

# Briefing Paper 21



## Focusing Mainstream Resources

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## Purpose of this paper

Briefing Papers aim to set out current thinking, discussion and debate around a specific topic or question. They provide new perspectives and can be used to outline potential ways in which to tackle the issues as we go forward.

This particular paper was written by Andrew Noble and is part of a series of publications arising from the Improvement Service (IS) / Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR) collaborative project, which focuses on 'Embedding an Outcomes Approach in Community Regeneration & Tackling Poverty'. Whilst the IS / SCR project is working with local partnerships involved in the area of community regeneration / tackling poverty, the issues covered within this paper are generic in nature, based on good practice collected from working in the field and are likely to be of wider interest across the public sector.

The views expressed in Briefing Papers are not necessarily shared by the Scottish Government.

## What's this paper about?

This paper looks at the issue of 'mainstreaming' and considers how Community Planning Partnerships can mainstream effective poverty and community regeneration programmes.. It will consider what we mean by the term and Scotland's history of 'ring fenced funds'. It will set out two approaches; refocusing budgets and services to become more effective and adapting service approaches. Case study examples will be given from West Lothian Community Planning Partnership.

## About the 'Embedding an Outcome Approach in Community Regeneration and Tackling Poverty' Project

The overall aim of the IS - SCR collaborative project, "Embedding an Outcomes Approach in Tackling Poverty and Community Regeneration" (a pilot demonstrator project ) is to encourage the embedding of an outcomes approach in community regeneration and tackling poverty within local areas.

A key aim is to help local partnerships develop and fulfill the potential of the outcomes approach, by ensuring that they can access relevant practical support and advice in specialist areas and in a format that meets their requirements.

The project is working with five local partnerships, Dumfries and Galloway, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian and West Lothian. In particular, the project is seeking to develop and pilot new forms of support that will help to encourage the development of capacity regarding how the outcomes approach can best be embraced within the context of community regeneration / poverty. A key objective is to assist local partnerships with embracing an Outcomes approach and to provide practical support that will encourage the adoption and embedding of such an approach.

The ultimate aim is that the support provided to the local partnerships will help them achieve the delivery of more effective and sustainable outcomes within their local communities in the area of regeneration / tackling poverty.

The project will also aim to encourage wider adoption of the learning from these demonstrator projects by capturing the key findings and experiences from each project. This paper is part of this dissemination of learning.

## Background Context

March 2010 saw the end of specific ring fenced funding for poverty and community regeneration in Scotland, with the Scottish Government's inclusion of Fairer Scotland Funding (FSF) into the local authority block grant award. The end of FSF signaled a significant shift in social policy in Scotland. Decisions on priorities for tackling poverty in local areas is now the responsibility of local authorities and their Community Planning Partners.

The previous twenty years had seen a succession of ring fenced poverty and community regeneration funds, most of which were area based, which had been allocated from the Scottish Government, Executive and Office to local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships. Community Regeneration Funding, Better Neighbourhood Services Funding, Social Inclusion Partnership Funding and their predecessor funds had been the principal external resource at the disposal of local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships to regenerate communities and tackle poverty in their areas.

These ring fenced funds were intended as “catalyst” funds, to access further funding streams, from other sources such as Europe and the Big Lottery and, critically, to lock in mainstream local authority and partner resources to tackle poverty, deprivation and support community regeneration. Mainstream resources in this context mean the services, people and finance that Community Planning Partners deploy as part of their routine day to day work- for example schools, social work services for child protection and the provision of housing are all mainstream services delivered by local authorities.

It should be noted that the research indicates that ring fenced funding largely did not have a catalytic effect on mainstream resources. The research conducted by ODS Consulting in 2009 “informing future approaches to tackling multiple deprivation in communities-beyond the Fairer Scotland Fund” showed that the Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF) had a limited impact in terms of gearing in partners mainstream resources to support efforts to tackle poverty.<sup>1</sup>

This is a critical point. It is through mainstream partner resources that the long term sustainability of programmes, projects and interventions aimed at tackling poverty and regenerating communities can be ensured. Through mainstreaming effective approaches to tackling poverty and regenerating deprived communities CPPs can move from short term, sometimes transitory, project based work that is almost entirely dependant on external sources of grant funding. A consequence of this is without suitable mainstreaming approaches being put in place, CPPs could potentially lose both effective programmes to tackle poverty and critically the learning and knowledge base that has been built up by successful programmes. This paper will consider a possible approach that CPPs can take to mainstream effective poverty and community regeneration programmes.

The joint Scottish Government. CoSLA statement “Equal Communities in a Fairer Scotland” published in November 2009 states the change in approach;

*“We believe this is necessary to increase local autonomy, flexibility, and the pace of progress in tackling high levels of multiple deprivation in our communities. Community planning partners need to come together with communities themselves to tackle this persistent challenge using the combined power and influence of all mainstream budgets and resources. “*

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/05142307/0>

Only by doing this, and by seeking maximum benefit for deprived areas from wider economic development and physical regeneration, will all of Scotland's communities have improved access to opportunity and a better quality of life."

The major budgetary challenge facing all Community Planning partners, and the likelihood of very tight financial settlements for the foreseeable future reinforces the importance of mainstreaming effective interventions to tackle poverty.

## What do we mean by Mainstreaming?

Mainstreaming is the means by which Community Planning Partnerships take account of and reflect the needs of disadvantaged or excluded groups and communities within policy making and service delivery, rather than having specific supplementary strategies to address their needs. In practice this can mean bending mainstream funds to sustain projects. It can also mean mainstream services taking on board new ideas and approaches that have been tested through initiatives and projects. In effect, with the move from ring fenced funding to core public sector budgets, the process in Scotland has been to move from one definition of mainstreaming to the other.

This Briefing Note draws on some of the issues raised in Learning Point 66 of this series, "Mainstreaming Regeneration Initiatives". A key issue identified in the previous learning point is 'how can we successfully refocus budgets and services and become more effective at using the range of resources available to us?'

## Refocusing Budgets and Service to become more effective

Mainstreaming existing projects and services- in effect refocusing budgets and services to make them more effective requires Community Planning Partnerships to carefully consider a range of issues; the broad strategic context of the CPP and the SOA, the performance of projects and programmes, and the likely impact of the end of a particular project.

## Mainstreaming Checklist

The following checklist contains a number of statements and questions which should be considered by CPPs as part of a process to mainstream poverty and community and regeneration projects. This checklist is based on an assumption that performance management information will be available from the project as part of a regular monitoring process. These questions and statements can be developed into mainstreaming criteria and "weighted" accordingly.

### Key questions for mainstreaming projects:

1. What is the current resource allocation to the project?
2. What resources are available for the continuation of the project?
3. How well does the project "fit" with the outcomes set out in the CPPs Single Outcome Agreement?
4. What is the evidence of need/ demand for the project?
5. What is the evidence of future demand? For example the impact of an ageing population.

6. What is the likely impact of the closure of this project/ removal of funding? In particular is the closure of this project likely to have a particular impact on particular group or community?
7. How well has the project performed against its targets?
8. Value for money of the project (ratio of inputs to outputs / outcomes) and its VfM relative to alternative interventions that could deliver similar outcomes.
9. What links are there to existing services? Does the project provide unique services in an area- for example support to women who have suffered domestic abuse.
10. What are the costs associated with the closure of a project? (redundancy costs, pension liabilities and so on).
11. Does the project operate on an early intervention/ prevention model- acting to reduce demand on other services?
12. Does the project have an innovative approach to service delivery?

### **Adapting Service Approaches**

There is a second element to Mainstreaming - when mainstream services adapt taking on board new ideas and approaches that have been tested through other initiatives and projects. An innovative example of this approach is the Life Stages programme in West Lothian Community Planning Partnership.

The Life Stages Outcome Planning Programme is a substantial, strategic programme of change led by West Lothian Council working across the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The overall aim of the programme is to enable the CPP to plan and deliver more effective interventions to tackle social inequalities and build successful communities across West Lothian using a Life Stage approach targeting deprived geographical areas. The Programme recognises that those who are most at risk (and generate the greatest expense in terms of demands on services) often lead complex lives, and hence focuses on redesigning services around the needs of the target group using a partnership approach.

The Life Stages outcomes planning programme will enable a significant positive change to happen for those individuals, families and communities in most need in West Lothian.

Life Stages is driving service redesign in West Lothian, through these three priorities:

- Targeting services to reduce inequalities.
- Shifting resources upstream to deliver preventative services.
- Ensuring that we obtain the maximum impact for our expenditure.

### **Target groups**

The West Lothian Community Planning partners have shared their knowledge and experience of working with communities across West Lothian and have identified the target groups who are most in need of support to achieve better outcomes and avoid worsening inequalities. They have been working together to improve their support for the people in these target groups in 5 pilot areas for the 5 Life Stages, and these are:

- Early Years: Children aged 0-4 living in families misusing drugs or alcohol .

- School Age: Children and young people at risk of failing to achieve their potential owing to serious adverse circumstances (including low income, dysfunctional families, and poor housing).
- Young People in Transition: Teenage mothers, children who have opted out of school, school leavers at risk of unemployment and 20-25 year olds in the criminal justice system without employment.
- Working Age: Adults aged 25-40 on health related benefits and women wanting to return to the job market
- Older People: People most at risk of poor health outcomes and low quality of life.

The following example of this approach is drawn from work on the Older People's Life Stage. This is a good example of mainstreaming as it demonstrates how a CPP has redirected existing resources to create an integrated service to maximise the income of poor older people in West Lothian. For further information on the Life Stages Programme, please contact Lorraine Gillies, Life Stages Programme manager at [lorraine.gillies@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.gillies@westlothian.gov.uk)

### **Pensioner Income Maximisation Service**

The Pensioner Maximisation Programme was launched, initially as a pilot in October 2009 with the intention of raising an additional £1million from unclaimed benefits in six months. Partners involved in the initial project include West Lothian Council and Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP), Credit Union, 50+ Network and the care at home agencies with whom the council has a contract as well as the council's own service. Organisations who provide sheltered housing and housing with care.

The programme raised £1.35 million in this period and as a result the service has been mainstreamed with a target of raising an additional £2 million extra income for older people each year.

In the year October 2009 – September 2010, 574 vulnerable older people shared £2.758 million, an average weekly gain of £92 per week each. 1,296 had their incomes checked and 574 (44%) got extra money.

Individuals can refer them selves to the Advice Shop, and through a wide range of community groups, services and initiatives e.g. Credit Union, 50+ Network , local Royal British Legions, West Lothian Council homecare, the care at home agencies the local social work services and the organisations who provide sheltered housing and housing with care in order to promote the programme through raising awareness

As well as this, publicity has been generated locally with frequent articles in local newspapers and talks to groups of older people.

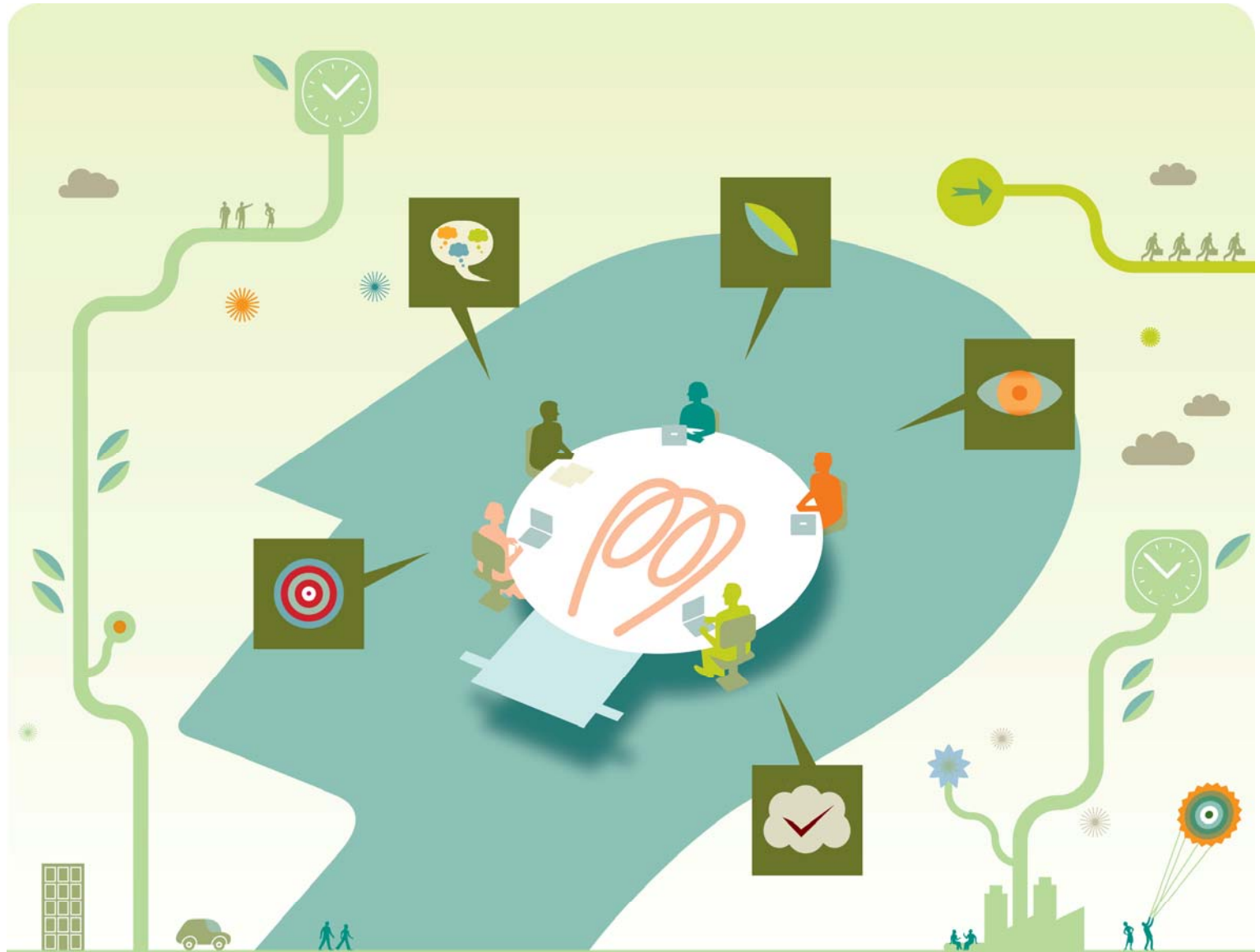
### **Related Impact on Individuals / Communities**

- Older People are able to have assistance to maximise their income.
- This brings greater economic independence and financial security for individuals.
- Improvements to general health and well being of older people.
- Less reliance on local authority and health services.
- It allows older people to purchase additional services.

- This contributes to older people being able to remain within their own home for as long as possible.
- There will be wider economic benefits to the West Lothian community given the amount of additional income to the local economy.
- Overall reduction in poverty in people over 65.

## Conclusion

The change in national policy approach highlighted in the “Equal Communities for a Fairer Scotland” and the severe financial constraints facing Community Planning Partnerships has reinforced the importance of mobilising existing mainstream resources to tackle poverty and community regeneration. The paper sets out two approaches to mainstreaming; refocusing budgets and services to become more effective and adapting service approaches. The case study drawn from the West Lothian Life Stages Programme helps to illustrate what can be achieved by Community Planning Partnerships when they effectively focus mainstream resources to address poverty within a specific group, in this case older people, in the community.



## Scottish Centre for Regeneration

This document is published by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration, which is part of the Scottish Government. We support our public, private and voluntary sector delivery partners to become more effective at:

- regenerating communities and tackling poverty
- developing more successful town centres and local high streets
- creating and managing mixed and sustainable communities
- making housing more energy efficient
- managing housing more efficiently and effectively

We do this through:

- coordinating learning networks which bring people together to identify the challenges they face and to support them to tackle these through events, networking and capacity building programmes
- identifying and sharing innovation and practice through publishing documents detailing examples of projects and programmes and highlighting lessons learned
- developing partnerships with key players in the housing and regeneration sector to ensure that our activities meet their needs and support their work

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