



Annual Report/Review 2006-2007





CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

As Chairman of the North West Community Network I am pleased to introduce this year's annual report.

The Network experience of the last 12 months has probably not been dissimilar to that of virtually every other organisation in the sector. That said, whilst it has continued to be a period of significant challenge and change, I am pleased to report that the rebuilding of the Network has been both solid and notable.

It is the hope of the Network Executive that our members have observed a significant change in output over the last year and whilst the difficult depths that we reached 3 years ago are never far from any of us, I am confident that a future for the Network is being identified.

What has been particularly welcome this year has been the apparent resurgence in appetite for networking and network support. Whilst the insecurity in the sector may have revitalised the need for collective action, it may also be that the same insecurity has focussed much more the need for the sector to consolidate and build its support structures.

Frustratingly, however, the context in which the sector operates remains little progressed from this time last year. The sector has a role to play in any new arrangement but it is clearly hard to adapt to that arrangement when the ground seems to keep moving. More importantly, however, the longer the uncertainty continues the more the sector deteriorates. We cannot bury our heads and hope that the inevitable change will go away. We must, as a sector, proactively approach the imminent changes and prove that we have a future. It will be a painful and tough experience but the reality is there and we can either be involved or be complacent. The latter isn't an option.

In closing I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support over the last period of operation and in particular my fellow Directors on the Executive. I also again commend our staff who have robustly rebuilt the organisation from the inside. The Directors and I thank them for their ongoing commitment to the organisation.

Eamon O'Kane
Chair, NWCN



2006-07 – A Review

There are few who would doubt the variety of work the Network is engaged in at any one time in presenting and promoting the interests of the Community & Voluntary sector. It is, though, this variety of task that has made the last year both extremely challenging and rewarding.

There have been the challenges around the delivery of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, the shifting sands that are RPA and Community Planning, dwindling core funds for everyone, the Network's own financial future etc.

There have also been significant rewards: a continuing increase in the level of usage of the Network by member groups and others, the securing of positions of influence at various levels, new and developing cross-sectoral relationships as well as impressive participation levels at events

organised by the Network.

The rest of this document will give a flavour of some of these but I would like to stress that the Network is very much focused on the future and the issues it continually presents for the Community & Voluntary sector.

In keeping with the growing demand for the Network's input, a key interest will be in developing human resource and collaboration with other agencies so that the chain of communication and influence from grassroots to decision-making levels is not only enhanced but further imbued with equality and genuine engagement.

The Network has been given a clear steer in recent times by its membership and it is on this collective voice that NWCN will continue to rely as we approach 2008.

Colin Devine – NWCN Co-ordinator

Information – Dissemination & Interpretation

Over the course of the past year, the Network has been assessing the range of methods it uses to support communication and information-sharing across and to the sector in the North-West. This analysis was guided by the very real factors of: financial and time outlay, environmental issues, efficiencies afforded by technology; and of course the ongoing need of community groups to have access to information that helps them deliver, develop and improve their services and also remain linked in to the sectoral representation provided by the Network.

The consideration of all of these has led to a few innovations/modifications that have been well-received by the sector:

- **NWCN Database** – significant effort in accuracy-proofing, categorisation, wider geographical spread, improved usage by member groups; now one of the most comprehensive sectoral databases in the NW.
- **E-bulletins** – the move was made away from ad-hoc response to dissemination needs towards a more regular pattern of composite bulletins with clear guidelines on submission practice. Though more efficient from both NWCN and readership point of view, this innovation has encouragingly seen a steady increase in the number of news items the Network is asked to carry.
- **Network Update** – the decision was taken to transform this long-standing news/opinion

publication from a hard-copy to primarily an electronically distributed document, supported by feedback from member surveys. It is still despatched to groups without reliable access to email and recipient groups are encouraged to share with their own members and/or signpost back to the Network for future inclusion.

- **Consultations** – like many groups, the Network receives notice, usually in the form of paper correspondence, of all departmental and NGO consultations. Whilst continually advocating for both consistency and accessibility of approach across departments, the Network has developed a regular summary of key consultation documents, inviting groups to highlight those that may call for a sectoral response. Improving how public policy engagement is conducted is a key motivation behind this approach, with particular reference to Section 75 and hard-to-reach groups.
- **Website** (www.nwcn.org) – although all of the above improvements are hosted and archived on the Network's website, in terms of ongoing efficiency and effectiveness improvements, it is online where the biggest potential remains, with exciting plans being devised for a complete overhaul. Based on research into other community development-oriented websites, it is hoped to develop for the sector in the NW a much more interactive, user-led platform that will support many outcomes – networking, virtual and actual, debate via blog and message-board, and support through resource/expertise sharing and signposting.



Network Events & Collaboration

If it is possible to encapsulate the essence of the Community & Voluntary sector, it might be that it exists fundamentally as a response to unmet need and inequality at community level, disparities that it supports, and indeed guides, public bodies in responding to. Such a dynamic, as imperfect a description as this might be, is fluid and evolving in nature i.e. needs, circumstances and priorities change so the sector has a duty to deliver an influencing role in the ongoing cycle of public policy decision-making.

This function is central to the Network's output and the last year has seen a range of events that demonstrate this. One of the issues around some of this activity, for which many use the general label of consultation, is that genuine engagement can be hard to evidence (e.g. in the form of feedback, variety of approach) – the Network continues to work towards wider good practice in this area, and will bring its own influence to bear at every opportunity.

2006-07 saw the Network organise/co-host the following events:

Public Body Consultations:

- Autism West – Spectrum For Change
- Primary & Community Care Infrastructure (one community, one sectoral)
- NI Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Section 75 Effectiveness Review

Collaboration Events:

- “Collaboration – How Does It Work?”
- NI Assembly Visit

- “Get To Know The Assembly”
- “RPA, Community Planning & Health”

Policy Submissions:

- Peace III Operational Plan
- Water & Sewerage Reform
- DSD – Support Services Strategy
- Derry City Council – Corporate Plan
- Ilex Sports Regeneration Plan
- Derry City Council – Community Support Plan

Training/Capacity-Building:

- Making Policy Work For You
- Values & Principles In Community Development/ National Occupational Standards
- “Lifetime Opportunities” – Anti-Poverty Strategy
- RPA & The Future of Networks
- Approaches to Quality, Self Evaluation, PQASSO (CENI)
- Peace III – Operational Plan
- NWCN Strategic Planning

The Network has also participated in work ongoing in the following areas:

- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Shadow Youth Council
- DHSSPSNI – LCG & CCA Development
- “Mapping Our Community”
- Derry LSP – C&V Representation
- NICVA Policy Manifesto
- CFNI – Fair Share Panel
- Governance Practice Group
- Bill of Rights Project
- C4Ni – Change for N.Ireland
- Walled City Neighbourhood
- Foyle Volunteer Awards
- Creating Change (WEA)

Statistical Summary of Primary Network Activity 2006/07:

- Network-supported events - 16
- Attendances at Network-supported events – c. 639
- Network Update – 15 editions produced
- E-bulletins – 40 disseminated (commenced Apr 07)
- Consultation bulletins – 13 disseminated (commenced Feb 07)
- Group Support – 638 (incl. signposting & referral)
- Use of Community Hub - 12



WASOP: Western Area Statutory Outreach Program

The Western Area Statutory Outreach Programme completed at the end of March 2007, after two years of activity which saw, across the Western Board area, fourteen statutory employees complete eighty-day project-based secondments in community settings.

The Network provided a mentoring/support role to six of these participants, delivering practical assistance as well as grounding in

community development approaches as they delivered on their agreed objectives.

The overall aim of the project was to promote community development principles in the delivery of public services, with a particular emphasis on outcomes and the learning that could be exported by participants from the community to the statutory environment.

WASOP, funded by DSD, underwent external evaluation and the role of Networks (across the Western area) was recognised as a key contributor to the overall success of the project.

Partnerships & Strategic Linkages

Key to its role as an advocate for the Community & Voluntary sector, the Network has a responsibility to seek out and make best use of representation across a variety of levels, themes and geographies. Alongside this is the development and enhancing of solid partnerships within and around the sector, again with the specific interest of influencing public policy.

The linkages mentioned below have all led to tangible benefits and activities in the delivery of the Network's aims on behalf of the sector:

- **Derry City Council** – Community Services Department (delivering on Community Support Plan)
- **Derry Local Strategy Partnership** – support received for strategic planning on priorities for sector
- **Rural Community Networks** – Oakleaf, Strabane, Omagh & Fermanagh Networks; collaboration on WASOP, consultations, and Community Planning/RPA events
- **Rural Community Network** – RPA/Community Developments; urban/rural positioning
- **WHSSB** – Community Development Team, WASOP, Consultations, Community Development Steering Group, Community Planning/RPA events
- **Local Commissioning Groups** – work on structures, roles and responsibilities to maximise community involvement in evolving structures

- **Community Development Networks Forum** – urban Networks from across NI establishing joined-up, strategic positions on sectoral matters such as funding, leadership, and RPA developments
- **Fair Share Panel** – participation in funding adjudication on areas deemed as under-represented through previous Big Lottery allocations
- **European Programs Advisory Group** – regional platform to receive and respond to latest developments on funds emanating from EU-sources
- **Joint Government Voluntary & Community Sector Forum** – strategic interface between representatives of C&V sector and counterparts from each government department; focus on cross-cutting policy issues such as Positive Steps, Anti-Poverty and Charity Legislation Reform
- **Civic Regeneration Forum** – citywide, social partnership entity with remit to look at and action all aspects of regeneration in Derry City Council area
- **North-West Stakeholder Alliance** – sub-regional, cross-sectoral forum with oversight role on Regional Development Strategy, and involvement in North-West Gateway initiative
- **Magee Stakeholder Group** – cross-sectoral working group aiming to deliver third-level Community Development Education at the Magee Campus of University of Ulster
- **Holywell Trust** – collaboration events at Calgach Centre and Stormont/Assembly study visit, Walled City Neighbourhood
- **Community Development & Health Network** – RPA, Community Planning, User Engagement, Advisory Group



NWCN Development Plan 2006-2010

Having launched the Network's Development Plan 2006-2010 at the last AGM, it is useful to revisit the principle elements of it in reviewing Network activity over the last year.

Mission: *"To work to achieve a genuinely participative democracy in the North-West."*

Strategic Aims:

- To encourage through networking and information exchange, greater co-operation between community and voluntary groups in the North-West
- To preserve, consolidate and develop the role of the Network as the voice of the Community and Voluntary sector in the North-West
- To facilitate networking opportunities between members of the sector and those with decision-making influence on the sector
- To develop and maintain strategic linkages between (the Network and) all stakeholders in order to advocate on behalf of the Community and Voluntary sector.

The Development Plan has been circulated and commented upon widely,

and formally approved by DSD, the main funder of NWCN's core activity. What has been clearly recognised from the outset is that the delivery of the Development Plan objectives is a collaborative effort requiring leadership from the Network, participation by groups in the sector, across the range of themes and geographies in the North-West, but also meaningful engagement by statutory bodies whose responsibilities towards user involvement are becoming ever more formalised but too often lack real substance.

It is central to the Network Executive Committee's role to ensure that all NWCN activities are consistent with the Development Plan and purposeful in achieving the overall Mission.

The Development Plan has provided the Network with the necessary focus to prioritise and shape its activities. That said, it is a four-year plan and reflective practice highlights that some aims may require greater future emphasis, to ensure the thread that links all four aims together is maintained and remains uniformly strong.

Full content of Development Plan available at Network website – www.nwcn.org

NWCN Funding

The Network's core funding for the last six years has mainly been provided, via DSD, through Measure 3.3 of BSP (Building Sustainable Prosperity). This programme came to an end in March 2007 with the Network having been successful in securing continuing core funding through the new Community Investment Fund, scheduled to run through to March 2009.

The Network's experiences around its own funding, supported by feedback from members, have highlighted a range of issues that it will seek to address in times to come:

- General sustainability of community organisations as the move is made away from grant aid to outcome-led funding
- Consistency of approach across major funding bodies in relation to e.g. bank charges, full-cost recovery and reserves policies
- Impact of imminent changes to legislation on charities and in particular around audit responsibilities

The Network also received funding from Derry Local Strategy Partnership and the Western Health & Social Services Board for work carried out on WASOP and Public Engagement activity.



NWCN INCOME & EXPENDITURE (as at 31 March 2007)

	31/03/2007 2007	31/03/2006 2006
<u>Restricted Income</u>		
DSD - Gap Funding	50,952	53,218
NIH	29,646	11,250
Derry City Council	1,722	-
The Junction	-	2,250
	82,320	66,718
<u>Unrestricted Income</u>		
Membership Fees	1,066	407
Other Income	-	439
Other Income Unrestricted	614	-
Corporation Tax Refund	-	741
	84,000	68,305

Resources Expended

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2007	Total 2006
Management & Administration				
Wages & Salaries	-	43,767	43,767	37,414
Travel & Hospitality	-	1,165	1,165	30
Staff Training	-	-	-	1,000
Rent Payable	-	10,575	10,575	6,679
Insurance	-	479	479	785
Derry Healthy Cities	-	4,100	4,100	-
Light & Heat	-	460	460	1,027
Repairs & Maintenance	-	849	849	600
Printing, Postage & Stationery	-	5,270	5,270	5,766
Administration	-	-	-	2,083
Telephone & Fax	-	1,592	1,592	1,303
Conference & Seminars	-	1,777	1,777	297
Room Hire	-	-	-	80
Accountancy	-	1,000	1,000	664
Facilitation	-	4,575	4,575	568
Sundry Expenses	-	401	401	267
Lease Finance Charge	-	849	849	737
Bank Charges	-	212	212	1,067
Depreciation of Fix & Fittings	-	907	907	912
		77,978	77,978	61,279
Current Liabilities			2,007	2,006
			£	£
Bank loans & overdraft			2,599	-
Other creditors			1,000	-
Accruals & deferred income			5,078	4,542
			8,677	4,542



NWCN BALANCE SHEET (as at 31 March 2007)

	Notes	£	2007 £	£	2006 £
Fixed Assets					
Tangible Assets	3		5,139		5,166
Current Assets					
Debtors	4		24,605		3,991
Cash at bank and in hand			8,551		18,981
			<u>33,156</u>		<u>22,972</u>
Current Liabilities (note 5)					
Bankloans and overdrafts			2,599		-
Other Creditors			1,000		-
Accruals			5,078		4,542
			<u>8,677</u>		<u>4,542</u>
Net current assets			<u>24,479</u>		<u>18,430</u>
Total Assets Less					
current liabilities			<u>29,618</u>		<u>23,596</u>
Capital Account					
Brought forward at 1 April 06					
Unrestricted			-		-
Restricted			23,596		16,571
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year			<u>6,022</u>		<u>7,025</u>
			<u>29,618</u>		<u>23,596</u>

NWCN Executive Committee 2007

Chair: Eamon O'Kane - Derry Healthy Cities
 Vice-Chair: Darren Kirby - Greater Shantallow Area Partnership
 Secretary: Alison Wallace - Newbuildings CEA,
 (Paul Kavanagh, BBI – stepped down May 07)
 Treasurer: Darren Boyle - Opportunity Youth
 (Ciaran O'Donnell, Volunteering Project – stepped down Feb 07)

Committee Members: Paula Martin - Bridge Accessible Transport
 William Lamrock - Londonderry YMCA
 Oliver Green - Greater Shantallow Community Arts
 Maureen Collins - Good Morning North-West
 (Graham Elliot, Dennett Interchange – stepped down May 07)



Evaluation of NWCN:

This year saw the completion of the Evaluation of the Network's activity under BSP Measure 3.3, building upon a baseline piece carried out at the start of 2006. The work, carried out by Lestas and available from the Network, reports on a wide range of feedback from groups in the sector on what services they have received from the Network over the last eighteen months and what overall role they see for the organisation as a sectoral advocate. Below is a summary of the findings:

"The specific targets for the Network ... underline that NWCN needs to be actively:

- *Representing the needs of the area/region it serves at network and individual level;*
- *Providing a focus for lobbying and consultation for the area/region it serves;*
- *Networking and providing interface with key statutory agencies and other organisations;*
- *Promoting and facilitating training and capacity building programmes;*
- *Interpreting and disseminating information.*

NWCN has developed a comprehensive approach to its role within the voluntary and community sector in the area. The organisation recognised a number of issues that needed to be addressed at the interim evaluation stage and have improved their systems and processes to address the issues. As a result, the second part of their project supported by DSD has enabled NWCN to successfully implement the key aspects of their funding requirements. This is reflected not only in the statistics and information provided by the organisation, but the important survey undertaken with their member organisations and detailed in this report.

To assist the long term sustainability of the organisation there are a few important recommendations that are highlighted from the findings of this report.

1. It is important that the increased level of

work continues and NWCN continues to implement the focus provided in their newly produced Development Plan

- 2. Continued effort is required to improve the number of fully paying members to the organisation - a realistic target is to double the current figure by end of 2008*
- 3. It is important to continue to provide information to the wider network outside of paying members to increase the profile and understanding of the work of NWCN*
- 4. There are a number of additional services requested by member organisations that need to be addressed efficiently and effectively such as providing mentoring support to the groups and assisting them to decrease their dependency on the EU funding cycle through tendering for public sector contracts and develop more elaborate financial control systems."*

Included below are some of the specific recommendations the Network will seek to progress during the next phase of its existence:

- More outreach clinics
- Advice on lobbying
- The development of an interactive website so members can upload their own content and interact with other users
- Advice on how to increase generated income and obtain service level agreements or commercial contracts to reduce dependency on grants
- Being a more vocal lobbying group with government and funding organisations
- Providing guidance for the sector to act as "one voice"
- Increase the awareness of the public in the work of the voluntary and community sector
- Develop a wider geographic base in the area
- Encourage member groups to network together more frequently.



North-West Community Network Membership 2007

1.	Action Inishowen	58.	Headliners Foyle
2.	ALLY Foyle	59.	Holywell Consultancy
3.	Amma Ireland	60.	Holywell Trust
4.	An Teach Ban	61.	Home Accident Prevention Foyle
5.	Baha'i Community	62.	INCORE
6.	Banagher Play Group	63.	Inside Out Youth Programme
7.	Bob Harte Memorial Trust	64.	Irish Street Community & Youth Association
8.	Bogside & Brandywell Health Forum	65.	The Koram Centre
9.	Bridge Accessible Transport	66.	Lifestart Foundation Ltd
10.	CALMS	67.	Little Rascals Playgroup
11.	Carnhill Community Association	68.	Londonderry YMCA
12.	Caw 2000 Community House	69.	MENCAP
13.	CDLi	70.	Mens Action Network
14.	Centre Of Creative Energy	71.	Methodist City Mission - Men's Hostel
15.	Childline NI	72.	Mind Yourself
16.	Children in Crossfire	73.	Nexus Institute
17.	Churchtown Community Association	74.	NI Association for Mental Health
18.	Citizens Online	75.	NI Newpin
19.	City Centre Initiative	76.	NI Tenants Action Project
20.	Clooney Family Centre	77.	North West Centre for Learning & Development
21.	Clooney Hall Centre	78.	North West Volunteer Centre (CVWB)
22.	Community Foundation NI	79.	Oakgrove Parents Association
23.	Creggan Neighbourhood P/Ship	80.	Off The Streets Initiative
24.	Cresco Trust Ltd	81.	Opportunity Youth
25.	Cruse Bereavement Care	82.	PAPA
26.	Chnoc na Rós Doire	83.	Peace & Reconciliation Group
27.	Cunamh	84.	Rainbow Child and Family Centre
28.	Currynierin Womens Action	85.	REACH Across
29.	Customised Training Services Ltd	86.	Relate NI
30.	Dennett Interchange	87.	RNIB
31.	Dergfinn Partnership	88.	Sai Pak Chinese Community Project
32.	Derry Healthy Cities	89.	SALT Community Association Ltd
33.	Derry Well Woman	90.	SEEDS
34.	DYCW	91.	Shopmobility Foyle
35.	Diamond War Memorial Project	92.	Sion Mills Parish
36.	Donegal Education Centre	93.	St Bernadettes Playgroup
37.	Donegal MS Ireland	94.	STEER
38.	Dry Arch Centre	95.	Strabane & District Caring Services
39.	Echo Echo Dance Theatre	96.	Strabane & District Community Network
40.	Eglinton Community Ltd	97.	Strabane & Lifford Women's Centre
41.	First Housing Aid & Support Serv.	98.	Strabane Community Unemployed Centre
42.	Foyle Child Contact Centre	99.	Surestart
43.	Foyle Day Care	100.	Templemore Early Years Centre
44.	Foyle Downs Syndrome Trust	101.	The Playhouse
45.	Foyle Haven	102.	The Vale Centre
46.	Foyle Hospice	103.	Triax Neighbourhood Partnership Board
47.	Foyle Search & Rescue	104.	Trojans Youth & Community Dev Group
48.	Foyle Trust for Integrated Education	105.	Tullyarvan Mill Project
49.	Foyle Women's Aid	106.	U3A Foyle
50.	Foyle Women's Information Network	107.	Waterside Women's Centre
51.	Galliagh Women's Group	108.	WEA
52.	Gasyard Development Trust	109.	West Bank Initiative
53.	Gasyard Wall Feile	110.	Yes! Publications
54.	Glenshane Care Association	111.	YouthAction
55.	Greater Shantallow Community Arts	112.	Youthlife
56.	Guildhall Press	113.	Zest
57.	Harpurs Hill EYP		



During this operational period
NWCN received core funding from:



under programmes BSP 3.3 & Community Investment Fund

North-West Community Network
23 Bishop Street, Derry~Londonderry BT48 6PR

Tel: (028) 7127 9090 Email: info@nwcn.org

Fax: (028) 7127 9357 Web: www.nwcn.org

Co-ordinator

Colin Devine
colin@nwcn.org

Administrator

Mary Harkin
mary@nwcn.org

Accountants:

McGroarty MaCafferty & Company Limited
2 Carlisle Terrace
Derry BT48 6JX

Banking:

First Trust Bank
Strand Road
Derry

A Company limited by guarantee – CN: NI39778
Recognised as a charity: XR21800

