

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

Protocol with

South Whitehaven Neighbourhood Partnership

a) Introduction – Neighbourhood Management

Neighbourhood Management is a process not a project. It involves communities working with local agencies to improve services at neighbourhood level.

Neighbourhood management aims to tackle quality of life issues in communities through:

- Better management of the local environment;
- Increasing community safety;
- Improving housing stock;
- Raising education and skill levels
- Encouraging employment opportunities.
- Reducing health inequalities
- And other issues important to that community.

The key to neighbourhood management is that residents concerns should be more important in defining what should be done than agencies' assumptions. So it is vital that local residents, through their elected councillors - and directly where possible - are involved and empowered.

Council services, the police, health services, development trusts, housing associations, schools and childrens services, employment services and regeneration companies all have an important part to play.

Neighbourhood management partnerships also need support at the strategic level through the active leadership of the Council and involvement in the Local Strategic Partnership. Neighbourhood management will only be successful if all relevant stakeholders are effectively engaged.

b) What this Protocol does

Copeland BC has agreed to lead a Neighbourhood Management programme in South Whitehaven, and has convened a Neighbourhood Partnership of local stakeholders to effectively engage in this programme. The Council therefore adopts this Protocol to set out the relationships between the Council and its partners in general terms. Detail about specific programmes and actions will be set out in the planning documents for those programmes and actions.

This Protocol governs the operation of the Partnership as a neighbourhood partnership and the bodies or groups established by and for the Partnership as a whole.

There also exist within and alongside the Partnership a range of independent bodies and partnering arrangements which have their own legitimacy and autonomy, and their own protocols and agreements covering their operations. This Protocol only applies to those bodies in the context of their membership of the Partnership.

For the avoidance of doubt, it should be noted that the Council does not intend to establish the Partnership as a body corporate but as a partner body to itself, and the Partnership has no assets liabilities or personality distinct from the Council.

c) Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is the Responsible Body for funding allocated through Local Area Agreement for the development of neighbourhood management arrangements in South Whitehaven, and the Council's usual financial regulations, delegations, and decision-making procedures shall apply. Accordingly, Copeland Borough Council may ask its staff, District Audit, or any other body, to examine any aspect of Partnership activity, including relevant records maintained by Partners, Project Managers, other funders, and delivery contractors, and Partners agree to co-operate with any such reasonable examination.

In all actions relating to South Whitehaven, including but not limited to those actions where the Council is required to do so pursuant to the Local Area Agreement with the County Council, the Council will have regard to the views of its partners in South Whitehaven, as expressed through the Partnership Board established by this Protocol. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council does not and cannot commit itself to acting in accordance with the views of the Board in any instance.

The Council undertakes to provide to the Board such reasonable information about the area, the services of the Council, Council budgets, management arrangements and spending plans as to enable the Board to come to an informed view of strategic approaches and delivery actions which are appropriate to the objective of securing the future of South Whitehaven communities as sustainable communities, and encourages its other public private and third sector partners to do likewise.

The Council undertakes to designate a named officer of the Council as having responsibility for supporting the work of the Board and the Partnership, and being the recognised first point of contact between the Council and the Board on the co-ordination of matters covered by this Protocol.

The Council undertakes to provide Members of the Board with a "job profile" defining their role within this Protocol; with appropriate training and development for Board in order to assist them to provide effective support and

advice to the Council through these arrangements; and to meet the reasonable costs members of the Board in undertaking their duties as members.

The Secretariat to the Partnership will be provided by the Council

Actions taken by the Council, with the Partnership, may include:

- Producing a Neighbourhood Strategy or Community Plan for the social economic and environmental well-being of the communities of South Whitehaven
- Establishing a Neighbourhood Delivery Plan or Delivery Agreement which sets out objectives and targets for the delivery of public services in South Whitehaven to agreed standards
- Making arrangements with existing service providers to improve poor services or if necessary taking direct action by managing the delivery of poor services themselves
- Establishing a Delivery Group of officers from the key public agencies working in South Whitehaven to co-ordinate the delivery of mainstream services in the area.
- Recognising the role of Neighbourhood Forums as the Partnership Forums for their local communities and working with the Neighbourhood Forums and the wider partnership to ensure that community advocates are properly delegated by their community; and, where they do not already exist, structures and systems are developed to build the capacity of communities to appoint and hold to account advocates.
- Developing and supporting residents' direct involvement in the partnership Board and in working groups, ensuring they are from a wide and diverse background, (including young people). This includes enabling different levels of involvement depending on personal preference and circumstances.
- Reaching out to residents not involved and removing barriers to involvement.
- Growing residents' capacity, knowledge and confidence to use evidence to challenge the work of service providers.
- Supporting community organisations, which can potentially make a positive contribution to renewal.
- Targeting communications at the local level.
- Identifying and supporting 'champions' within local service providers to make the case for the neighbourhood.
- Using local politicians as 'vibrant local leaders' to promote the case for the neighbourhood.
- Opening channels of communication by instilling a new mind set in service providers' approach to the neighbourhood, service delivery and community involvement in decision-making.
- Coordinate the activities of service providers so their combined efforts link together and are more effective on the ground.
- Ensure the standard of services are continuously raised in line with agreed targets

- Ensure service providers are effectively held to account by local people for the quality of service they provide
- Build the capacity and expertise of the community to understand and then set the agenda for change and local renewal.

c) The Partnership Board

1. Function of the Board

In convening the Partnership, the Council establishes a “Neighbourhood Partnership Board”, which may be called the Board. This is not a Board in the Executive sense, but the representative grouping through which the Council agrees the Plans for the social, economic, and environmental well being of the communities of South Whitehaven, and challenges the bodies who implement those Plans, in partnership with those communities. As such, the Board will –

- sign off the Community Plan and Local Neighbourhood Renewal Delivery Plan on behalf of the Council’s partners
- monitor implementation of the Community Plan and LNRDP
- make recommendations on the spending of Neighbourhood Element, Cleaner Safer Greener Element, and Housing Market Renewal and any other temporary spending initiative funds allocated to South Whitehaven in support of mainstream funding, whether through Local Area Agreement or otherwise.
- Comment on and seek to influence the mainstream spending plans of the Council and other public bodies operating in the area.
- ensure that the Partnership works to its Terms of Reference
- Identify local needs and priorities, analysing the underlying or ‘real’ causes and planning to improve failing services.
- Provide agencies and communities with a clear point of contact within the neighbourhood.
- Negotiating on the community’s behalf with the higher levels of government and service providers with the benefit of backing from the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- Gaining access to people at the right levels to get things moving
- Partners will fully co-operate with all requests for information from Copeland Borough Council to enable it to support bids for funding and identify outcomes following on from such funding to the Council, and in particular comply with any time limits imposed.
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2. Composition of the Board

The Board shall, with the approval of the Council, adopt Terms of Reference for the Board which shall define its membership in detail, provided that such membership shall include

- Elected members appointed by Copeland Borough Council
- Elected member(s) appointed by Cumbria County Council

Together with representatives of the Councils partners in the area:

- Community groups organised by community within South Whitehaven (eg Mirehouse, Woodhouse etc)

- Community Groups organised along interest lines(inc youth)
- Social Partners (Chamber of Commerce, Trades Union Congress, and Third Sector Forum, to include Registered Social Landlords)
- Other public sector bodies (including Connexions, Job Centre Plus, Police, Health)

Such terms of reference shall include the following provisions:

- Nomination of representatives shall be the prerogative of the nominating bodies to be identified in the Board's Terms of Reference, who shall undertake to exercise their selection and appointment procedures in accordance with the principles of this Protocol.
- Representatives shall be lay members rather than professional officers, but professional officers may attend meetings in support of their members.
- A representative may send a named substitute to meetings provided that substitute has been so appointed by the nominating body; substitution of lay members should be by lay members, rather than officers.
- Membership of the Board shall constitute a personal commitment to the work of the Partnership, to attend meetings regularly, and to give due priority to Partnership business
- It shall be acknowledged that the Partnership is not an executive or corporate body, that it does not have power of control over its members, and that wherever possible, decisions should be made jointly by consensus.

3 Operation of the Board

The Board shall adopt Terms of Reference which shall govern its own operations and procedures. Such Terms may include provision for

- Frequency of Meetings
- The election of a Chair of the Board from within its membership
- The role of the Chair of the Board in taking a leading role in the planning, development, and progression of business.
- Standing Orders for the conduct of meetings, including, but not limited to provision for agendas, items for information only, minutes, distribution of papers, quora, confidentiality, accessibility of times and venues, and special meetings,
- Attendance at meetings by Advisers and Officers from the Council, partners, and other bodies.
- Establishment of cross-sectoral sub-Groups to assist in strategy development and service improvement for social, economic and environmental well-being
- Oversight of any other Working Groups established by the Board itself to undertake work on its behalf

d) . Termination of this Protocol

The Council may dissolve this arrangement on notice in writing to the members of the Neighbourhood Partnership Board