council, Lorraine McKenzie South Ayrshire Council, Neil Goudie South Ayrshire Council, Shaun Lowrie Corra Foundation, Jackie McColm North Ayrshire Council, Jen Williams AHEAD South Ayrshire Council, Toni-Ann Hope AHEAD South Ayrshire Council, Angi Pinkerton AHEAD South Ayrshire Council, Arlene Hodgart East Ayrshire Council, Maggie Henderson East Ayrshire Council, Kieran Wardrop East Ayrshire Council, Paul Algeo Ahead South Ayrshire Council, Helen Bath Tandem (Aspire to Access), Euan Lees North Ayrshire Council, Cally Hughes North Ayrshire Council, Colette McGarver SCDN, Mary Scott SCDN, Susan Campbell SCDN.

Apologies: Julia Whitaker Support at the Edge, Christina Pieraccini North Ayrshire Council, Andy McAlpine, Ballantrae Trust, Anne-Marie Hunter North Ayrshire Council, Liz Sullivan North Ayrshire Council, Pam Crosthwaite, North Ayrshire Council, Colin Love South Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, Pam Maxwell.

Welcome and Role of SCDN

Susan welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke about the purpose of the SCDN networks and how they have been set up in other parts of the country – Dumfries and Galloway, Fife and Aberdeenshire. This is the initial meeting to gauge whether there is an appetite to develop a Pan Ayrshire network. However, as we move forward, we will pro-actively engage with more voluntary sector organisations as wider partners. Also, showcasing of CD work will help to motivate staff and services and support them to feel valued.

Each network is open to anyone with an interest in CD and is run by and for members. The agenda is set by the network and SCDN can offer support with promotion and facilitation of meetings.

Colette and Mary then talked about the role of community development and how SCDN fits into this in terms of its support to members and links with other organisations. They stressed the need to embed CD values at a senior level as top down combined with bottom up is what affects change best.

Small group discussions

People were then asked to go into small groups and consider what is working well in their practice and what issues there may be.

Group 1 – Facilitated by Mary

What's working well?

- Merging of departments that were designed around 'the people we serve' works well = positive partnerships
- Local authority workforce with 3rd sector, knowing what each other does
- Redesign mostly positive in some areas
- ABCD working well
- Positive pan Ayrshire working (PB)
- Budget efficiency – partnerships and redesign of services have strengthened some networks and partnership

What are the Challenges?

- Constraints **too** narrowly focused on priorities
- Sense of identity – (common within both council and 3rd sector)
- Standards: Differing interpretations of 'consultations' 'engagement' etc from other services/departments.*
- Effective, real and meaningful consultation with communities and that in some instances perception that 'Quantitative 'somehow equates to 'Qualitative'.*
- Policy has strengthened what we do, however not necessarily strengthened our position to deliver this, view was more in favour of Planning Dept ?*
- Consistency/staff turnover/get to know community and then move on – impact on community
- Budget challenges!!! – impact on professionalism – planning – relationships – moral
- Continuous restructure
- Short term projects/funding– difficult to measure long term effect/impact
- Outcomes meet/short term
- Money withdrawn – not properly addressed issues – not consistent investment in communities – impacts on perceptions of participants
- Not a statutory service therefore continue to shoulder disproportionate percentage of cuts
- More removed from budget cuts
- Community bases less visible in community
- Community members need to 'see' workers = investment
- Need to raise profile of service

**these 3 points inter- relate to each other.*

Group 2 – Facilitated by Susan

What's working well?

- AHEAD Project – Workers in local areas and manager good at promoting the work to partners
- Role is more valued
- Vibrant Communities seen as at the forefront of services in CD
- Good turn out today at SCDN meeting
- Partnership working

- Asset based work
- There is scope for a large network in Ayrshire
- Informal networking in localities – open to all
- Locality plans working well in some areas
- Community led action plans – things coming through and seeing what’s important (East Ayrshire)
- Community led
- Funders are listening to the needs of the community and the application process

What are the Challenges?

- Settling into my role and finding it difficult to reach the community
- Short term funding
- Post changing – people moving on – community unhappy with new people all the time
- Re-structuring – name changes
- Partnership working – not knowing where to sit – how long will post be for – short term contracts
- Council agenda/NHS agenda – where’s the community agenda?
- Localities versus neighbourhoods versus council wards – own identities depending on where you stay
- No targets or outcome within work for some
- Small villages – some identify on their own, others want to be part of a bigger locality
- Central locations for events don’t exist due to large geographical spread
- Small villages can feel isolate - Corra funding can help this
- Difficult to shut off from work
- CD going on all over by people who don’t see it as CD
- Supportive team and supported in general, but often managed by people without CD experience
- Community uncertain about role of CD – seen as council worker e.g. can you cut my hedge?
- People precious of what they do due to uncertainty of service
- Unless people are actively engaging with CD they don’t know what we do
- People are asset rich, but financially poor
- Social isolation

Group 3 – Facilitated by Colette

What’s working well?

- Empowerment Act – implications and making organisations aware of the importance of CD
- Community led action (East Ayrshire) impact need 40% return on order to develop an action plan. Important for community buy-in – social change and partnership with Local Authority.
- SCDN Networks- opportunity for awareness raising to senior managers
- **Community want what the government want – it’s the how we do it**
- Opportunity – case studies from front line staff to evidence, showcase and for evaluation – SCDN website using SCDN template

What are the Challenges?

- Funding and restructuring – uncertainty
- Workload – implications – reporting and admin
- Questions being raised – are they being listened to? (Place Standards - impact of rolled out)
- Senior managers’ understanding of the role for CD – not consistent – opportunity
- Working to community locality plan priorities in some areas
- Value examples of good practice e.g. East Ayrshire Council – throughout Scotland – other methods being adopted e.g. making Place Standards relevant to community engagement.
- Stop reinventing the wheel
- Raising awareness amongst senior managers/heads of service to the importance of community engagement and the role/skills of CD officers in leading the process – politics acting as a driver
- Active versus passive consultation and impact on engagement and co-production
- Leadership important – bureaucracy

SCDN Ayrshire Network - Way Forward

Everyone agreed to the continuation of an SCDN Ayrshire Network. It was seen as important for support, networking and discussing practice issues.

It was agreed that meetings will take place three times a year and the location will rotate between the three Ayrshire locations, North, East and South with each area taking turns to host the meetings. The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 10th July in North Ayrshire**, venue to be confirmed and it was agreed that the host area will showcase a positive example of practice as well as time for support and networking.

Susan asked that if people hadn’t already done so they take out membership of SCDN and also take postcards to promote to the people they work with and their teams, encouraging them to also join SCDN. The more members we have the stronger our voice.

Evaluation – not everyone took part in the evaluation

Question	Yes	No	Comments
1. I’ve had opportunities to discuss and debate community development policy and practice with others	12	1	<p>Discussed work practice and got updates on what is happening in other areas</p> <p>Would be good to further explore policy and how it is implemented in practice</p> <p>There was a very positive, driven attitude from many of the participants. There is uncertainty around cuts, but overall a positive outlook towards a Pan Ayrshire partnership. Great start to establishing SCDN in Ayrshire</p> <p>Impact of Community Empowerment Act on engagement/co-production</p> <p>Discussed current issues/challenges re</p>

				<p>practice and budget cuts</p> <p>Yes, discussed what works well in CD and how this can link to sport</p> <p>Yes, good to see similarity of issues/good practice across Pan Ayrshire</p>
2. I've had opportunities to share my experience of working with communities with others	9	2		<p>I gain from the support from CD workers so great for us to get together</p> <p>Good understanding of best practice – e.g. East Ayrshire Council Action Plans – what works</p> <p>Sharing my experiences and listening to others makes me feel supported by my colleagues in a wider geographical area</p> <p>Yes, shared experience of a sports environment</p> <p>Yes – interesting to see there are the same issues either in urban or rural across Pan Ayrshire</p> <p>Really enjoyed chatting with colleagues in other local authority areas and hearing their challenges</p>
3. I've learned something new that will affect or improve my practice when working with communities	4	5	1	<p>Haven't learned anything, but that wasn't today's primary objective. I'm sure I will in future meetings as I have in the past</p> <p>A lot of work is focused on evaluation and measuring impact. Lot of food for thought in terms of challenges and future of CD</p> <p>Have to be in itto affect change – use opportunities to raise awareness of CD with Heads of Service</p> <p>I feel the discussions were very council led and with internal issues in the council hierarchy. Need more community led discussions</p> <p>Every meeting is a learning curve</p> <p>Yes – great to hear that we are all in this</p>

				together – partnership is there. Let’s use it
4. I feel better ‘networked’ as a result of participating in today’s event!	6	1	1	<p>Good chat, very informal and no Gaffers!!</p> <p>I always appreciate the opportunity to network, to keep in touch with colleagues</p> <p>Yes – informal opportunity to do so. It was enjoyable to share info with others and also listen to them</p> <p>Yes – I think developing the SCDN network across Pan Ayrshire will allow future opportunities to work together</p> <p>As a student, it’s given me an opportunity to meet CLD workers across Ayrshire and form positive connections for any future in CD</p> <p>I got to put some key points across that have potential impact on current practice</p>