|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Meeting of the Joint Forum  between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector | |
| **DATE:** 19 June 2018 **TIME:** 10.00  **VENUE:** East Belfast Network Centre, 55 Templemore Avenue, Belfast | |
| Arthur Scott | (Joint Chair) Voluntary and Community Unit, Department for Communities. |
| **Present - Public Sector Group (PSG)** |  |
| Keith Gordon | Department for Communities, Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) Secretariat |
| Alastair Hughes | Department for Communities (DfC) |
| William Redpath | Department of Justice (DoJ) |
| Annie McGowan | Department for the Economy (DfE) |
| Angela Starkey | Department for Infrastructure (DfI) |
| Pamela Mallon | Department of Health (DoH) |
| Elaine Allen | The Executive Office (TEO) |
| Cathy Malone | Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) |
| Cate Taggart | SOLACE |
| Jamie Warnock | The Executive Office (TEO) |
| **Present - Voluntary and Community Group (VCG)** |  |
| Geoff Nuttall | NICVA - Secretariat |
| Siobhan McAlister | NICVA – Secretariat |
| Seamus McAleavey | NICVA- Chief Executive |
| Jonny Currie | East Belfast Development Agency (EBCDA) |
| Anne McVicker | Women’s Resource Development Agency (WRDA) |
| Chris Quinn | NI Youth Forum |
| David Smyth | Evangelical Alliance |
| Kate Clifford | Rural Community Network NI (RCN) |
| Lorraine Griffin | COSTA |
| Craig McGuicken | NI Environmental Link (NIEL) |
| **Apologies** |  |
| Niall Heaney | Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) |
| Rosie Drysdale | Department of Health (DoH) |
| Louise Cooper | Department of Justice (DoJ) |
| Ciaran Doran | Department for the Economy (DfE) |
| Alison McCullagh | NILGA |
| Ronan Adams | Department of Finance (DoF) |
| Gabrielle Kerr | Department for Infrastructure (DfI) |
| Anne Marie McClure | Start 360 |
| Clare-Anne Magee | Carers NI |
| Glenda Davies | Sandy Row Community Forum |
| Cara Cash-Marley | Nexus NI |
| Denise Hayward | Volunteer Now |
| Brendan Heaney | Diabetes UK |
| Ellen Finlay | Children in NI |
| Kevin Murphy | Voluntary Arts Ireland |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS** |
| Arthur Scott (Joint Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Jonny Currie for hosting the Joint Forum at the East Belfast Network Centre. |
| 1. **MINUTES / ACTION POINTS** |
| The minutes from the last Joint Forum meeting in March were agreed.  Update on action points from previous meeting 26th March:   * Meeting held between VCS and Lisa Boal from DoJ. Lisa presented an update on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime aspect of the Fresh Start Agreement. * Claire McKee spoke to Full Joint Forum to provide an update on roll out of Universal Credit. (Presentation attached) * Date for drugs misuse roundtable to be agreed with Anne Marie McClure and NIADA for late summer, early autumn. * SRO for outcome number 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law and each other, Brain Gryzmek attending this session to give an overview of the delivery of this outcome. * Arthur took on board the issues around funding that had been raised previously at the Joint Forum. He explained that Seamus McAleavey and Leo O’Reilly (DfC Permanent Secretary) were to meet in the coming weeks to discuss this issue but didn’t anticipate much progress at this stage. In response to this issue Ian Snowden (DfC) to set up a number of workshops with sectoral groups to discuss the funding issue. Arthur highlighted that it is highly likely that the one-year budget process would continue next year. Arthur noted that DfC are keen to engage in discussions with the voluntary and community sector to discuss a better approach to the funding issue. * David Patterson, TEO (stepping in for Paul Brush) attended this Joint Forum meeting to provide an update on work that NI officials are doing in relation to the Brexit process. (Presentation attached) * Update on the Anti-Poverty Strategy included within the updated issues table. |
| 1. **MATTERS ARISING** |
| None |
| 1. **PROBLEM SOLVING JUSTICE INIATIVE, OUTCOME 7. BRIAN GRYZMEK DOJ** |
| * Brian acknowledged that there were challenges in the absence of having a functioning Assembly and Ministers in place. * He outlined that the Programme for Government (PfG) had undergone a couple of rounds of consultation and the most recent associated document was the Outcomes Delivery Plan 2018-19. * He highlighted that departments are working on plans to actively take the PfG forward and this includes having monitoring systems in place. * Brian reminded us that the PfG sought greater collaboration and cooperation across departments and sectors with a greater focus on outcomes. * For DoJ, their main focus is on outcome 7 as well as outcome 12 (We give our children and young people the best start in life). * Brian highlighted that the over-arching aim was to make the justice system more effective in dealing with those who commit crimes and working upstream to intervene and provide support at an early stage of a person’s life. * He highlighted that those who end up in the prison system often have more complex problems such as mental health issues, addiction problems, abusive relationships and fractured homes and prison becomes a place of last resort. * Brian highlighted the need to intervene at a much earlier stage for they enter into the criminal justice system. It is not sufficient for people to have to wait to commit a serious crime to deal with the issues and get the support that they need. * This requires cross departmental cooperation to ensure that intervention and support can start in the early years, specifically between the age of 0-2 years. * This is the basis of problem solving justice, to divert those who have committed a crime away from the criminal justice system. * Brian also highlighted that the rate of crime is lower in NI than the rest of the UK and NI also has a lower rate of reoffending. * DoJ have also rolled out a number of support hubs such as the Family hub. * Other pilot programmes include the Enhanced Combination Orders to move away from short sentences (which do not act as a deterrent or do not rehabilitate). It also includes an early mental health assessment to help develop and support to confront and address behaviour and help to move on. * Pilot programmes also include Substance misuse courts- which is when crime is committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol and would not have been committed had the person been sober. This will give people an opportunity to be fast-tracked for support and monitored by a judge and frequently tested for drug and alcohol use. Brian highlighted that this has worked successfully in America. * Brian also talked about a domestic violence perpetrator pilot programme in Derry/Londonderry which has also worked well. This pilot programme is victim focussed and the aim is to put the perpetrator through an awareness course working towards keeping the family together and focus on rehabilitation. * All of these initiatives are focussed on moving away from a simple approach to more tailored solutions. * He also emphasised the involvement of community and voluntary sector organisations (e.g. Addiction NI, Women’s Aid) in these pilot schemes and highlighted the need for their involvement in this type of tailored support. * Highlighted the need to look at children in custody (as this is usually the feeder population for older prison population) in terms of mental health issues and getting to the crux of why they have committed a crime and then work to support a re-directing of them away from the criminal justice system. * There is consideration being given to the development of a mental health court as well. * In response to a question about cost from Seamus McAleavey (NICVA), Brian outlined that expenditure in the justice system is one of the least productive spends in society, there is no real gain from expenditure here and is more like a holding system. The money would be better spent in other areas to enable earlier intervention to prevent people ending up in the justice system. * Jonny Currie (EBCDA) also highlighted the need to support and educate local communities to understand better how the justice system works. Brian advised that the PCPS should be doing more of this but accepted that they could do better. He said that there is a review of sentencing policy being undertaken currently and when this goes out to consultation there will be a need to reduce the amount of literature, so it is easily understood by all. This will include going out into communities to present to groups. * Kate Clifford (RCN) raised the issue about the decimation of youth services- Brian conveyed his disappointment at this but advised that he saw opportunity for these kinds of services to have more leverage in the new PfG as departmental silos break down and DoJ begin tackling problems ‘upstream’. |
| 1. **BREXIT UPATE and ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: DAVID PATTERSON, TEO** |
| Presentation attached.   * This presentation set out priority issues for NI, workstreams as well as day one (after exit day) planning. * He advised that contingency planning for in a no deal scenario was underway however any policy would require ministerial direction. * He highlighted that the biggest difficulty was the border with no single solution emerging to deal with the range of multi-faceted issues this presents. * He expressed disappointment that there was no Assembly in NI to examine the EU Withdrawal Bill locally as had been done in Scotland and Wales * He highlighted that a number of powers are coming back to the UK and the current plan is that they will be repatriated centrally to Westminster and then be devolved- however difficulties of having no functioning Assembly here. * He highlighted that there are tens of thousands of pieces of legislation that have foundation in EU law and there is an ongoing trawl of NI legislation and prioritisation of issues to be addressed via Stormont- difficulty in managing this on time. * He advised that there is still a lot of work to be done in relation to the NI/Ireland section of any withdrawal agreement and this work will progress through the summer. * In terms of next steps, officials here will continue to plan for day one (still uncertainty around when this will be). Upstream engagement will be continuing throughout the summer and they will continue to keep people informed. David also said that they would be engaging with local parties to hear their concerns and keep them informed of developments. * He advised that the EU have suggested rolling PEACE and INTERREG into PEACE plus funding for 2021-27 and SEUPB will continue to be the managing authority- this is dependent on the UK government agreeing to match funding. * Departments here have a list of the gaps and this is forming part of their concerns. Over the summer, Permanent secretaries will identify policy gaps as a result of exit from the EU. * Issues and concerns raised in the roundtable discussion by Forum members included: * Women’s rights * The real impact on rights on the ground here * The psychology of the border and the perception of some people ‘having more rights than others’ depending on their identity * Workers and especially cross border workers’ rights * Regulatory alignment (and the issue of ongoing regulatory divergence in terms of marriage equality and reproductive rights) * Non-diminution of rights here and how this happens in the context of the repeal of the Charter of Fundamental Rights * Impact on social rights. * It was agreed to keep Brexit on the Joint Forum agenda. |
| 1. **UPDATE on the ROLL OUT OF UNIVERAL CREDIT- CLAIRE MCKEE (DFC)** |
| Presentation attached  Main points:   * Outline of how UC is made up * Phased approached beginning in September 2017 * Move to a digital service * Outline of how it is being paid * In the autumn budget statement (2017) a £1.5bn package was included to address concerns * Claire outlined that it is now working as anticipated and the roll out will continue and will complete in Dec 2018 (for new claimants and those with a change in circumstances) * Advised that they are working with advice centres and stakeholders so that everyone is well informed. * Advised that UC is separate from PIP. |
| 1. **UPDATE ON FUNDING- ARTHUR SCOTT (DFC)** |
| Arthur advised that a one-year budget cycle is likely to continue for 19/20 together with reduction in budget allocation.  He highlighted that DfC is not a protected department but that the advice sector had been protected from any reduction in 18/19 and that funding to other VCS groups had been reduced by at least 4%. He explained that the Department continued to move towards outcomes-based funding. He also acknowledged the increased uncertainty around the short-term budget cycles and the impact of this on the retention of staff.  He indicated that towards autumn of this year, the Department would issue applications for funding and at this point would be assuming a further 4% reduction in budget. This is subject to change. |
| 1. **UPDATE ON CAT TEAM WORK** |
| Review of Concordat  Concordat team working on final draft, workability and communications. Keith and Glenda to meet with Joanna McConway.  Rural issues  RCN are working with NISRA and NILGA to produce evidence of the policy gap.  A meeting of academics, government department and voluntary and community sector representatives on 5 July to explore rural evidence base and how it might prove that a policy gap exists.  This work had to stop in April and May due to RCN significant work pressures. The steering group were aware of this. |
| 1. **AOB: UPDATE ON TWO-CHILD CAP AND NON-CONSENSUAL CLAUSE- ANNE MCVICKER (WRDA)** |
| Detailed update attached |
| **AOB: DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |
| 25th October 10am-1pm Adelaide Exchange Building, Adelaide Street (BCC Buildings)  7th February 10am-1pm NICVA |