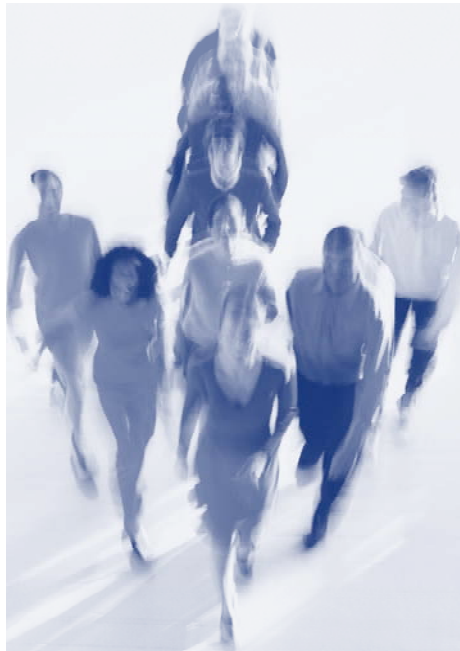


North Belfast Community Action Unit

North Belfast Community Capacity Baseline Profile



Office of the
**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**

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Executive Summary

In December 2001, the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development jointly commissioned the North Belfast Community Action Project to conduct a study in North Belfast. This followed a long period of sectarian unrest and violence between communities in North Belfast, perhaps raised in the perception of the public by the well publicised disputes around the Ardoyne/Alliance and Glenbryn areas. In May 2002, the Project Team published its report (the Dunlop Report) setting out an analysis of the issues facing North Belfast. This followed extensive consultation with residents, community groups and statutory bodies.

The Dunlop Report made a number of recommendations for positive action, including:

- To set up a dedicated senior level unit to build community capacity, develop a long-term strategy for North Belfast, encourage partnership and take responsibility for addressing issues in interface areas.
- To create a community capacity building programme in North Belfast.
- To make available £3 million of additional funding per year for community capacity building.

The Report also suggested (paragraph 166) that a community capacity building audit should be undertaken.

North Belfast has the reputation of being the most divided area in Northern Ireland. North Belfast has the highest number of peace lines dividing communities of any area in Northern Ireland and has also, in recent years, seen the most frequent and serious incidents of sectarian unrest and violence, particularly in the interface areas. The Dunlop Report describes North Belfast as a patchwork of small communities, often separated by walls and peace lines, in which people have an intense sense of belonging. Segregated living has become part of North Belfast's spatial and social fabric, particularly in interface areas where the problem of sectarianism is seen in its most destructive form. The report notes that in social and economic terms some parts of North Belfast are prosperous, while others suffer from multiple disadvantage and deprivation. Overall education standards are low and North Belfast demonstrates some of the poorest health in Northern Ireland. The report concludes that there is little chance of improving people's standards of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their collaborative participation in planning processes. This requires community capacity building, defined as the ability and will of people who live in a locality to act collectively for the common good.

In 2003, the North Belfast Community Action Unit commissioned a Community Capacity Baseline Survey which was undertaken by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The findings of the survey are presented in three parts, first, identifying common issues, factors and concerns across North Belfast, secondly setting out the results of the Key Providers Survey and, thirdly, summarising the findings of the survey for each of eight discrete areas in North Belfast.

The survey model chosen by North Belfast Community Action Unit was one that was used successfully by Bradford City Council, Assessing Community Strengths (F. Skinner and M. Wilson, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2002). A community strengths assessment focuses particularly on the community and voluntary groups in an area and looks at how they are organised, their aims and needs, support they receive and what support they might need in the future. The Community Strengths Framework has four main themes:

- Building organisations;
- Building skills;
- Building equality; and
- Building involvement.

The Community Strengths Framework is a way of identifying the levels of community organisation and support in an area and comparing these, using five levels, each defined by a series of characteristics which relate to degrees of community organisation and support, with Level 1 being the lowest level.

The Community Sector

The survey included 171 community and church groups in North Belfast, of which 108 groups responded. The survey showed that there is a wide range of community provision and activity in North Belfast. The summary of the Community Strengths Framework for all of North Belfast is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

The Key Providers Sector

The Key Providers survey included responses from 22 organisations which support a wide range of types of community and voluntary groups. Most organisations found it difficult to provide information about their work in North Belfast and the main conclusion is that there

is clearly a difference between the support that voluntary and statutory organisations believe they provide and the perception from the community sector about the support groups receive.

Area Based Analysis

The Community Capacity Building Survey results have also been assessed by categorising responses from eight distinct areas in North Belfast. This allows the local community leaders' views of the capacity within their own community to be summarised. The results of this analysis, using the Community Strengths Framework as a template, is as follows:

Area	Theme	Level
Ardoyne and Marrowbone	Building Organisations	3
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
Cliftonville	Building Organisations	3
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
Ligoniel	Building Organisations	3
	Building Skills	3
	Building Equality	3
	Building Involvement	2
Lower North Belfast	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
New Lodge	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
Rathcoole	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	1
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	2
Upper and Mid North Belfast	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	1
	Building Involvement	2
Whitewell	Building Organisations	1
	Building Skills	1
	Building Equality	1
	Building Involvement	2

The Unit is working with communities to set up Community Empowerment Partnerships which will address capacity building issues within communities in North Belfast. Community Empowerment proposals should be informed by the findings of this community capacity building survey, although this information should **not** be used to compare groups or areas, or to **dictate** the scale or scope of bids.

Conclusions

While the Unit needs to be careful about what can and cannot be derived from this survey, the following conclusions can be made:

Building Organisations

- Within a broader framework, any approach to community capacity building needs to be tailored to defined areas, as there are differences between communities in terms of capacity building needs.
- Short term funding is a major problem for most groups and this contributes to other significant problems including staff and volunteer turnover. Staff and members are often distracted from core activities by the need to consistently pursue funding from different bodies.
- Many of the key providers have inadequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms in relation to work in North Belfast, given the need that exists in the area and the problems there.
- Statutory organisations have not yet developed clear strategies and systems for working in North Belfast to take account of its unique circumstances.

Building Skills

- Training should meet the needs of groups and should be accessible in terms of location and time. Safety issues also need to be considered.
- Work needs to be done to identify training needs within individual groups and communities. Training needs identified presently are primarily concerned with external communication and promotion rather than internal management issues.
- Many groups felt that they did not have access to advice, particularly on funding issues.

Building Equality

- There needs to be a mechanism to assist communities to work together to address common needs and issues and to build trust and understanding.
- Groups need to be aware of the need for community relations policies to be put in place and implemented. However, this needs to flow from recognition of the value of developing an accommodation and possibly a good working relationship, with neighbouring areas, rather than as a gesture to funders' demands.

Building Involvement

- There is a high level of need in North Belfast for community capacity building work. In many areas there is a relatively low level of community participation and community leadership is lacking.
- Interaction between community groups and the statutory sector is poor and work needs to be done to enable community groups to access statutory organisations and for statutory organisations to reach out to communities.
- Groups in all areas need to work in their communities to increase the level of active participation.
- The Unit and the statutory agencies need to consider a more joined-up approach in developing strategies for North Belfast.

Recommendations for Action

Based on the above conclusions the recommendations for action, by the Unit, community organisations and statutory agencies, can be summarised as follows:

Building Organisations

- Capacity building work should be undertaken on two levels. There are areas of work which should be carried out on a North Belfast wide basis, e.g. some elements of training, youth work, building links with statutory organisations and addressing the funding issue. Other work needs to be undertaken with an area-based focus, i.e. to meet the particular needs of discrete areas in North Belfast.
- All capacity building work should have a long-term aim of narrowing the gaps between areas in terms of community capacity and of addressing the community relations issues that have held back economic and social development in the area.
- Key providers need to consider their monitoring and reporting mechanisms in relation to work in North Belfast, given the need that exists in the area and the problems there.
- Statutory organisations need to further develop appropriate strategies and systems for working in North Belfast to take account of its unique circumstances.

Building Skills

- Community organisations need to work closely with training providers in developing training interventions that will meet the needs of the community both in terms of external and internal requirements.
- Capacity building work needs to take place within communities and within statutory and larger voluntary organisations to improve links and interaction between the sectors. One way of encouraging this would be to share training, funding information and advice and other activities to help develop understanding and networks.

- Capacity building work should focus on increasing active participation within communities, as well as building skills levels.

Building Equality

- Communities need to seek to develop more links outside their own community, particularly to help the understanding of other communities and to address community relations issues in a positive way.
- The Unit and the Community Relations Council need to work together to influence community leaders in the need to develop an accommodation and a working relationship with neighbouring areas.

Building Involvement

- The survey has reinforced the need in North Belfast for community capacity building work. A community capacity building survey should therefore be repeated after three years, using the current survey as a baseline.
- A more formal and regular opportunity for interaction between the community and statutory sectors should be established. This could take the form of a discussion forum and/or “open day” type events in community groups to which statutory bodies are invited (staff at operational level) and reciprocated in statutory organisations.
- Groups need to develop proposals to increase the level of active participation within their communities.
- There should be clear linkages between the work of the Community Empowerment Partnerships and other public sector initiatives including Neighbourhood Renewal and Urban 2.

1 Introduction

1.1 In December 2001, the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development jointly commissioned the North Belfast Community Action Project to conduct a study in North Belfast. This followed a long period of sectarian unrest and violence between communities in North Belfast, perhaps raised in the perception of the general public by the well publicised disputes around the Ardoyne/Alliance and Glenbryn areas. In May 2002, the Project Team published its report (the Dunlop Report) setting out an analysis of the issues facing North Belfast. This followed extensive consultation with residents, community groups and statutory bodies.

1.2 The Dunlop Report made a number of recommendations for positive action, including:

- To set up a dedicated senior level unit to build community capacity, develop a long-term strategy for North Belfast, encourage partnership and take responsibility for addressing issues in interface areas.
- To create a community capacity building programme in North Belfast.
- To make available £3 million of additional funding per year for community capacity building.

The Report also suggested (paragraph 166) that a community capacity building audit should be undertaken.

1.3 North Belfast has the reputation of being the most divided area in Northern Ireland. North Belfast has the highest number of peace lines dividing communities of any area in Northern Ireland and has also, in recent years, seen the most frequent and serious incidents of sectarian unrest and violence, particularly in the interface areas. The Dunlop Report describes North Belfast as a patchwork of small communities, often separated by walls and peace lines, in which people have an intense sense of belonging. Segregated living has become part of North Belfast's spatial and social fabric, particularly in interface areas where the problem of sectarianism is seen in its most destructive form. The report notes that in social and economic terms some parts of North Belfast are prosperous, while others suffer from multiple disadvantage and deprivation. Overall education standards are low and North Belfast demonstrates some of the poorest health in Northern Ireland. The report concludes that there is little chance of improving people's standards of living and overall quality of life, in a sustainable way, without their collaborative participation in planning processes. This requires community capacity building, defined as the ability and will of people who live in a locality to act collectively for the common good.

1.4 North Belfast is an area which stretches from Belfast Lough to the east, takes in part of the city centre to the south, bounded by the Crumlin Road to the west and Rathcoole in Newtownabbey as its northern boundary. North Belfast contains some of the most pleasant and affluent parts of Belfast but also some of the most deprived and troubled areas. As defined, it has a population of around 85,000 people. The table below summarises the population figures and multiple deprivation indicators for all of the North Belfast wards.

Area	Wards Included (all or part)	Multiple Deprivation	Estimated Area Population
Lower North	Castleview	254	13,738
	Duncairn	19	
	Fortwilliam	295	
Upper and Mid North	Ballysillan	82	19,896
	Cavehill	496	
	Crumlin	1	
	Ligoniel	86	
	Shankill	10	
	Woodvale	7	
Ardoyne and Marrowbone	Ardoyne	12	9,540
	Cliftonville	134	
	Crumlin	1	
	Glencairn	35	
	Waterworks	16	
	Woodvale	7	
New Lodge	New Lodge	8	9,902
	Waterworks	16	
Whitewell	Valley	136	3,140
	Whitehouse	106	
Cliftonville	Chichester Park	193	12,300
	Cliftonville	134	
	Water Works	16	
Ligoniel	Ligoniel	86	5,703
Rathcoole	Bellevue	176	6,046
	Coole	90	
	Dunaney	60	
	Valley	136	

- 1.5 The Dunlop Report describes North Belfast as a patchwork of small communities, often separated by walls and peace lines, in which people have an intense sense of belonging. The issue of territory, particularly of Protestant and Catholic areas, is particularly apparent in North Belfast and there are a number of interfaces, often marked by “peace walls” or derelict or blighted buildings. Interface areas are often also marked by high levels of social and economic deprivation, as well as frequent sectarian unrest and violence. Contentious territory has affected physical infrastructure, economic investment, housing, transport, health and employment.
- 1.6 There is a rapidly changing population profile in many parts of North Belfast, often with a young and growing Catholic population, compared to neighbouring, ageing and declining Protestant populations. Hence, Protestant communities feel threatened and under siege, while Catholic communities have a high demand for housing which cannot be met. Poor communication has contributed to a lack of understanding and mistrust of “the other side” and segregated living has become part of North Belfast’s spatial and social fabric. Communities have often become inwardly focused and dominated by fear and a defensive attitude. This has contributed to a lack of positive community leadership, both within communities and across communities. Traditionally, North Belfast has a much different profile than other areas of Belfast and lacks the sense of unity and shared identity that can be found in, for example, East or West Belfast.
- 1.7 The North Belfast Community Action Project was therefore commissioned in December 2001 to work alongside communities in North Belfast to address the issue of community capacity building. It was a joint initiative of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Department for Social Development and worked closely with the six North Belfast members of the Legislative Assembly. The Project Team published their independent report in May 2002.
- 1.8 Following publication of this report, the North Belfast Community Action Unit was established in August 2002. The primary functions of the Unit are:
- Building community capacity to empower local people to address their needs and to improve community relations.
 - Building partnerships within and between North Belfast communities and statutory agencies.
 - Addressing issues at interface areas.
 - Development of a strategy for an integrated Government response to the problems of North Belfast.
 - Redevelopment of the Crumlin Road Gaol site.

The Unit is working with communities to set up Community Empowerment Partnerships which will address capacity building issues within communities in North Belfast.

1.9 There is a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations which are active in North Belfast, providing services to and supporting communities. Some of these are listed below:

- Belfast City Council
- North Belfast Partnership
- Belfast Regeneration Office - North Team
- North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust
- Belfast Education and Library Board
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Voluntary & Community Unit.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The Dunlop Report on North Belfast suggested that there was a research gap and that an audit of community capacity be undertaken in the area. The aim of the audit is to inform the better development of community capacity in North Belfast. The Dunlop Report underlines the importance of community participation and emphasises that the audit should inform the way in which the Community Capacity Building Programme is developed and implemented to ensure that it is responsive to community needs. The model chosen by the North Belfast Community Action Unit was one that was used successfully by Bradford City Council, Assessing Community Strengths (F. Skinner and M. Wilson, Community Development Foundation Publications, 2002 (www.cdf.org.uk)). A community strengths assessment focuses particularly on the community and voluntary groups in an area and looks at how they are organised, their aims and needs, support they are receiving and what support they might need in the future. It provides a template and model for identifying the groups to be involved, preparing a questionnaire and assessing the findings from the survey.
- 2.2 The area covered by the profile includes the most disadvantaged wards of the Parliamentary Constituency of Belfast North. Using a range of sources, the Unit compiled as comprehensive a list as possible of community organisations across the area. Key community organisations and service providers were advised of the process and it was agreed that the findings of the surveys would be presented and discussed at focus groups across North Belfast when the final draft became available.
- 2.3 The Research Branch of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Central Survey Unit of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency engaged with the Unit to help with the development of the survey; offer advice on how best to get an independent survey; and to get as large a response rate as possible. The Central Survey Unit carried out the fieldwork for the survey. Two surveys were carried out, a survey of community and voluntary groups, the Community Capacity Stakeholders Survey and a survey of the statutory agencies working in the area, a Key Providers Survey. The survey instruments were compiled and tested through workshops and pilot projects in North Belfast.
- 2.4 The survey was undertaken in March and April 2003. A total of 171 community and church groups were included in the survey and 108 interviews were completed. In addition, 22 organisations in the voluntary and statutory sector also contributed to the survey.
- 2.5 The results of the survey were presented at three public meetings held at NICVA in January 2004. Around 40 people representing community, voluntary and statutory organisations, attended the meetings. A list of those organisations that attended is

included in the appendices. Over 200 invitations were issued for the public meetings, including all of the organisations that responded to the surveys and political representatives for North Belfast. The presentation provided an overview of the methodology used in the survey and the main findings and conclusions. The meetings stimulated a range of comments and questions about the survey including:

- How would the results of the survey be used in the allocation of funding to CEPs?
- Could a comparative survey for all of Belfast be carried out?
- Would the findings be published?
- How did the responses break down in terms of community background?
- How could the links between statutory and community organisations be improved?

2.6 The findings of the survey have been presented in three sections. First, an analysis of the Community Capacity Survey for North Belfast as a whole (section 3.1). This seeks to identify common issues, factors and concerns in North Belfast and to draw out conclusions for the area as a whole. Secondly, the results of the Key Providers Survey have been assessed (section 3.2). Thirdly, North Belfast has been divided into eight discrete areas (defined by the Unit) and the findings of the survey have been assessed for each area (section 4). In each case, the findings have been expressed in accordance with the framework set out in the Assessing Community Strengths Model. The main features of this approach are:

- Community strengths profiles are mainly about the community and voluntary groups and not particularly about individuals. In other words, building effective community involvement and leadership is seen as being primarily identified with the collective activity of local community and voluntary groups.
- Community strengths profiles emphasise the importance of the grassroots, by emphasising the importance of smaller community and voluntary groups which are the bedrock of healthy communities. The approach emphasises the strengths of communities and what communities have to offer or contribute to the renewal process, rather than focusing on indicators of deprivation.
- The Community Strengths Profile contains two main elements, the level of community organisation and the level of support for communities.
- The approach is based on community development principles.

2.7 The Assessing Community Strengths Model as devised by Skinner & Wilson, is based around assessing community profiles under four main themes. These are:

Building organisations - this is not about physical buildings but about the development of community and voluntary groups and how they may work with other groups. It also concerns the ways in which community and small voluntary groups are supported to develop their strengths and organisational capacity.

Building skills - this is about the ways in which groups build skills, knowledge and confidence of their members to enable them to be effective in achieving their aims and fully participate in and benefit from, regeneration and community development. It is also about the skills and ability of people working and involved in local partnerships and support organisations.

Building equality - this is about the ways in which community and voluntary groups are inclusive and the extent to which they try to help to build equality within their group and in communities.

Building involvement - this is about the extent to which community and voluntary groups involve people and contribute to and influence local decision-making.

2.8 The Community Strengths Framework is a way of identifying the levels of community organisation and support in an area and comparing these. The framework uses the four headings set out above and has five levels, each defined by a series of characteristics, which relate to degrees of community organisation and support. The five levels are:

- Level 1 - Creating
- Level 2 - Connecting
- Level 3 - Structuring
- Level 4 - Partnering
- Level 5 - Sustaining

In this matrix, Level 1 is the lowest level and suggests a high level of need for capacity building within a community. Level 5 suggests that there is a high level of capacity within the community and that the community should be taking a strategic role in its community and reaching out to other communities. The analysis of the results of Community Capacity Profile has therefore been set out using the Community Strengths Framework as a basis. The framework is set out in tabular form in the appendices.

2.9 It should be noted that this report does not seek to identify any particular group within an area, nor does it set out to assess the strengths or weaknesses of any particular group. All responses to the survey are confidential and the survey is an assessment, based on the Assessing Community Strengths Model, of community capacity in an area.

2.10 A number of provisos should be placed on interpreting this information. The assessment of Community Strengths acknowledges that community progress will only happen where there is a reasonable degree of community organisation and effective support to develop it further. Accordingly, an area may score lower than its

apparent community infrastructure would suggest because the external support (e.g. relationships with the statutory sector) may be inadequate. Furthermore, the nature of the questions used in the survey meant that individuals were placed in a position where they had to measure their own group's skills, activities and resources from their own perspective. Clearly those who have little experience of community development activity elsewhere and who have had reasonable success in developing infrastructure in their own area over a number of years, would rate their own progress quite positively. Conversely, someone who had extensive experience of community development across a range of areas and in turn recognised the limitations of local activity, might rate their own area at a lower level. In addition, while a large number of community groups in a comparatively small area may look like a very positive progress, it may be more appropriate for these to work collectively on larger projects and in turn to relate back better to the statutory sector through a more structured and strategic approach.

- 2.11 The model cannot measure all the nuances of a community infrastructure and therefore interpretation of results must take similar caution. Ultimately, the survey is perhaps of most use in charting the views of local community leaders of their community organisations and community infrastructure at a point in time. It would be inappropriate to use this information to compare areas, as the measurement baseline is different. Similarly, the Community Strengths Framework profile for any area cannot simply be used as a baseline for future development as increased experience and skills may actually lead these community leaders to assess their own areas from a different baseline. The report does however provide an important basis for looking back after a period of time when some capacity building work has taken place. Indeed, perhaps the most obvious outcome from the survey has been the clear indication that all areas in North Belfast could benefit from additional capacity building work, even though this needs to be carefully tailored to the needs of particular areas and groups.

3 Community Strengths in North Belfast

3.1 Community Capacity Baseline Profile for North Belfast

3.1.1 The survey was undertaken across 171 community and church groups in North Belfast. There were 108 responses from community groups across North Belfast. There was quite a wide variation in the numbers of groups taking part in the survey in different areas. This disparity is due to a number of factors including the number of groups in the area and the response rate from groups.

3.1.2 The breakdown of the responses is as follows:

Area	Catholic Groups	Protestant Groups	Mixed Groups	No. of Groups
Ardoyne & Marrowbone	15	0	0	15
Cliftonville	8	0	0	8
Ligoniel	5	0	0	5
Lower North	0	19	1	20
New Lodge	14	0	2	16
Rathcoole	0	4	0	4
Upper & Mid North	0	27	0	27
Whitewell	42	0	0	42
Thematic*	3	3	5	11
Total number of groups	47	53	8	108

* Thematic groups are those organised to cover a specific area of interest or work area and which cover all of North Belfast, e.g. youth work, rather than a geographic area.

One feature of the table above is that no area contains groups from the Protestant and Catholic communities. Each area has either Catholic groups or Protestant groups, but not both. Some have groups from one community or the other and mixed groups. This perhaps illustrates the divided nature of communities in North Belfast.

3.1.3 The following table shows the breakdown of umbrella or large groups and small groups. This shows that the survey results represent the views of a range of groups, including large umbrella organisations, which may claim to represent several groups in an area and also the views of smaller groups themselves.

	Catholic Groups	Protestant Groups	Mixed Groups	No. of Groups
Umbrella groups	7	11	1	18
Small groups	40	42	7	82
Total	47	53	8	108

3.1.4 This analysis does not set out to detail the responses to every question in the survey. Rather, it sets out the key findings and conclusions for North Belfast as a whole, based on responses from church and community groups in North Belfast.

3.1.5 The survey shows that there is a wide range of community provision and activity in North Belfast. The main activities of the 108 groups which responded included:

- Social activities - 65%
- Youth provision - 59%
- Play activities/sports/recreation - 58%
- Training and community education - 50%
- Welfare advice - 42%
- Arts and cultural activity - 41%
- Advocacy/campaigning - 39%
- Environmental activities - 38%
- Housing advice - 36%
- Resource centre - 32%
- Counselling - 24%
- Other - 17%

This list is typical of community activity in most areas of Belfast and perhaps elsewhere and illustrates that there is a strong and varied community sector active in North Belfast. There were some interesting responses to questions about the number of active members of a group. Over 62% of the groups had less than 16 active members, with over 40% having less than 10 active members. Only 11% had over 50 active members. Furthermore, community groups in Catholic areas tended to have more active members than groups in Protestant areas. The majority of these smaller groups, with less than 10 active members, tended to come from Protestant areas. This could suggest that community groups find it difficult to engage residents in active community participation and that this is often left to a small core group. This may also be a result of a lack of community capacity and participation, particularly in Protestant areas, but which also affects Catholic areas. There may be a need for initiatives to encourage people to become actively involved

in their communities. It would appear that there are many more people that participate in community activity in Catholic areas than in Protestant areas, despite the fact that the populations are similar.

- 3.1.6 Of the groups who provide direct services to people, 60% claim to have over 100 users of their services each week. Almost 20% claim to attract more than 500 users in a week. Again, there are clear differences between Catholic and Protestant areas. Groups in Catholic areas reported much higher user numbers, with five groups having more than 500 users per week and eight groups having more than 1,000 users per week. 70% of Protestant groups had less than 200 users per week, with 50% having less than 100 users per week. This suggests much greater service provision in Catholic areas than in Protestant areas, or at least much greater uptake of services. This is interesting as there is little difference between the types of provision offered in Protestant and Catholic areas, or the apparent need.
- 3.1.7 Only 9% of respondent community groups in North Belfast do not have a written constitution. Over 60% are community groups with a formal constitution and 22% are limited companies. 36% are also registered charities. There is a much greater tendency among groups in Protestant areas not to have a formal constitution, with 15% falling into this category, compared to 2% in Catholic areas. Again, this suggests a much lower level of formal organisation in Protestant areas and lower capacity to deliver community services in an organised and structured way. This also has a bearing on funding applications, as most funders require groups to have a written constitution in place before funding can be offered. 90 groups had a management committee, with the majority having less than 15 members.

Building Organisations

- 3.1.8 Groups were asked to identify the issues that cause problems for their group in meeting objectives. The most significant problem identified was the short-term nature of funding and to a large extent this contributes to other problems within the group, notably managing and keeping staff. Other problems mentioned included recruiting and retaining volunteers, access to resources, access to childcare for members to join activities and limited skills within the organisation. These issues were common to both Catholic and Protestant groups, although a higher proportion of groups from Protestant areas identified access to resources, limited skills among committee members and access to childcare facilities as problem issues. Groups are funded from a range of sources, including Belfast City Council, Belfast Regeneration Office, The Community Fund, The Community Foundation, the Local Strategic Partnership, Peace II, etc. Around 20% of groups had a service level agreement with a statutory agency which provided funding for services delivered. Around 40% of groups had funding from other sources which were not identified. 15% of groups had no external funding. There were some differences in the profile between the funding of Protestant groups and Catholic groups. Almost 30% of

groups had an annual income in the last financial year of less than £10,000. 60% had an income of less than £50,000, while 20% had an income of more than £100,000. Groups in Protestant areas tend to have a lower level of funding than groups in Catholic areas, although at the highest end of the income scale, i.e. groups with income of over £100,000, the figures were similar. The main difference was in income of between £50,000 and £100,000, where there were 27% of Catholic groups, compared to 2% of Protestant groups. This supports the earlier finding that Protestant groups tend to be smaller than Catholic groups and have fewer active members and users.

- 3.1.9 The majority of groups have at least one paid member of staff (60%), of this 34% have between one and five staff, 18% between six and 10 and 8% more than 10 staff. A significant proportion (40%) did not have any paid staff. Almost twice as many groups in Protestant areas did not have any paid staff compared to Catholic areas, with over half of all Protestant community groups having no paid staff. The proportion of groups with more than 11 paid staff is similar to both Protestant and Catholic community groups, with the main difference being in those groups which employ between one and 10 staff. Over a third (35%) of all groups own their own building. 32% had free use of the building and 21% rented a building. Only 6% had no premises. 5% shared ownership of a building. Almost twice as many in Protestant areas had free use of a building, compared to groups in Catholic areas and a much lower proportion in Protestant areas rented premises. The figures for ownership of a building were fairly similar. The majority of groups had few problems of access to resources required to enable the group to work effectively. This included meeting space, computers and office equipment. The main problem was access to transport which was a problem for more than half of the groups in the survey. Groups in Protestant areas had greater difficulty in accessing the resources than in Catholic areas, with a significant difference for all resources except meeting space.
- 3.1.10 In terms of planning work and demand for resources in the future, the majority of groups claim to undertake some planning work. Just over a third (35%) undertake research, while 42% have some form of business plan. 79% of groups engaged in informal discussions. However, this means that over half of all groups do not have any form of written business plan in place which sets out future plans for the group and its resource needs. This could suggest a lack of formal review and planning systems within community groups. Groups in Catholic areas tended to undertake more research and community consultation than groups in Protestant areas and more tended to have a written business plan in place. The majority of groups tended to have a business plan covering more than one year and often more than three years.
- 3.1.11 Based on the responses to the questions as set out above, North Belfast as a whole, in terms of building organisations, using the definitions in the Community Strengths

Framework set out in section 1, would probably be at Level 3, although with some elements at Level 2. According to the Assessing Community Strengths Model, this means that groups and agencies understand and aim to maximise their own organisational capacity, but there is little evidence of groups consistently working together across the area at a strategic level, however this does happen in smaller areas or clusters. It would appear that there were significant differences between the responses from groups in Catholic areas and Protestant areas. Generally, groups in Catholic areas tended towards Level 3 while groups in Protestant areas tended more towards Level 2. This difference is perhaps partly due to the longer history of community-based activity in some Catholic areas of North Belfast. Overall Level 2 appears to be the more appropriate level suggesting that there are some established groups and new groups emerging, which are beginning to work with statutory agencies to increase the level of resources available for their area.

Building Skills

- 3.1.12 The majority of groups felt that active members had sufficient skills and experience to meet the groups' needs in terms of managing and running their organisation. However, there were four main skill areas where a significant proportion (at least 25%) felt that there were gaps. These included doing presentations, understanding how statutory agencies work, handling the media and fund-raising. The areas where groups felt they were particularly strong included working as a team, working in partnership with others, planning activities, managing projects and programmes and committee skills. The responses from Catholic and Protestant groups were reasonably similar, although Catholic groups tended to have more responses of "strongly agree" than Protestant groups. Catholic groups tended to be more confident about their members' skills and experience in doing presentations and managing staff, handling the media and committee skills.
- 3.1.13 Groups identified that the most important factors affecting the take-up of training for volunteers and employees were: a local venue; availability of childcare; content tailor-made to meet the groups' needs; the cost of training; safety issues; and accreditation. Issues which were considered less important included: a city centre venue; an accessible venue; the availability of weekend sessions; and a participative style of training. Not surprisingly, paid staff preferred daytime training sessions, while volunteers and active members preferred evening training sessions.
- 3.1.14 Almost 60% of groups indicated that they had not received any external advice regarding the running of the group. It is not clear whether advice was unavailable, or the groups did not seek advice. Of those groups that had received advice, most had received it from other community groups, around a third had received advice from the North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust and the remainder from another statutory agency, including Belfast City Council, the Local Partnership Board/Local Strategic Partnership and NICVA. A very high proportion of groups

reported that they would like advice on funding, but were unable to get this. The responses from Protestant and Catholic areas show some disparity between the sources of advice. Groups in Catholic areas were twice as likely to receive advice from Belfast City Council, although groups in Protestant areas were twice as likely to receive advice from local politicians or councillors. Groups in Protestant areas are more likely to have received advice from Belfast Regeneration Office, while groups in Catholic areas were more likely to seek advice from NICVA.

3.1.15 While most groups responded that active members had sufficient skills and experience, this was contradicted to some extent by later responses to questions about access to and take up of training and advice. In terms of the Community Strengths Framework, the responses to the survey questions suggested under the heading of Building Skills, North Belfast as a whole fits in at Level 2, where there is some awareness of training and learning opportunities but many unacknowledged barriers. Groups in both Catholic and Protestant areas would fit into this category.

Building Equality

3.1.16 This section of the questionnaire asked groups about all aspects of equality within their organisation. The responses show that only 52% of groups had a written equal opportunities policy and only one third had a statement of equality in their constitution, 15% of groups had neither. Interestingly, while 76% of groups had a formal policy statement on equality and 84% on child protection, only 55% had a formal policy statement on community relations. These figures are similar for most Protestant and Catholic groups. This suggests that many groups need to address the issues of equality and community relations in a much more positive way than currently.

3.1.17 The majority of groups were single identity, with membership from one community only (58%). The remainder (42%) were cross-community, with membership from both communities (although the definition of this in all areas is unclear). This is not particularly surprising, given that many groups serve very small localised areas within North Belfast. The responses were fairly similar from Protestant and Catholic areas, although slightly more groups from Catholic areas were single identity than from Protestant areas. A very high majority of groups had links with other groups to build up understanding between communities (81%). Less than 21% had links with groups in the same community only or no links with other groups and these tended to be smaller groups. Groups from Catholic communities tended to have a higher proportion of linkages to build up understanding between communities, than in Protestant areas, at 85% compared to 76%. In addition, 84% in groups reported that community relations is an aspect of their work, or the main focus of their work. Only 15% responded that community relations was not an aspect of their work. This is an interesting response, given that only 55% of groups responded that they had a formal community relations policy in place. A higher proportion of groups in

Catholic areas (91%) responded that community relations was an aspect or the main focus of their work, compared to 80% in Protestant areas. Two thirds of groups indicated that they did not need support or advice on equal opportunities issues and a high majority responded that they knew where to get such advice if needed.

3.1.18 In terms of the Community Strengths Framework, under the heading of Building Equality, North Belfast as a whole would probably fit somewhere between Level 3 and Level 2. The description of Level 3 is “an increase in equality opportunities, action plans and networks which reflect a variety of interests and perspectives”. The description of Level 2 is “some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented”. While there is some evidence of Level 3, perhaps the description for Level 2 fits best with North Belfast as a whole.

Building Involvement

3.1.19 Building involvement is about how groups involve people and contribute to and influence local decision-making. Groups reported a number of methods of keeping users and their community informed of their work. 86% of groups held an annual general meeting, 80% used a variety of methods such as public meetings and word of mouth, while 66% of groups produced a newsletter or reports. What this response does not measure is the effectiveness of these methods in keeping the community involved. Groups also responded that they use a number of methods to provide two-way communication with the local community and users. A large majority (83%) use informal channels, such as word of mouth or local networks. Just over half use consultation meetings, while 48% use questionnaires, or seek feedback through outreach work (43%). A very high proportion of groups (93%) responded that they would be prepared to participate in a North Belfast Community Network which would facilitate the exchange of information between community groups.

3.1.20 In terms of the Community Strengths Framework, under the heading of Building Involvement, North Belfast as a whole would fit in under Level 3, which is defined as “significant active membership of community groups and clear processes for decision-making”, although this is likely to vary across the area. There is however a need to develop greater accountability and representative structures to ensure that there is active participation by communities.

Community Strengths Framework Summary

3.1.21 In terms of the Community Strengths Framework for North Belfast as a whole, the responses from community groups indicate that it should be as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

3.2 Responses from the Voluntary and Statutory Sector

3.2.1 NISRA also undertook a key providers survey which gathered information from voluntary and statutory organisations that provide services and support in North Belfast. There were responses to the questionnaire from 22 organisations. The organisations which responded were:

- Belfast City Council
- Belfast Education and Library Board Youth Service
- Belfast Education and Library Board
- Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education
- Belfast Local Strategy Partnership
- Belfast Regeneration Office
- The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
- The Community Fund
- The Edward de Bono Fund
- Groundwork Northern Ireland
- The International Fund for Ireland (two responses)
- Invest Northern Ireland
- North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust
- The New Opportunities Fund
- The NIO Civil Representatives
- North Belfast Partnership Board
- The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
- The Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- The Police Service for Northern Ireland
- Urban II

This section of the report does not identify the responses of any one organisation. Rather, it seeks to provide an overview of support from the statutory and voluntary sector in North Belfast.

3.2.2 Organisations were asked what percentage of their budget was spent in North Belfast. Only 11 organisations were able to provide this information. As might be expected for bodies which in many cases have a Northern Ireland remit, almost half of these groups provided less than 25% of their total budget for North Belfast. The resources allocated to North Belfast varied between £30,000 and £3.3 million.

However, the majority of organisations spent more than £200,000 per annum. The fact that half of the groups surveyed were unable to provide information on expenditure in North Belfast suggests that, in many cases, there is a failure to address the issues of the area in a strategic manner and to take account of its needs fully.

- 3.2.3 Over half of the organisations have worked in North Belfast for over 10 years. The organisations supported a wide range of types of community and voluntary groups including residents groups, youth groups, senior citizens groups, community fora, resource centres, mothers and toddlers groups and others. The other category included community and voluntary organisations which work in specific areas such as ex-prisoners, victims, community businesses, interface groups, sports, church groups, ethnic minorities and women's groups.

Skills Development

- 3.2.4 Sixteen of the 22 groups who responded provide skills training for community and voluntary groups. The range of training included awareness training in the health sector, community youth work training, counselling, managing social economy businesses, reconciliation, health and safety and engagement with the public sector, financial management, team-building, handling conflict, developing partnerships, fund-raising, equal opportunities, computer skills and communication and presentation. Fifteen organisations responded that they supported the development of skills in community and voluntary groups in other ways by providing funding, community leadership programmes, establishment of service level agreements, direct input to committees and assisting with funding proposals, etc. This suggests that there is a wide range of resources available to community groups from the statutory and voluntary sector. However, this conflicts with the responses from the community groups themselves, many of who felt that they did not receive adequate support from the statutory sector.

Building Organisations

- 3.2.5 Seventeen of the 22 respondents to the questionnaire said that they provided funding for groups in North Belfast. Only four of these were able to provide information on the number of groups that were funded. Two organisations funded one group, another funded six groups and another funded 16 groups. Only six respondents were able to offer other resources for voluntary and community. Of these six, four offered meeting space, three provided transport and two offered access to the Internet. However, assistance to groups is restricted according to the criteria of the statutory or voluntary organisation. Some of the restrictions included: that groups must be from a high social and economic need area; they must be registered with the provider; or they must be properly constituted groups.

Community Work

- 3.2.6 Twelve of the 22 organisations provided support staff who regularly work directly with community groups in North Belfast. Five responded that they did not have any workers of this type and a further five had workers who did not spend time with groups in North Belfast. Only six organisations were able to provide information about how many workers worked full-time alongside community groups in North Belfast. The range of work carried out included helping groups to identify their needs and develop project ideas, youth workers, community development workers providing support directly to community groups, liaising with groups and organisations regarding provision of programmes and liaising with committees.
- 3.2.7 Fourteen organisations out of 22 said that they gave support to community and voluntary groups to develop their own equal opportunities initiatives and policies. Seven organisations provide awareness raising training. Five funded equal opportunities initiatives. Six provided training on cultural awareness and four provided direct help with writing equal opportunities policies or statements. Fourteen of the 22 organisations had a formal published policy on improving relations between the various equality groups and between Protestants and Catholics. Eight organisations applied this policy to local community and voluntary groups, as well as their own staff.

Involvement in Local Decision-making

- 3.2.8 Of the 22 organisations, 19 provided community groups with the opportunity to have a say in developing local projects, 16 in policy development, 16 in regeneration programmes and 15 in delivery of local services. Eighteen of the organisations are involved in active networks in North Belfast. Twenty of the organisations had a policy on equal opportunities, 14 had a policy on consulting and involving local people and 13 had a policy on community development.

4 Area Based Analysis

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The analysis in the previous section (3.1) describes the responses from community groups in North Belfast as a whole. However, it is widely accepted, that North Belfast is not a cohesive and united area and it is therefore not particularly helpful to assess community strengths only for North Belfast as a whole. This analysis is useful in terms of an overview of the area and looking at common issues and concerns. However, there needs to be a more detailed analysis of community capacity at local level.

4.1.2 To facilitate this, North Belfast has been divided into eight discrete areas, with area based community groups allocated to each geographic area. As far as possible, this takes into account geographic and community boundaries so that, in each area, it should be possible to build up a cohesive picture of that area. These areas reflect, to a large extent, the makeup of the Community Empowerment Partnerships. The areas are:

- Ardoyne and Marrowbone;
- Cliftonville;
- Ligoniel;
- Lower North Belfast;
- New Lodge;
- Rathcoole;
- Upper and Mid North; and
- Whitewell.

4.1.3 The analysis of areas within North Belfast is different from the overall analysis. The area-based report has to be much less detailed, to avoid identifying individual groups, particularly in smaller areas. Again, the analysis is based on the responses to the survey questions and uses the Community Strengths Framework as a basis for identifying community capacity within each area. It should be noted that the views reflected in this section are those of respondent groups, not those of any external party. These sections therefore reflect the perceptions of local community leaders in relation to their capacity, stage of development, interface with the statutory sector, etc., in April 2003.

4.2 Ardoyne and Marrowbone

- 4.2.1 The Ardoyne and Marrowbone area includes the Ardoyne ward and parts of the Cliftonville, Crumlin, Glencairn, Waterworks and Woodvale wards, which are ranked among the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. The population of the area is approximately 10,000 people and 15 community groups in the area responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Ardoyne and Marrowbone is a predominantly Catholic area.
- 4.2.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, housing advice, sports and recreation, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, managing and keeping staff, recruiting and retaining volunteers and access to childcare facilities. Ardoyne and Marrowbone have a long established community sector with the majority of groups having existed for at least five years and almost half of the groups in existence for more than ten years. Most of the groups have more than 10 active members and several have more than 50 active members. The number of users per week varied, but most groups had more than 100 users per week with the highest number recorded as 1,500 users per week.

Building Organisations

- 4.2.3 Almost all of the groups were constituted groups, limited companies or registered charities, with a Management Committee. Most committees had at least five members. Around two thirds of groups employed paid workers and just over half had an annual income of over £10,000. Most groups rent their premises, with around one third owning their own premises and the rest having free use of premises. Most groups have little or no problem accessing resources. In terms of building organisations, Ardoyne and Marrowbone would fit under Level 3, where groups and agencies understand and aim to maximise their own organisational capacity.

Building Skills

- 4.2.4 All groups in the area carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, business planning and informal discussion. Half of the groups had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, most groups in Ardoyne and Marrowbone felt that their employees and members had adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The only area where a number of groups felt that there was a gap was in understanding how statutory agencies work. While there were some other areas where groups felt there were skills gaps, these tended to be very much in the minority. The main issues about training involved providing a local venue, childcare, tailored contents

to the group's needs and accreditation. Both paid employees and members had received training in a range of subjects including staff management, awareness training, project management, training skills and staff management. Only three groups had not received any training. All of the groups, except two, reported that they would like help in identifying group training needs. Less than 40% of groups had received advice from outside agencies. Where advice has been received it has tended to be from other community groups, Belfast Local Strategy Partnership or North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. In terms of building skills, Ardoyne and Marrowbone is best placed at Level 2, there is some awareness of training and learning opportunities but many unacknowledged barriers.

Building Equality

- 4.2.5 All groups but two had an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. Two thirds of the groups had formal policy statements on equality and all but one had a formal policy statement on child protection. However, just over half had a formal policy statement on community relations. 70% of groups are single identity groups and 30% stated that they were cross community. However, all groups but two had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. Again, all groups but two responded that community relations is an aspect or the main focus of their work. Just over half of the groups responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Ardoyne and Marrowbone would fit under Level 2, with some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented.

Building Involvement

- 4.2.6 All groups but two hold annual general meetings and all but three provide regular newsletters/reports. All groups report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings, word of mouth and local communication networks. Just over half of the groups responded that they hold consultation meetings and just under half use questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users. All receive feedback through informal channels and outreach work. Under the heading Building Involvement, Ardoyne and Marrowbone would fit under Level 3, where there is significant active membership of community groups and clear processes for decision-making.

Summary

4.2.7 The Community Strengths Framework Table for Ardoyne and Marrowbone is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	3
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

This analysis suggests that Ardoyne and Marrowbone should focus capacity building work on community relations issues and building up contacts with the statutory sector. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.3 Cliftonville

4.3.1 The Cliftonville area includes the Cliftonville and Water Works wards, along with parts of Cavehill and Chichester Park wards. This includes wards with high levels of deprivation. The population of the area is approximately 17,000 people and there were eight community groups in the area which responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Cliftonville is a predominantly Catholic area.

Building Organisations

4.3.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, housing advice, sports and recreation, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, managing and keeping staff and access to resources. The majority of groups in Cliftonville have existed for between five and 10 years. Most of the groups have more than ten active members but less than 20. The number of users per week varied, but most groups had less than 200 users per week, with the highest number recorded as 500 users per week. Almost all of the groups were constituted groups, limited companies or registered charities, with a Management Committee. Most committees had around 10 members. Over two thirds of groups employed paid workers and around two thirds had an annual income of over £20,000. Most groups own their own premises and the rest have free use of premises. Most groups have little or no problem accessing resources, with the exception of transport. In terms of building organisations, Cliftonville would fit under Level 3, where groups and agencies understand and aim to maximise their own organisational capacity.

Building Skills

4.3.3 All groups carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, business planning and informal discussion. Half of the groups had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, most groups in Cliftonville felt that their employees and members had adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The areas where a number of groups felt there was a gap were in handling the media, doing presentations, monitoring and evaluation and understanding how statutory agencies work. The main issues about training involved providing a local venue, childcare, customising content to meet the group's needs and accreditation. Both paid employees and members had received training in a range of subjects including staff management, awareness training, project management, training skills and staff management. Only three groups had not taken part in any training. All of the groups except one reported that they would like help in identifying group training needs. Around half of the groups had received advice from outside agencies. Where advice has been received it has tended to be from other community groups or from NICVA and Belfast Local Strategy Partnership. In terms of building skills, Cliftonville is best placed at Level 2.

Building Equality

4.3.4 All groups but one had an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. Most groups had formal policy statements on equality and child protection, however, only four had a formal policy statement on community relations. 47% of groups are single identity groups and 53% are cross community. Nine groups had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. Ten groups responded that community relations is an aspect or the main focus of their work. Just under half of the groups responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Cliftonville would fit under Level 2 with some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented.

Building Involvement

4.3.5 All groups but one hold annual general meetings and most provide regular newsletters/reports. All groups but one report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings, word of mouth and local communication networks. While some hold consultation meetings and use questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users, most relied on feedback through informal channels and outreach work. Under the heading Building Involvement, Cliftonville would fit under Level 3, where there is significant active membership of community groups and clear processes for decision-making.

Summary

4.3.6 The Community Strengths Framework for Cliftonville is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	3
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

This analysis suggests that Cliftonville should focus capacity building work on community relations issues, presentation and media handling skills and building up contacts with the statutory sector. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.4 Ligoniel

4.4.1 The Ligoniel area includes the Ligoniel ward, which is ranked at 86 in terms of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. The population of the area is approximately 6,000 people and there were five community groups in the area which responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Ligoniel is a predominantly Catholic area.

Building Organisations

4.4.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, managing and keeping staff and recruiting and retaining volunteers. In Ligoniel, while only a few community groups responded to the survey, most have existed for more than 10 years. Most of the groups have more than ten active members. Most groups had more than 100 users per week with the highest number recorded as over 500. All of the groups were constituted or organised, with a Management Committee. Most committees had between five and ten members, with involvement from local people and Councillors. Most employed paid workers and had an annual income of over £50,000. Most groups have free use of premises. Groups have little or no problem accessing resources. In terms of building organisations, Ligoniel would fit at Level 3.

Building Skills

4.4.3 All groups carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, discussion with service providers, business planning and informal discussion. Half of the groups had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, groups in Ligoniel felt that their employees and members had

adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The main issues about training involved providing an accessible venue, childcare, training, tailored contents to the group, safety and accreditation. Both paid employees and members had received training in a range of subjects including staff management, awareness training, project management, training skills and staff management. Only three groups had not received any training. Most groups had not received advice from outside agencies. Where advice has been received it has tended to be from Belfast City Council. In terms of building skills, Ligoniel is best placed at Level 3.

Building Equality

4.4.4 Most groups had an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. Most had formal policy statements on equality, child protection and community relations. Most groups identified themselves as cross community and had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. Again, all groups responded that community relations is an aspect of their work. All groups responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Ligoniel would fit at Level 3.

Building Involvement

4.4.5 Most groups hold annual general meetings and all report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings, word of mouth and local communication networks. Most groups responded that they hold consultation meetings to find out the needs of the local community and users. Under the heading Building Involvement Ligoniel would fit at Level 2.

Summary

4.4.6 The Community Strengths Framework for Ligoniel is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	3
Building Skills	3
Building Equality	3
Building Involvement	2

This analysis suggests that Ligoniel should focus capacity building work on encouraging local people to become more involved in community activities and decision-making. Short term funding causes problems for community groups. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.5 Lower North Belfast

4.5.1 The Lower North Belfast area includes the Castleview, Duncairn and Fortwilliam wards, which contain high levels of deprivation. The population of the area is approximately 14,000 people and 20 community groups in the area responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Lower North Belfast is a predominantly Protestant area.

Building Organisations

4.5.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, housing advice, sports and recreation, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, managing and keeping staff, recruiting and retaining volunteers and accessing resources. Lower North Belfast has a well-established community sector with the majority of groups having existed for at least five years and almost half of the groups in existence for more than 10 years. Most of the groups have between 10 and 30 active members. The number of users per week varied, but most groups had less than 150 users per week with the highest number recorded as 1,000 users per week. Almost all of the groups were constituted groups, limited companies or registered charities, with a Management Committee. Most committees had less than 12 members. Around half of groups employed paid workers and just under half had an annual income of over £20,000. Around one third of groups own their building, around one quarter rent and the rest have free use of premises. Some groups reported problems accessing resources such as photocopying, computers and transport. In terms of building organisations, Lower North Belfast would fit at Level 2.

Building Skills

4.5.3 All groups carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, business planning and informal discussion. Half of the groups had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, most groups in Lower North Belfast felt that their employees and members had adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The only area where a number of groups felt there was a gap was handling the media. While there were some other areas where groups felt there were skills gaps, these tended to be very much in the minority. The main issues about training involved providing a local/accessible venue, childcare, safety issues, costs of training, tailoring contents to meet group needs and accreditation. Both paid employees and members had received training in a range of subjects including staff management, awareness training, project management, training skills and staff management. Only five groups had not received any training. Around two thirds of the groups reported that

they would like help in identifying group training needs. Only 25% of groups had received advice from outside agencies. Where advice has been received it has tended to be from other community groups, Belfast Local Strategy Partnership or North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. In terms of building skills, Lower North Belfast is best placed at Level 2.

Building Equality

4.5.4 All groups but three had an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. All groups but four had formal policy statements on equality and child protection. However, just over half had a formal policy statement on community relations. 40% of groups are single identity groups and 60% cross community. 78% had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. All groups but five responded that community relations is an aspect or the main focus of their work. Only five groups responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Lower North Belfast would fit under Level 2 with some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented.

Building Involvement

4.5.5 All groups but two hold annual general meetings and all but three provide regular newsletters/reports. All groups report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings, word of mouth and local communication networks. Half responded that they hold consultation meetings and just under half use questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users. All receive feedback through informal channels and outreach work. Under the heading Building Involvement, Lower North Belfast would fit under Level 3, where there is significant active membership of community groups and clear processes for decision-making.

Summary

4.5.6 The Community Strengths Framework for Lower North Belfast is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

This analysis suggests that Lower North Belfast should focus capacity building work on building organisational capacity, relations with statutory agencies, community relations and training. Short term funding causes problems for community groups. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.6 New Lodge

4.6.1 The New Lodge area, as defined here, includes the New Lodge and Waterworks wards, which are ranked at eight and 16 respectively in terms of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. The population of the area is approximately 10,000 people and 16 community groups in the area responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. New Lodge is a predominantly Catholic area.

Building Organisations

4.6.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, housing advice, sports and recreation, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding and access to resources. New Lodge has a long established community sector with the majority of groups having existed for at least five years, although around one third have existed for less than five years. Most of the groups have less than 15 active members. The number of users per week varied, but most groups had less than 150 users per week with the highest number recorded as 1,000 users per week. Almost all of the groups were constituted groups, limited companies or registered charities, with a Management Committee, although three did not. Most committees had at least ten members. Just under two thirds of groups employed paid workers and just under half had an annual income of over £50,000. Most groups have free use of premises, with only three owning their own premises and three renting. Most groups have little or no problem accessing resources, except transport. In terms of building organisations, New Lodge would fit under Level 2.

Building Skills

4.6.3 All groups carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, business planning and informal discussion. Only four groups had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, most groups in New Lodge felt that their employees and members had adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The only areas where a number of groups felt there was a gap were in understanding how statutory agencies work and fund-raising. While there were some other areas where groups felt there were skills gaps, these tended to be very much in the minority. The main issues about training involved providing a local venue, childcare, safety, cost of training, tailored contents to the group and accreditation. Both paid employees and members had received training in a range of subjects including awareness training, project management, training skills and staff management. Only two groups had not received any training. Eight groups reported that they would like help in identifying group training needs. Only 30% of groups had received advice from outside agencies. Where advice has been received it has tended to be from other community groups or statutory bodies. In terms of building skills, New Lodge is best placed at Level 2.

Building Equality

4.6.4 All groups but two had an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. Two thirds of the groups had formal policy statements on equality, child protection and community relations. 70% of groups are single identity groups and 30% cross community. However, all groups but one had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. Again, all groups but one responded that community relations is an aspect or the main focus of their work. Five groups responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality New Lodge would fit under Level 2 with some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented.

Building Involvement

4.6.5 Ten groups hold annual general meetings and nine provide regular newsletters/ reports. All groups report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings and word of mouth and local communication networks. More than half of the groups responded that they hold consultation meetings and just over half use questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users. All receive feedback through informal channels and outreach work. Under the heading Building Involvement New Lodge would fit under Level 3, where there is significant active membership of community groups and clear processes for decision-making.

Summary

4.6.6 The Community Strengths Framework for New Lodge is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

This analysis suggests that New Lodge should focus capacity building work on building organisational capacity, community relations, relations with statutory agencies and training. Short term funding causes problems for community groups. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.7 Rathcoole

- 4.7.1 The Rathcoole area includes the Bellevue and Valley wards, which display high levels of deprivation. The population of the area is approximately 6,000 people and four community groups responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Rathcoole is a predominantly Protestant area.

Building Organisations

- 4.7.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, housing advice, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, managing and keeping staff, recruiting and retaining volunteers, access to resources, access to training and access to childcare facilities. Rathcoole has a long established community sector with all of the respondent groups having existed for at least 10 years. Most of the groups have around 10 active members. The number of users per week varied between 20 and 400. All of the groups were constituted groups, limited companies or registered charities, with a Management Committee. All committees had at least ten members. Two groups employed paid workers and annual income varied from £1,000 to over £100,000. Groups either own their own premises or have free use of premises. Most groups have little or no problem accessing resources. In terms of building organisations, Rathcoole would fit at Level 2.

Building Skills

- 4.7.3 All groups carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, business planning and informal discussion. Only one group had a business plan in place, with most relying on informal discussion. Under the heading of Building Skills, most groups in Rathcoole felt that their employees and members had adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The areas where groups felt there were gaps were in publicity, presentations and understanding how statutory agencies work. While there was some other areas where groups felt there was skills gaps, these tended to be very much in the minority. The main issues about training involved providing a local venue, childcare, costs of training, tailored contents to the group and accreditation. Only three groups had received any training in subjects including staff management, awareness training and budget management. All of the groups reported that they would like help in identifying group training needs. Only two groups had received advice from outside agencies, NICVA and the Local Strategy Partnership. In terms of building skills, Rathcoole is best placed at Level 1.

Building Equality

4.7.4 All groups had formal policy statements on equality and child protection. Two did not have a formal policy statement on community relations. Three groups are single identity groups and two are cross community. Four groups had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. All groups responded that community relations is an aspect of their work. Only one group responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Rathcoole would fit under Level 2 with some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented.

Building Involvement

4.7.5 All groups but one hold annual general meetings and two provide regular newsletters/reports. All groups report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings, word of mouth and local communication networks. Four groups responded that they hold consultation meetings and three use questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users. All receive feedback through informal channels and outreach work. Under the heading Building Involvement Rathcoole would fit at Level 2.

Summary

4.7.6 The Community Strengths Framework for Rathcoole is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	1
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	2

This analysis suggests that Rathcoole should focus capacity building work on building organisational capacity, community relations, relations with statutory agencies, access to training and involving local people in community activities and decision-making. Short term funding causes problems for community groups. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.8 Upper & Mid North Belfast

- 4.8.1 The Upper & Mid North Belfast area includes the Ballysillan ward and parts of the Cavehill, Crumlin, Ligoniel, Shankill and Woodvale wards, which display very high levels of deprivation. The population of the area is approximately 20,000 people and 27 community groups in the area responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Upper and Mid North Belfast is a predominantly Protestant area.

Building Organisations

- 4.8.2 The community activities in the area include welfare advice, advocacy, arts and cultural activity, counselling, housing advice, sports and recreation, play activities, social activities, training and community education and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, recruiting and retaining volunteers and access to childcare facilities. Upper and Mid North has a long established community sector with the majority of groups having existed for at least five years and almost half of the groups in existence for more than 10 years. Most of the groups have less than 15 active members. The number of users per week varied, but most groups had less than 150 users per week with the highest number recorded as 1,000 users per week. While most groups were constituted groups, limited companies or registered charities, with a Management Committee, six were unconstituted. Most committees had around ten members, with some involvement from Local Councillors. Around 60% of groups employed paid workers but 90% had an annual income of less than £50,000. Under half of the groups own their premises, with 13 having free use of premises. Most groups have little or no problem accessing resources, except transport. In terms of building organisations, Upper and Mid North would fit under Level 2.

Building Skills

- 4.8.3 All groups but one carry out some form of planning activity including research, community consultation, business planning and informal discussion. Around one third of the groups had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, most groups in Upper and Mid North felt that their employees and members had adequate skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives. The only areas where some groups felt there was a gap were in understanding how statutory agencies work and fund-raising. While there were some other areas where groups felt there were skills gaps, these tended to be very much in the minority. The main issues about training involved providing a local venue, childcare, cost of training, safety, tailored contents to meet the group's needs and accreditation. In most groups, both paid employees and members had received training in a range of subjects including staff management, awareness training, project management, training skills and staff management. Only six groups had not received any training. Seventeen groups reported that they would like help in identifying group training

needs. Less than 40% of groups had received advice from outside agencies. Where advice has been received it has tended to be from other community groups. In terms of building skills, Upper and Mid North is best placed at Level 2, there is some awareness of training and learning opportunities but many unacknowledged barriers.

Building Equality

4.8.4 Half of the groups did not have an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. Half of the groups had formal policy statements on equality and two thirds had a formal policy statement on child protection. Half had a formal policy statement on community relations. 75% of groups are single identity groups and 25% cross community. Two thirds of groups had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other community. Eight groups responded that community relations is not an aspect or the main focus of their work. Seven groups (30%) responded that they would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Upper and Mid North would fit at Level 1.

Building Involvement

4.8.5 Five groups do not see themselves as accountable, 75% hold annual general meetings and 66% provide regular newsletters/reports. Most groups report that they provide regular feedback through public meetings, word of mouth or local communication networks. Just over 40% of the groups responded that they hold consultation meetings and 58% use questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users. All receive feedback through informal channels and outreach work. Under the heading Building Involvement Upper and Mid North would fit under Level 2.

Summary

4.8.6 The Community Strengths Framework for Upper and Mid North Belfast is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	1
Building Involvement	2

This analysis suggests that Upper and Mid North Belfast should focus capacity building work on building organisational capacity, community relations, relations with statutory agencies, training and involving local people in community activities and decision making. Short term funding causes problems for community groups. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

4.9 Whitewell

- 4.9.1 The Whitewell area includes the Valley and Whitehouse wards, which display high levels of deprivation. The population of the area is approximately 3,000 people and two community groups in the area responded to the Community Capacity Baseline Survey. Whitewell is a predominantly Catholic area.

Building Organisations

- 4.9.2 The community activities in the area are limited compared to other areas but include housing advice, play activities, social activities and youth provision. The main issues or problems faced by groups in the area include short-term funding, managing and keeping staff, recruiting and retaining volunteers, access to resources, access to training and access to childcare facilities. Whitewell has a more recently established community sector with the majority of groups having existed for between two and 10 years. Groups have less than 10 active members and the number of users per week tended to be low. The groups were constituted groups with no Management Committee and are run by local residents. The groups did not employ paid workers and had an annual income of less than £10,000. Both respondent groups meet at a member's house. Most groups have a lot of problems in accessing resources. In terms of building organisations, Whitewell would fit at Level 1.

Building Skills

- 4.9.3 The groups carry out planning activity using informal discussion. Neither group had a business plan in place. Under the heading of Building Skills, groups in Whitewell felt that their members required new skills and experience to enable the group to meet its objectives, including managing finances, computer skills, presentations, managing staff, managing projects, monitoring and evaluation and understanding how statutory agencies work. The main issues about training involved providing a local venue, childcare, costs of training, safety, tailored contents to the group and accreditation. Few members had received training, the only training being in conflict management. Both groups reported that they would like help in identifying group training needs. Both groups had received advice from outside agencies, including Belfast Local Strategy Partnership, Belfast City Council and NICVA. In terms of building skills, Whitewell is placed at Level 1.

Building Equality

- 4.9.4 Both groups had an equal opportunities policy or statement of equality within their constitution. Both had formal policy statements on equality and child protection but nothing on community relations. Both groups see themselves as single identity groups but had links with other groups to build up understanding of the other

community. Both groups responded that community relations is an aspect of their work. One group responded that it would need support or advice on equal opportunities issues. In terms of building equality Whitewell would fit under Level 1.

Building Involvement

4.9.5 Both groups hold annual general meetings and one provides a regular newsletter/ reports. One group holds consultation meetings and uses questionnaires to find out the needs of the local community and users. One receives feedback through informal channels. Under the heading Building Involvement Whitewell would fit under Level 2.

Summary

4.9.6 The Community Strengths Framework for Whitewell is as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	1
Building Skills	1
Building Equality	1
Building Involvement	2

This analysis suggests that Whitewell should focus capacity building work on building organisational capacity, community relations, relations with statutory agencies, training and involving local people in community activities and decision-making. Short term funding causes problems for community groups. There should be better access to advice and training in a local context and a skills and training audit made available to groups.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Community Capacity Survey in North Belfast was undertaken using the “Assessing Community Strengths Model”. The responses to the questionnaires from groups across North Belfast suggest that the Community Strengths Framework for North Belfast should be as follows:

	Level
Building Organisations	2
Building Skills	2
Building Equality	2
Building Involvement	3

What this means is that, according to the responses to the survey, North Belfast as a whole has a relatively low community capacity. There was evidence that community capacity in Protestant areas is lower than in Catholic areas. In Protestant areas groups tend to be smaller, have fewer active members and to be less well organised. This is not to say that community groups in Catholic areas do not have capacity building needs. The evidence suggests that groups in Catholic areas, which have been more successful in attracting active participants from the local community, have slightly different needs in terms of co-ordinating and making best use of the skills and experience that exists. However, a note of caution should be given. The report simply summarises local community leaders’ views of their community groups’ activities and capacity. It must be acknowledged that this effectively introduces a different measurement baseline for each area (the experience of community leaders). Therefore, it would be inappropriate to compare area scores and these should simply be used as a measure of how local people feel about their community infrastructure at a point in time.

- 5.2 Consultation with statutory and voluntary organisations reveals some disparity between the responses from community groups and statutory organisations. Community groups suggest that relationships with the statutory sector are not good and groups found it difficult to access statutory organisations at a meaningful level. Statutory organisations, on the other hand, do have mechanisms in place to work with community organisations. Perhaps this suggests a communication problem between the two sectors. The Key Providers Survey also suggests that many of the key providers need to have better monitoring and reporting mechanisms in relation to work in North Belfast, given the need that exists in the area and the problems there. The statutory organisations need to develop clear strategies and systems for working in North Belfast to take account of its unique circumstances. Further work

needs to be done between statutory organisations, the North Belfast Community Action Unit and local community groups.

- 5.3 The Community Capacity Building Survey results have also been assessed by categorising responses according to eight distinct areas in North Belfast. The results of this analysis, using the Community Strengths Framework as a template is as follows:

Area	Theme	Level
Ardoyne and Marrowbone	Building Organisations	3
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
Cliftonville	Building Organisations	3
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
Ligoniel	Building Organisations	3
	Building Skills	3
	Building Equality	3
	Building Involvement	2
Lower North Belfast	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
New Lodge	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	3
Rathcoole	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	1
	Building Equality	2
	Building Involvement	2
Upper and Mid North Belfast	Building Organisations	2
	Building Skills	2
	Building Equality	1
	Building Involvement	2
Whitewell	Building Organisations	1
	Building Skills	1
	Building Equality	1
	Building Involvement	2

5.4 A number of other conclusions can be drawn from this. These are:

Building Organisations

- Within a broader framework, any approach to community capacity building needs to be tailored to defined areas, as there are differences between communities in terms of capacity building needs.
- Short term funding is a major problem for most groups and this contributes to other significant problems including staff and volunteer turnover. Staff and members are often distracted from core activities by the need to consistently pursue funding from different bodies.
- Many of the key providers have inadequate monitoring and reporting mechanisms in relation to work in North Belfast, given the need that exists in the area and the problems there.
- Statutory organisations have not yet developed clear strategies and systems for working in North Belfast to take account of its unique circumstances.

Building Skills

- Training should meet the needs of groups and should be accessible in terms of location and time. Safety issues also need to be considered.
- Work needs to be done to identify training needs within individual groups and communities. Training needs identified presently are primarily concerned with external communication and promotion rather than internal management issues.
- Many groups felt that they did not have access to advice, particularly on funding issues.

Building Equality

- There needs to be a mechanism to assist communities to work together to address common needs and issues and to build trust and understanding.
- Groups need to be aware of the need for community relations policies to be put in place and implemented. However, this needs to flow from recognition of the value of developing an accommodation and possibly a good working relationship, with neighbouring areas, rather than as a gesture to funders' demands.

Building Involvement

- There is a high level of need in North Belfast for community capacity building work. In many areas there is a relatively low level of community participation and community leadership is lacking.

- Interaction between community groups and the statutory sector is poor and work needs to be done to enable community groups to access statutory organisations and for statutory organisations to reach out to communities.
- Groups in all areas need to work in their communities to increase the level of active participation.
- The Unit and the statutory agencies need to consider a more joined-up approach in developing strategies for North Belfast.

6 Recommendations for Action

6.1 Based on the conclusions in Section 5, the recommendations arising from the survey can be summarised as follows:

Building Organisations

- Capacity building work should be undertaken on two levels. There are areas of work which should be carried out on a North Belfast wide basis, e.g. some elements of training, youth work, building links with statutory organisations and addressing the funding issue. Other work needs to be undertaken with an area-based focus, i.e. to meet the particular needs of discrete areas in North Belfast.
- All capacity building work should have a long-term aim of narrowing the gaps between areas in terms of community capacity and of addressing the community relations issues that have held back economic and social development in the area.
- Key providers need to consider their monitoring and reporting mechanisms in relation to work in North Belfast, given the need that exists in the area and the problems there.
- Statutory organisations need to further develop appropriate strategies and systems for working in North Belfast to take account of its unique circumstances.

Building Skills

- Community organisations need to work closely with training providers in developing training interventions that will meet the needs of the community both in terms of external and internal requirements.
- Capacity building work needs to take place within communities and within statutory and larger voluntary organisations to improve links and interaction between the sectors. One way of encouraging this would be to share training, funding information and advice and other activities to help develop understanding and networks.
- Capacity building work should focus on increasing active participation within communities, as well as building skills levels.

Building Equality

- Communities need to seek to develop more links outside their own community, particularly to help the understanding of other communities and to address community relations issues in a positive way.
- The Unit and the Community Relations Council need to work together to influence community leaders in the need to develop an accommodation and a working relationship with neighbouring areas.

Building Involvement

- The survey has reinforced the need in North Belfast for community capacity building work. A community capacity building survey should therefore be repeated after three years, using the current survey as a baseline.
- A more formal and regular opportunity for interaction between the community and statutory sectors should be established. This could take the form of a discussion forum and/or “open day” type events in community groups to which statutory bodies are invited (staff at operational level) and reciprocated in statutory organisations.
- Groups need to develop proposals to increase the level of active participation within their communities.
- There should be clear linkages between the work of the Community Empowerment Partnerships and other public sector initiatives including Neighbourhood Renewal and Urban 2.

Appendices

1. Attendance List for Public Meetings
2. Community Strengths Framework Table

Attendance List for Public Meetings

Ardoyne Youth Providers

Ashton Community Centre North Belfast Partnership

Belfast Institute for Further & Higher Education

Brookvale Residents

CLASP

Cliftonville Community Forum

Club Oige Mhachaire Bothain

Community Relations Council

First Step Drop-in Centre

Holy Cross, Ardoyne

Ligoniel Community Centre

Ligoniel Improvement Association

Little America Community Association

Little America Community Centre

Marrowbone Community Association

Mountainhill Youth Club

Opportunity Youth

Partnership in Community Transformation

Star Neighbourhood Centre

Vine Centre

Community Strengths Framework Table

Appendix 2

	Theme	Level 1 Creating	Level 2 Connecting	Level 3 Structuring	Level 4 Partnering	Level 5 Sustaining
Building Organisations	Baseline	Few active community groups, low level of co-ordinated activity, little external support	Some established groups and new ones emerging, increasing resources available from support agencies	Groups and agencies understand and aim to maximise their own organisational capacity	There is a strategic approach to joint working between the majority of groups and agencies based in the area	Highly organised groups and infrastructure. Support agencies are fully accountable to those they service
	Possible action	Increase activity and involvement	Develop information and networking between groups	Develop infrastructures which are locally accountable	Develop action partnerships	Develop sustainable community led projects, partnerships and policies
Building Skills	Baseline	Few opportunities for, and low take-up of, relevant and accessible training	Some awareness of training and learning opportunities but many unacknowledged barriers	Support, training and learning opportunities are well organised	Wide range of skills and skill sharing amongst community groups. Agencies provide relevant and flexible training packages	Training needs and training opportunities are frequently reviewed and addressed
	Possible action	Identify existing skills and training gaps	Develop opportunities for sharing skills and knowledge	Develop locally relevant training courses and recognition for learning through action	Analyse the existing relationship between skills development and community strengths - plan for the future with local partners	Ensure continual access to learning opportunities
Building Equality	Baseline	Little awareness and knowledge about different community needs and perspectives	Some evidence of equal opportunities policies being implemented	Increase in equal opportunities action plans. Networks reflect a variety of interests and perspectives	There are integrated strategies to promote greater access and involvement	Minority and marginalised groups have equal access to strategic planning processes
	Possible action	Increase knowledge and awareness of community diversity	Share best practice	Target under-represented groups and promote access and inclusion	Develop strategic action to ensure all community members benefit from activities	Regularly review and address barriers to involvement
Building Involvement	Baseline	Little involvement in community groups. Only a few groups contribute to planning processes	Community groups are growing. There are some consultation procedures in place	Significant active membership of community groups. Clear processes for decision-making	There is support for community action. There is increasing control of local services/agencies	Community groups play recognised and equal roles in local planning and development
	Possible action	Bring groups together and share strengths	Publicise and develop consultation mechanisms	Develop accountable representative structures	Ensure community participation strategies across all sectors	Provide continuing support for community-led developments.

North Belfast Community Action Unit
Enterprise House 55-59 Adelaide Street Belfast BT2 8FE
Tel: 028 9072 6014 Fax: 028 9072 6102
Email: secretariat.office@northbelfastcommunityactionunit.org