

Going Forward Together

NEIGHBOURHOOD
PARTNERSHIP

A report from the NP Conference



We don't switch teenagers off.
We have a sense of wonder (we
don't lose it...).

The partnership is the major
in communities.

We all understand the language
in simpler.

Going Forward Together

A report from the Neighbourhood Partnership Conference

An introduction to 'Going Forward Together'...

Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs) are committed to improving the quality of life and services for local people by listening to people's priorities and coordinating local services.

Everyone has a role to play in their NP, including those who live in the local area, those who are elected to represent local people, and those who work in the local area for public and voluntary organisations.

In the two years since NPs were set up, we have continued to enhance the way we engage with local people and improve our partnership approaches. We also recognise that to become even better there are still challenges and opportunities that we need to respond to – and Going Forward Together has helped to clarify these. There has never been a better time to act together to meet these challenges:

- We want more local people to feel involved and listened to.
- We want NPs to feel more local, with agendas that reflect the local issues people care about.
- We want more recognition of increasing involvement in NPs by all partners

This report highlights those areas of activity that were identified at Going Forward Together to overcome challenges to making NPs the best they can be.



Outcomes from the conference; ways forward for NPs

On 30 September 2009 'Going Forward Together' drew 185 people into a large scale discussion about how we take NPs forward. Amongst us were 71 representatives from our local communities, including older and young people, 16 Councillors, 22 people from the voluntary sector, 76 people who work in the Police, Health, Council and other partners in NP action groups, all helping to shape the way forward with practical ideas and helpful insight.

Thinktastic energised our discussion, leaving us enthusiastic about taking a more confident, informal and direct approach to engaging with local people. They took us from thinking operationally to thinking inspirationally, and we agreed on the enormous potential of what we can achieve together through NPs.

The enthusiasm and commitment to NPs at Going Forward Together confirms that those involved are keen to make changes and take ownership of our part of the solution. We all have a role to play in working together to translate the energy and positive enthusiasm of the Conference into supporting the way NPs operate at a local level.

Each individual made a pledge on the day, and these together, recorded in this report, are a powerful message that we are all committed and motivated to change.

Dumping the negative...

The first thing we did at Going Forward Together was to banish all the words, phrases, attitudes and practices that hold us back, for example:

- That'll never work
- Why bother - what's the point'?
- We've tried it before – it can't be done
- We need funding first
- I'm too busy; there's no time
- Why change? That's the way we've always done it
- Not taking ownership
- Using NP as political football
- I'm the voice of the community
- Obsessing about structure
- Focussing on process instead of outcome
- Unnecessary meetings instead of action
- 'Short-term thinking' (not planning for the future)
- Using jargon
- Too much bureaucracy

We recognised that when people feel positive they will think more clearly, be more productive and inspire others

Examples of attitudes that take us forward...

We can do this together

We can find a solution

OK, we can make it work

Leave it with me

I'll take that on

Sure, no problem

Delegates told us

'What I can bring to my Neighbourhood Partnership is...

- new ideas
- experience, knowledge, different ways of thinking
- passion
- experience in tenant participation and good practice in community engagement
- enthusiasm
- an open mind
- joy, fun, bright ideas, big dreams and passion
- honesty
- me, myself and I



joy, fun, bright ideas, big dreams and passion

The vision...

Edinburgh's NPs become world leaders in community participation

Every change needs a forward direction. We must focus on where we are going, rather than what we leaving behind.

At Going Forward Together, we set out what this vision feel like:

- people will be our most valuable asset
- we will make use of the skills of all the people around us
- everyone will have something to contribute
- we will engage where people are, and not expect them to come to us
- we will try different, fun approaches to conducting our business
- we'll have strong links into schools and hold workshops in High Schools
- people will know what we are doing

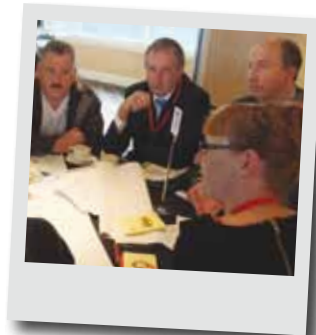
People will be our most valuable asset

everyone will have something to contribute

Delegates set out what the combined skills and commitment of those involved in NPs can achieve ...

- anything we put our minds to
- the sky's the limit
- passion, fun, more engagement
- breaking the culture of power over others
- less focus on representative structures
- better places to live in
- public services that listen
- everyone with a chance to be involved – barriers to participation smashed
- a happier Edinburgh
- leading as we would wish to be led
- sharing information
- more active communities
- everyone has access to a healthy diet
- tenants at the heart of decision making
- be more imaginative and daring
- more say on how our taxes are spent

More active communities



Better places to live in

Getting it right.

We identified four main areas where activity will help us to achieve our vision for Neighbourhood Partnerships, expanded here.

1. Choose the right attitude!

Our attitudes can impact positively or negatively on others. Delegates talked about combining the feelings and attitudes of community spirit with the way we engage with people.

Focus on the solution ...

- be conscious of my own behaviour so that I express myself positively in terms of 'can do'
- we know how to get things done

be more solution focussed when working with health groups / clients



*have ideas walls like this one
(at conference) in local community centres*

Have fun ... good things come from enjoying what we do.

- I will encourage, promote and support new and different ways of doing things
- try out more fun ways of engaging with people

*Be conscious of my own
behaviour so that I express
myself positively in terms
of 'can do'*



always act as if I make a difference

Get Involved

- always act as if I make a difference
- think positive before looking at the negative
- I have a voice!
- I pledge to reinvigorate my NP



Take responsibility ... we all have something to offer to help achieve joint outcomes.

- I pledge to change the way my community council organises itself
- Neighbourhood Partnership is more than just about the Council – we (health, police, voluntary sector) are here
- We (young people) can run our own clubs

I pledge to change the way my community council organises itself

Be open ... to involving the wealth of experience and knowledge available locally

- I will be a more active listener and try and hear more views around the city
- be a politician who listens
- make more time
- listen to each other

make more time



2. Pave the way for people to get actively involved

Meetings...

More informal styles of meeting does not mean having less important or relevant meetings.

- don't make barriers at meetings – arrange seating to be inclusive
- come to my mum's for a meeting
- fun / good alternatives to meetings
- local agendas

local agendas

Reaching out...

The partnership is not just about meetings – much of the work takes place in action groups that have stronger links into the local community.

- remember rural areas
- more of a say for tenants groups
- make sure that everyone gets involved, like parents and young people
- get the opinion of kids in more deprived areas
- get out to underrepresented groups
- go to where the people are – schools, bingo, shops, pub, parks...
- look at community engagement processes for our NP's health subgroup.
- improve community engagement tools and techniques – use more imaginative ways
- make participation genuine – remove barriers; provide crèche, care facilities, translation



use more imaginative ways to engage people

3. Better communication, more often

We use both formal and informal communication to share information about what we are doing

“we need to identify diversity within each neighbourhood and use a variety of communication tools...”

These are the pledges people made:

- never stop telling ourselves and others when there have been successes
- celebrate all the good stuff that happens in our NP
- make sure I tell people what I am working on
- be honest in my communications
- manage unrealistic expectations
- contact the local radio station
- develop a local communications plan that involves more of the community
- get a signboard in for neighbourhood
- build our community council’s Facebook page / web presence



celebrate all the good stuff that happens in our NP



4. Your community needs you

Big things can come from getting involved - and there are lots of ways to be heard – from getting in touch with community groups or NP action groups to going to public meetings or organising events; the community needs you.

Use technology to engage with people...

- I will create a blog to engage with more of the community.
- I will help my peers to use 'digital technology' methods of including people – to increase community discussion and participation.
- Ensure youths are represented on Stenhouse community council website and contact the local youth forum to work together

Learn to use twitter or social networking site.

Making better use of local networks...

- I am going to learn more about the community
- Introduce myself to my neighbours – create a Facebook group and encourage them to participate – a voice for change
- Help to increase participation in NP subgroup structures.

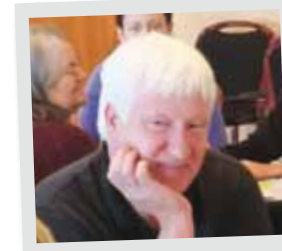
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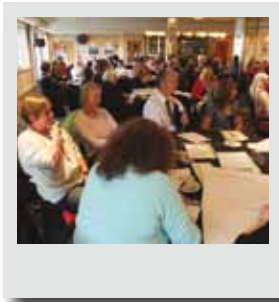
Improve links between young people and CCs

Improve links between young people and CCs

Voices of the future...

- we will make sure our views are heard - through youth forums, school councils, school newsletters, youth parliament
- I will connect with my youth parliament constituents better
- I am going to work with our youth forum to give a presentation at our next NP meeting
- develop pages for youth forums on the NP website
- Improve links between young people and CCs
- Make more effort to include young people in regeneration consultations
- Work with youth forum to set up more contact with Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Make sure new youth members of the Community Council can get involved





So, going forward together ...

we will place our values and principles at the heart of our approach.

Delegates said these are:

- being fully inclusive
- being more joined up
- making the meetings more relevant
- sharing information and experience
- listening then acting together
- talking to each other
- good and clear communication
- keeping it simple
- making use of existing skills
- the concept of 'Ubuntu' driving the spirit locally (recognising we are connected to each other, having mutual respect).
- using our different experiences to the best of our ability – making us more influential / powerful together

keeping it simple

being fully inclusive



We will set up a new area of the NP website, www.edinburghnp.org.uk called 'Partnerships in Practice' to record examples of how we are all taking forward the learning from Going Forward Together.



Cover graphics taken from *Going Forward Together* flipcharts.

