



The Power of Community

Community Empowerment!

Event Monday 25th June 2018

Held at the Jubilee Hall, Portlethen, Aberdeenshire

Feedback Report

Let's
Explore

The Power of Community

Programme

- 9.30am Check-in Tea Coffee
- 10.00 Welcome and Introductions
- 10.15 The Shift in the distribution of Power
Ed Garret AVA
- 10.30 Local Example of CE in K&M
The Bettridge Centre
- 10.50 Exploring Community
- 11.30 Tea/Coffee Break/ Networking
- 11.45 Local Example of CE in K&M
What's On Inverbervie
- 11.55 Coproduction
Jacky Niven Kincardineshire Development Partnership
- 12.45 Local Example of Coproduction in K&M
Pillar Kincardine
- 1.00pm Lunch/Networking
- 1.30 Community Empowerment Act Local Authority Overview
Reid Hutchison Aberdeenshire Council
- 2.00 World Café Discussion
- 2.30 Break
- 2.45 World Café Discussion
- 3.45 Summary and Closing Remarks
- 4.00pm Check-out



Introduction

In 2015 Parliament passed the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to give new rights to community bodies and new duties to public sector authorities. Three years on local Rural Partnership, Kincardineshire Development Partnership wished to look at Community Empowerment in Kincardine and Mearns, understand what truly empowered communities look like and further engage with the Act to help ensure that our communities maximise the opportunities it should present. KDP with partners from Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, held a day event for community groups to consider the wider subject of Community Empowerment and how it could align with the Act.

There are assumptions associated with the term and practice of 'community empowerment' making both concept and application potentially problematic, confusing and somewhat meaningless.

These include the assumption that:**

- There is an existing and collective understanding of what 'empowerment' means
- Individual empowerment is the same as community empowerment
- 'Empowerment' is seen as a task rather than an integral part of how we work (in empowering ways) and what happens as a result (empowerment)
- If communities cooperate with public agencies, then public sector demands and targets will be met
- Communities are homogeneous and that anything to do with 'community' is inherently good
- Community empowerment is a threat to representative democracy

Research indicates that a lack of empowering approaches in the past may have left a legacy of people and communities, feeling: disillusioned, cynical, apathetic, disinterested, angry, confrontational and over-consulted.

Staff working in both public and voluntary sectors often face this reality – and, whilst focusing on priorities around community empowerment, it can be helpful to remember how easy it is for people to feel disempowered and how engagement can take place in ways which are 'more empowering' than others

**Source:: Elisheva Sadan , MA Zimmerman

Let's Explore the Power of Community - Community Empowerment Event

This full day event was held on Monday 25th June 2018 at Portlethen's Jubilee Hall. In attendance were 30 members of the community, Local Authority and Third Sector partners. It is hoped that this report will help to feedback a picture of the impact locally of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 to date and perhaps offer an exploration of the challenges to be addressed if government policies to promote community engagement and empowerment are to work towards nurturing confident, inclusive, organised, cooperative and inspired communities who feel able to influence positive change where they live and work. Given the quality of the discussions on the day, we were asked, in some of the feedback, "Would there have been value in extending the invitation to members of the Local Authority at the Senior Management level?"

Exploring Community

With the introduction of the Act many events and sessions held have focused primarily on the facets of the Act. Community groups who are ready to engage with the Act are most likely quite empowered already. We felt there was a need to try and reach community members who are less informed and consider community and how it can effect change, look after itself and move away from the consumer view of service provision and towards citizenship.

To that end we devoted the morning's activities to looking at the Shift in the Distribution of Power, The make up of Communities and the different values of different sectors and how those differences can tell us how we can best work together. An introduction to coproduction highlighting that public services could benefit if based on the principles of approaching service users as assets who have skills that are vital to the delivery of those services. We also supplied three local case studies which demonstrated Community Empowerment happening in Kincardine and Mearns, underlining the concept that Community Empowerment is not something new. The message being that the Community Empowerment Act (2015) aims to provide mechanisms and frameworks to facilitate more Community Empowerment. The question is, is it working?



Community Empowerment Act (2015) - Local Authority Overview

We provided a presentation from Aberdeenshire Council focusing on the ethos of enabling communities and featuring in detail three of the eleven key facets of the Act; Participatory Budgeting, Participation Requests and Asset Transfer Requests. It was interesting when the speaker took a standing poll to ascertain the level of knowledge of the Community Empowerment Act (2015) it was only the Local Authority and Third Sector partners who remained standing. This was encouraging for us that we had pitched the event to the right people but perhaps raises the question of whether there is a risk of inequality in communities when it comes to the Act; could some community groups become more or less empowered than others because of their level of knowledge of the Act? What can be done to prevent this from happening?

Community Empowerment Act (2015) - Conversations that Matter

To give the delegates the opportunity to delve into aspects of the Act in more detail we invited key individuals to host table discussions on the different parts. Conversations were captured throughout the day with some graphic facilitation displaying key messages.



A Shift in the Distribution of Power

Historically, the distribution of power has followed the principles outlined in Thomas Hobbes', Leviathan (1651) where it rigorously argues that civil peace and social unity are best achieved by the establishment of a commonwealth through social contract. Hobbes's ideal commonwealth is ruled by a sovereign power responsible for protecting the security of the commonwealth and granted absolute authority to ensure the common defence. Ergo power is largely given to a government to act on our behalf, legitimacy through consent given at democratic elections and others forms of consultation and the belief that individuals are selfish and need controlling. However there is a paradigm shift occurring and a new model approach is emerging. That is that communities have power to do things for themselves, legitimacy guaranteed through communities actively participating in decision making process and the belief that individuals are basically good and can work together.

The exercise was to create your own tableau of power distribution and consider:

- *How might power be distributed more equally?*
- *What is the legitimacy of the decision making process?*
- *The power within your own group*







Case Study: The Bettridge Centre, Newtonhill

The Bettridge Centre is a large, busy volunteer-led leisure centre providing sports, arts and community facilities for the village of Newtonhill and surrounding rural area - including the growing towns of Portlethen and Chapelton. The Bettridge Centre is a completely independent social enterprise, it receives no revenue support or contributions to its day-to-day running costs. Although they have gratefully received funding towards specific projects and events - such as refurbishing the Small Hall, draught-proofing the stage, buying new tables and chairs etc - from a number of organisations.

Local fundraising resulted in the original Newtonhill Community Hall being built in 1986. The village of Newtonhill however, expanded rapidly over the next ten years and this hall was no longer adequate for the growing community. In 1996, Newtonhill Village Association spearheaded a campaign for better facilities. Fundraising by local residents, assisted by Aberdeenshire Council and the National Lottery, enabled plans to be drawn up and building commenced in March 2002. The Centre was officially opened by Sir Robert Smith on 1st March 2003.

Their mission is to provide a wide variety of high quality sports, arts and community activities at affordable cost to local people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Thereby helping to improve each individual's health and well-being, but also improving the quality of life in the community as a whole.

The Centre is not a private concern nor is it a council run facility. It is a charity, run for the community by a body of elected persons who have a general interest in providing these facilities. None of the committee are remunerated for their efforts and all of their time is given voluntarily for no financial gain.

The centre continues to be a focus for community life and whilst continuously busy its income only just covers the overheads. Looking forward there are plans to develop unused space and flow within the building to maximise its potential as a community facility. Bridget Scott, Development Worker for the centre, told us more about this very ambitious undertaking which they hope will benefit the whole community. They believe the future of the centre as an independent, sustainable enterprise depends on being able to use all the space they have at their disposal to generate income and the time to make that happen is now...



Exploring Community

We looked at this using a scenario based on “Tragedy of the Commons” often used by philosophers, economists and environmentalists to model what happens when people are left free to do what they like with common resources. We asked the groups to consider the scenario from the private sector, public sector and community perspectives looking at the values, differences and how knowing this can help us work better together.

What we learned...

The general feeling of a Private Sector approach was a focus on maximising profit to benefit the few. Often the model would be selective and exclusive, leaving behind weaker or poorer members of society. Historical experiences of the impact on Rainforests, The Highland Clearances and Deforestation were cited as reminders of high risk strategies which long term end in resource depletion. There were positives and a feeling that much could be learned from the Private Sector in terms of efficiencies and organisation which could feed into Social Enterprise models where profit can be made but reinvested back into the community for the greater good. In some cases, communities have benefited from philanthropy where land or funds are gifted.

A Public Sector approach solicited responses of lengthy processes, bureaucracy and a “top down” approach. Value, however, was recognised in their role in offering guidance and support, policing and enforcement. There was the view that there was more listening to and more effective communication with communities needed so that decisions were made in line with members needs and wants to be truly enabling. Also comments included the point that expertise can come from within communities and the importance of working in partnership as equals.

Language such as inclusiveness, cooperation, consensus and working together filtered through many of the Community Sector solutions. However, there was an appreciation that this would not be the utopia it might promise to be. There was still a need for decision making bodies and an acknowledgement of the challenges of a purely egalitarian approach. Cooperative and Social Enterprise models were favoured as efficient but with more civic minded aims.





Case Study: What's On Bervie, Inverbervie

As a new resident to Inverbervie back in 2010, Caroll Burness (Evans) became involved with the local "Twos Group" as Fundraiser. This led her to set up a Facebook page dedicated to news and events in Inverbervie. Over a short space of time this grew into a communication network of pages keeping the community of Inverbervie and surrounding area in touch with local groups, organisations and activities. The What's On Bervie brand grew to support more activities and groups in the area more actively. Initiatives such as Bervie Youth Club and Secret Santa developed through this communication hub. The Facebook network has a following of 6,000 members and is an efficient means of reaching many members of the local community. This reach has attracted the sponsorship a number of local businesses.



One of the main sponsors, Fotheringhams Property Development were vacating their office on the high street and approached Caroll for ideas of what to do with the space. This was a great opportunity for a Community Hub and the shop was donated to What's On Bervie to continue Caroll and her team's work in the heart of the community. They fundraise in various ways to cover their running costs and everything else is reinvested back into the Inverbervie community - they pay for projects including the pensioners Lunch Club, the Youth Club and the Community Café. The Christmas project, donating Christmas Hampers to community members who may not receive anything for Christmas, has grown. In 2017, What's On Bervie donated 85 hampers locally. The shop is also a base for the local foodbank.



Through this Community Hub, the Inverbervie Community have access to a Community Café, a Youth Club, Gentle Exercise classes, events to tackle loneliness and the list goes on. Caroll says that none of this could be possible without her team of Volunteers. With a helping hand from a local business, this community has been empowered to make positive changes to the lives of people in this town.



Co-production

“ Co-production is the process of active dialogue and engagement between people who use services and those who provide them”

--Sir Harry Burns,
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland

Co-production is a practice in the delivery of public services in which citizens are involved in the creation of public policies and services. Co-production is an asset-based approach that enables people providing and people receiving services to share power and responsibility, and to work together in equal, reciprocal and caring relationships.

Co-production is based on the following principles:

- Recognising people as assets, because people themselves are the real wealth of society.
- Valuing work differently, to recognise as work the things that people as well as services do to raise families, look after people, maintain healthy communities and good governance.
- Promoting reciprocity, giving and receiving – because it builds trust between people and fosters mutual respect.
- Building social networks, because people's physical and mental well-being depends on strong, enduring relationships

Co-production is not, however:

- Service user involvement in assessing services
- Service user involvement in service design
- Representation on service boards and panels
- Service user consultation
- Informing people who use services



Co-Production - the Practicalities, the Challenges and the Possibilities

Co-production may well be one of the most positive routes towards the vision of the Community Empowerment Act where community empowerment is a

“process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them”

...but let's consider the practicalities, challenges and possibilities.

What we learned...

Communication was a large factor when considering the **practicalities**. How do the community learn about decision making opportunities? What is the quality of communication? Are we achieving genuine dialogue? Are all members of society being reached? Is consultation sincere, managing expectations, focused and realistic? How do we identify the local need? Where there's rejection, are the reasons explained? The rurality and geography of the area were factors for consideration. Do communities have the capacity to take on more local activity and services and where there is a need to build social capital is there the level of support available? How will information be shared and what are the logistics around potential redistribution of resources? Co-production looks to the assets of people with lived experience, how can they be supported to participate?

The underlying factor in the discussions was the need for mutual trust to be in place. Effective and transparent communication could foster more confident relationships.

As with the discussions around the practicalities “Trust” emerged as a common theme when considering the **challenges** of co-production. It is a question of what conditions are needed for power to be devolved to people from a local authority and/or professionals. The need for a change in the way of thinking. Nurturing a climate of confidence with supported community members who have the capacity to be actively involved in the co-productive delivery of public services with a local authority confident enough to let go of the need to be in control. A key message centred around capacity. Communities have much to bring to services, but there were questions as to whether they had time and other resources. Also, overcoming the suspicion that working with volunteers is considered a “free option” and how can equity be achieved in such relationships. Concerns were raised in relation to vulnerable groups and how to ensure advocacy on their behalf. As highlighted as some of the practicalities, there are challenges in reaching some members of the community and effective engagement. The burden of making difficult decisions, how can communities be supported and prepared to cope with such eventualities?

Possibilities? “Endless”, was one comment. “More inclusive/impactful outcomes, pitched at a more local, effective level” and “challenging expectation as to who delivers what for whom”, expressed a sense that co-production could lead to resources focused on smaller administrative areas.



Co-Production - the Practicalities, the Challenges and the Possibilities cont.

Improved quality of services achieved through the recognition of the value of lived experience and the acknowledgement of the experts within our communities. Also, the skills, flexibility, energy and experience people can bring. We already see the innovation, inspiration and the ability to do more with less resources in projects across K&M. Service users, actively involved in the design and delivery of public services will take ownership and be part of the positive change they want to see, perhaps prompting local authorities to act differently. Consider services to be about people not systems. In addition, there were more specific comments focused on help dealing with health conditions again highlighting the value of lived experience and experts within communities.



The Christie Commission 2011 - Co-Production

The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services stated that “... *unless Scotland embraces a radical new collaborative culture throughout our public services, both budgets and provision will buckle under the strain* ...” (Christie, 2011: viii). Christie emphasises that we recognise “*that effective services must be designed with and for people and communities – not delivered ‘top down’ for administrative convenience*” (2011: ix). Our public services need to be reformed and “*built around people and communities, their needs, aspirations, capacities and skills, and work to build up their autonomy and resilience...*” (2011: 23).

The Commission’s recommendations were embraced by The Scottish Government and they expressed the need for public service reform based on the following four pillars:**

Prevention – “...directly aimed at improving outcomes and reducing the demand for a range of acute services over time ... (by) ... better utilis(ing) the talents, capacities and potential of our people and communities...” (Scottish Government, 2011: 6&8)

Partnership – which will be “...comprehensive and participative, harnessing the full spectrum of talents and capacities of public bodies, citizens, third sector organisations and local businesses... (and)... where appropriate ... place greater responsibility and control in the hands of citizens and communities ...” (Scottish Government, 2011: 10)

Workforce development – building on Christie’s recommendation that frontline staff working with people and communities are best placed to plan and deliver services, Scottish Government priority is that “... management and frontline staff in public services need to be encouraged and supported to prepare for change, promote innovation, embrace new approaches, improve performance and involve communities and services users in the design of public services ...” (Scottish Government, 2011: 14)

Performance improvement – Christie emphasises the importance of outcomes in improving and measuring performance. In response ‘Renewing Scotland’s Public Services’ calls for “... greater clarity around the objectives of public organisations which offer transparent measurement of progress and benchmarking ...” (Scottish Government, 2011: 16).

Case Study: Pillar Kincardine

We welcomed Development Worker, Moira Hurry and Director Wendy Brown of Pillar Kincardine, a small voluntary organisation based in Stonehaven, Scotland, supporting people in and around Kincardine and the Mearns who are coping with serious emotional, social or mental health difficulties. The organisation was founded in 1989 as a result of the success of "Stepping Stones" and Pillar Aberdeen's provision of social and leisure activities for people within the city at a time when, within Aberdeenshire, little service existed beyond Community Psychiatric Nurses and 'generic' social workers. Today, Pillar covers a large rural and urban area and supports people from a wide range of backgrounds. As well as benefitting from the service that Pillar provides, members play an active part in the running of the organisation through a formal Users Forum and by becoming elected user representatives on the Board of Directors. This co-productive approach enables the organisation to facilitate and develop opportunities which contribute to recovery and leads to the ability to self-manage even the most complex of mental and physical health conditions.

In conversation, with Linda Babbs of Aberdeenshire Council CLD we heard about the work of Pillar, how it has changed over the past 29 years and the many challenges along the way. We also learnt more about the effectiveness of their co-productive approach and the benefits to be gained if that same relationship was to be replicated between the organisation and the Health and Social Care services.

In addition, we were privileged to gain some real life insight to the value of their service provision from one of Pillar's Directors who gave first hand experience of the positive impact the organisation has had on her and her family.



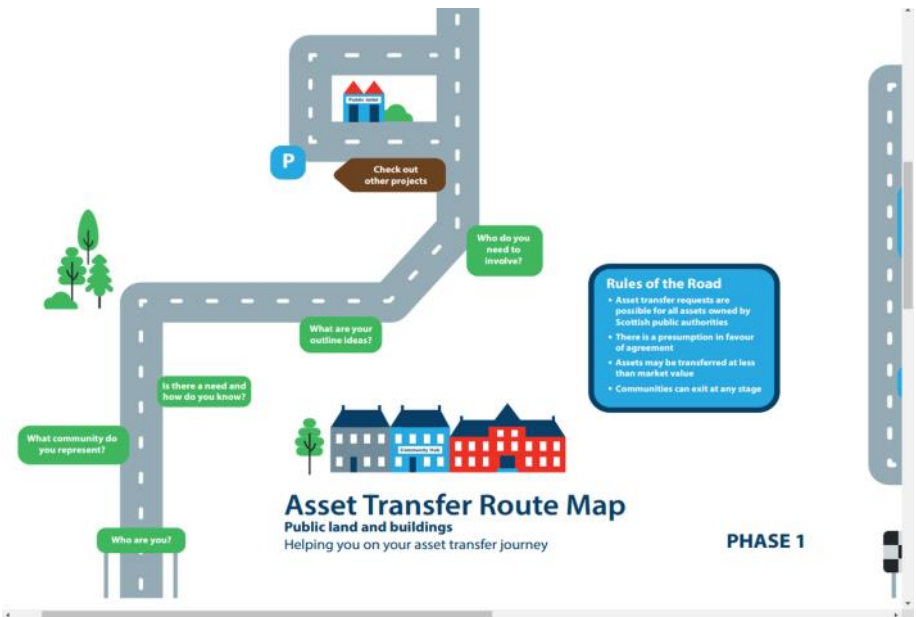
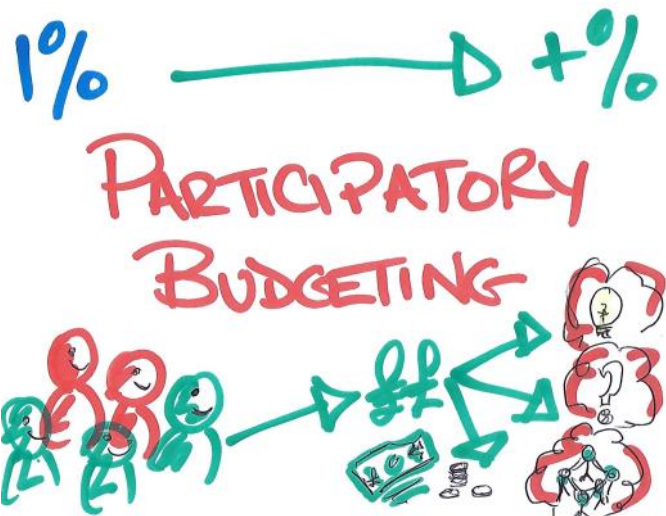
Community Empowerment Act (2015) - Local Authority Overview

The afternoon's sessions were dedicated to the actual Act itself, aimed at introducing the facets of the Act most relevant to community groups in Kincardine and Mearns. Reid Hutchison, Community Economic Development Co-ordinator for Aberdeenshire Council presented on three key parts of the Act being Participatory Budgeting (PB), Participation Requests (PR) and Asset Transfer (AT), formerly referred to as Community Asset Transfer (CAT). For further information, Reid's presentation slides were made available on request along with his contact details which can be found at the end of this report.

To further explore the three individual parts of the Act or indeed the wider detail of the whole Act we invited some expert hosts to engage in World Café style discussion.

What we heard...

Many of the participants had already some experience of Participatory Budgeting through the H&SC initiative in 2017. This was the small grants process and most agreed that this was a start but not particularly meaningful if it was to effect real change. It was also agreed that there was still a lot of learning to be done. There was a feeling that the process can be too emotive even divisive and whilst in theory democratic, the reality was there wasn't always a level playing field with the populist vote winning on the day rather than the most worthy cause. How do we move PB to the mainstream? How do we support and prepare communities to make the big decisions? Are communities prepared to influence how public money is spent? 1% allocation to PB - looking to the future, what about the other 99%?



What we heard...

Universal understanding of **Participation Requests** is still a work in progress. There have only been 15 PRs across the whole of Scotland and none to date in Aberdeenshire. It is hoped that this result is due to robust forum's for engagement already in place but also it is possible that it present a tricky concept to navigate given that it is not a mechanism to make a complaint, challenge a decision or make an asset transfer. To better understand what constitutes a Participation request there is a requirement for more case studies to become available. It was largely agreed that there was a need for support to ensure that the request is appropriately framed and that the aim of a PR should be to ensure the community body works with the local authority to seek constructive solutions that they possibly may be part of.

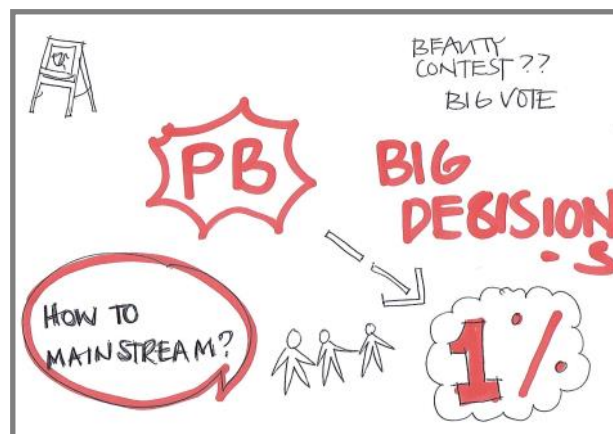


The concept of **Asset Transfer**, previously referred to as Community Asset Transfer (CAT), has been easier for communities to grasp; as in *"...the transfer of management and/or ownership of public land and buildings from its owner (usually a local authority) to a community organisation than market value – to achieve a local social, economic or environmental benefit."* Mention was made to underline that this process was not restricted to Local Authority Assets. It was felt that this process was the domain of more mature, established groups with the suggestion that more could be done to support younger organisations. Perhaps a slower, more enabling process for example, the opportunity to test the viability through an initial leasing arrangement rather than an 'all or nothing' approach. There was a call for more clarity of starting points for community groups; Where to go for support, funding and is the guidance readily available? There was discussion around the capacity of groups and the need for a diverse range of skills along with a clear vision, sustainability

and robust planning which make for an effective application. The range of available assets and their condition differ considerably, this coupled with the varying capacity of groups makes each case individual and therefore somewhat in need of a bespoke, dedicated level of support more often than not. Comments surrounding the lack of "joined up thinking" in relation to opportunities such as Developer Obligations and potential Asset Transfer. Many groups, having gone through the process and produced a strong case which has secured funding are finding they are at risk of losing that funding due to delays connected with property legal documentation coming from the public body. A disappointing outcome for those communities encouraged to take ownership and become empowered. It would appear there is an appetite from some communities to embrace the spirit of the Act but unless public bodies are supported to have the capacity to deliver what is required to truly enable groups to make it through to the end, we return to the position whereby communities feel: disillusioned, cynical, apathetic, disinterested, angry, confrontational and over-consulted. Possibly to a greater extent when goal has been so close.

What we heard...

More generally the discussion around the **Community Empowerment Act (2015)** as a whole voiced the need to inform the wider community of its presence and how it can help communities effect positive change. It was recognised that there was a great need for a change in thinking by communities and real need for a change in culture within public bodies if the spirit of the Act is to be realised. There was a lack of confidence, from members of the community, that all local authority staff across all departments were fully onboard and understanding of the facets of the Act. Part of the culture change would be the willingness to accept an element of risk - some groups will succeed but there will be others that fail. Lessons can be learned in these cases but in order to encourage communities to act as citizens and take on challenges and opportunities there has to be a willingness to trust and not inhibit the desire to try. However, it can be damaging to the relationship between communities and the local authority if the failure is caused by a breakdown in the process, as is emerging with a number of Asset Transfers in K&M. There were many questions - What is the starting point for a community to get involved in a particular sector? How can learning from communities be shared and communicated effectively? How can constructive criticism influence things that are not working well? Participation Requests? There is still a great deal of work to do to help build a confidence of understanding around Participation Requests. There was a call for more and better examples to help define the concept. There was also a call for better access to information on assets and other issues. It was felt that often Community Empowerment projects are coming from the heart of the community but it can be difficult for individual groups to empower themselves, highlighting the need of strong support networks to help build the capacity of these groups.



Conclusion

In principal, the Community Empowerment Act Scotland (2015) reflects the need for social change suggesting that a way to confront some of the community's challenges is through community organisation and development. Rather than looking to the municipal authorities, that the mobilisation of groups and organisations toward community projects will provide more local benefit, and greater improvements over time. Larger community projects may require greater expertise as well as the mobilisation of technical financial resources. This is where support networks of Local Authority, Third Sector and other partner agencies can contribute. However, as a prerequisite to any community partnership, the process of community mobilisation and capacity must be in place. This will ensure a sense of "ownership" and "community control" when the communities sit down with external agencies to plan and implement community projects.



In taking on such a task however it is also hoped that the ideals of empowerment, sustainable development, equity, social justice, local knowledge, mutual learning, and participatory democracy be respected. Respect for the ideals of "bottom-up" organisation, will be instrumental in designing creative solutions which are deemed attainable and sustainable by the community of Kincardine & Mearns.

As practitioners on the ground it is clear that the area has a variety of challenges regarding health, employment, infrastructure, and equality. Its diversity and its geography bring its own challenges but also community resilience, with communities keen to make positive change for themselves. We enjoyed three local case studies demonstrating the existence of Community Empowerment long before the Act in 2015. There is a sense that there are communities who would like to embrace the concept but are not finding the process easy sometimes due to lack of capacity of the public bodies. For an Act which is underpinned by the work of volunteers provision should be made to resource those support networks be it the Public or Third Sector. This investment would help build the required social capital which would then be better positioned to help communities self-determine services and relieve some of the burden from restricted budgets of Public Bodies. Without careful resourcing there is a risk that there is not the capacity within communities or the capacity of support organisations to fulfil the need and the Act will not facilitate positive change and we again refuel the climate of disillusion, cynicism, apathy, disinterest, anger confrontation and over-consultation.

It is hoped that the purpose of this report will serve as a basis for consciousness-raising and thereby provide a mechanism for discussion leading to action-oriented initiatives essential for empowerment. The word needs to be spread wider, there is a need for more readily available information, more resourcing of support agencies and building social capital to ensure more groups and organisations feel they can be empowered.

A Summary of the Key Learning Points

- Long before the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act Scotland (2015), communities throughout K&M have been taking ownership of making positive changes in their area. Community Empowerment is already alive and kicking!
- Public, Private and Community Sectors have much to learn from each other; the key to this learning is to ensure that these relationships are founded in equality.
- The need for mutual “Trust” to be established between the Sectors, in particular the relationship between the Community and Public. Better communication and transparency are suggested routes towards building confidence and equal partnerships.
- Communication! Communication! Communication! This needs to be timely, accurate jargon-free and effective. Communication that is clearly and successfully delivered, received and understood. This effective communication can help partners to resolve differences while building trust and respect. - and sometimes the answer will be, “No,” - communities need to know this as soon as this is established.
- There are Third Sector organisations embracing Co-production as a means of ensuring service delivery meets the needs of their members. Work on building the confidence of the Public Sector in the capacity of the community to co-produce services. Are Local Authority processes in need of updating to reflect this potential shift?
- The small grants approach to PB used largely in Aberdeenshire so far has not been particularly effective in developing the changes in mindset and development of social capital needed to look at PB in the mainstream
- The concept of Participation Requests is largely misunderstood and more work is required help communities discern how PR could work for them.
- Communities approaching Asset Transfer are encountering challenges due to under-resourcing in Local Authority departments. There is a need to address this as the legacy of disappointment and loss of funding investment into the area will likely compound an already delicate relationship between the community and public sector.
- There is still work to do in bringing the benefits of the Act to the wider community. Stronger and already empowered groups are already engaging with the Act but how do we get the word out more extensively and inclusively?
- Focus on local democracy and communities delivering services locally asks that government and resources are applied at a local level.
- The Community Empowerment Act Scotland(2015) is underpinned by the presumed support of volunteers. To allow communities to take a more “citizen” rather than a “consumer” approach to improving life where they live and work, support is needed from Public and Third Sector Agencies to help build the capacity required to realise this aspiration. This support needs to be resourced effectively.

This report was prepared by Jacky Niven, Development Officer with KDP based on the comments and information gathered at the event held on 25th June 2018.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Ed Garrett - *Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action*

Reid Hutchison - *Aberdeenshire Council
Community Economic Development*

Table Hosts

Heather Macrae - *Aberdeenshire Council
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Nicky Donald - *Community Ownership
Support Scotland (COSS)*

Dawn Brown - *Board for Participatory
Budgeting Scotland*

Elaine Sinclair - *Aberdeenshire Voluntary
Action*

Case Studies

Bridget Scott - *The Bettridge Centre*

Caroll Burness - *What's On Inverbervie*

Linda Babbs - *Aberdeenshire Council
Community Learning and Development*

Moir Hurry - *Pillar Kincardine*

Wendy Brown - *Pillar Kincardine*

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Ed Garrett

Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action

<https://www.avashire.org.uk/>

Aberdeenshire Council

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Scottish Government

<https://beta.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/>

A new film about the next steps for participatory budgeting in Scotland

<https://pbscotland.scot/film>

Community Ownership Support Service (DTAS)

<http://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/>

Other Rural Partnerships:

The Garioch Partnership

<http://gariochpartnership.org.uk/>

Marr Area Partnership

<http://www.marrareapartnership.org.uk/>

Buchan Development Partnership

<http://www.bdp.scot/>

Banffshire Development Partnership

www.banffshirepartnership.co.uk/

Formartine Partnership

www.formartinepartnership.org.uk