

LINK meeting with Paths for All - Health and the environment, May 2009

Present – Ian Findlay, Rona Gibb, Jess, (PfA) & Helen Zealley, Jen Anderson, LINK

What's afoot

PfA focus on increased physical activity esp among very inactive recognised by Govt in the form of funding (via Health Dept) to develop model of local schemes with local interest and 50% match funding.

Quantitative evidence not easy to gather though qualitative data and testimonials are good and there is now effort to capture the former too (eg PfA walkers' database; we noted mental health criteria could be added). PA is 'the best buy in public health'

'Tsar' role (Mary Allison) key in encouraging depts, sectors, organisations, with responsibilities, to play a part. Current 'active players' agree that qualitative feedback is more than sufficient justification for continuing the work.

This is a busy landscape with potential for confusion about who is doing what. (See PfA mapping and information sheet)

Recent positive developments include appointment of Scottish Minister for sport as well as physical activity, consultation on the physical activity strategy which informed about the issues, the range of interested bodies and type of initiatives already afoot, NICE guidelines on how environment can play a role.

Consultation on strategy led to effort now to join initiatives up by giving day-to-day management of projects to Health Scotland (though some continue to be funded from other budgets) and establishing national monitoring and evaluation framework. Lack of coordinator in central government a concern

SCVO have big potential to spread the word; poss joint PfA/SCVO event later 09 will aim to raise awareness of the considerable work at community level and the need for communities to be able to access funding.

Centre for Healthy Working Life – this is a good model, on a par with, but for some organisations more relevant than, Investors in People. PfA committed.

World Cancer Organisation (coinciding with NICE guidelines) reported on physical activity and cancer – more evidence of growing body of literature.

NPARE (committee with funding to research material)

PfA engaging with community regeneration organisations? (PfA)

Ecoschools and Forestschools are relevant, and these link to eating healthily, though there needs to be some integration here. Curriculum for Excellence needs to restate importance of physical activity

Voluntary Health Scotland role noted esp in promoting messages to networks

Prescriptions for physical activity – this is harder for us to influence though not impossible esp., through personal contacts. Also constrained by other factors like accidents, etc. But where surgeries are interested we noted that as schemes take off, GPs could monitor decreases in anti depressant/anxiety drug prescriptions.

Where / how could LINK add value

Encourage members to promote own relevant projects (reserves, walks, biodiversity, etc)

Articles in LINK and members newsletters to promote the issue and how eNGOS relate

Sell this side of biodiversity (esp re greenspaces near urban/rural urban populations)

Consider map packs and leaflets (Borders PfA scheme example)

Discuss with SNH how to present this aspect of biodiversity at the right pitch

Consider Woods for People or Woods around Towns schemes as opportunities eg for training; work on auditing for walkability is afoot

Keep PfA informed of contact details for staff based locally who may be interested in linking up with local initiatives groups

Call for the community funding in SRDP to be safeguarded for communities (Agri TF)

Submission on Curric for Excellence on restatement of importance of physical activity

Use our dialogue with Govt and Agencies to encourage join-up between portfolios

Run event in SEW 2010 to bring transport, environment and health

Congress on Economics & Environment to explore physical activity & environment in relation to happiness/wellbeing measures (IF to engage in steering group)

Regional Transport Plans are opportunities to flag active travel, value of biodiversity (hedgerows, interpretive work, etc)

Next steps

Explore these action points with LINK staff and LINK members (meeting 26th May to identify collective 'asks'/need)

Possible discussions with other voluntary sector interests thereafter

Keep in touch with PfA

Meet SNH again September