

MAKI Local Area Community Planning Group Training

1. SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the outcomes of a training day for members of the MAKI LACPG held on Monday 21 March 2011, on the theme of better community engagement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That members note participants at the training unanimously agreed that the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islands area is too large for one Local Area Community Planning Group. Participants suggested that responsibility for community planning should be devolved to the Mid Argyll Partnership and Kintyre Initiative Working Group and that the Islands could be assisted to form a similar local community planning group. Participants further suggested that the chairs of the MAP, KIWG and Islands Forum meet four to six times a year to agree MAKI area wide priorities and actions.

2.2 That an 'induction pack' on community planning in Argyll and Bute, including the role/s of MAKI area community planning group/s, should form part of the Community Planning Partnership's Better Community Engagement Resource for MAKI. This induction pack would contain all pertinent Area Community Plans and Action Plans, as well as partnership agreements, key contact details, glossary and guidance on roles and responsibilities of community planning group partners and members.

2.3 That members note the results of a series of workshops on representation at the MAKI LACPG, Mid Argyll Partnership (MAP) and Kintyre Initiative Working Group (KIWG). Participants felt that a number of key groups (specifically young people, the business community, senior citizens, Island communities and people with disabilities) were not properly represented at the MAKI LACPG and action should be taken to address this. Community groups and the business community are better represented at KIWG, but young people, remote island communities, tenants, social enterprises are not so well represented. (It should be noted that senior citizens and people with disabilities are represented through the Community Care Forum in Kintyre.) Community groups and social housing tenants are better represented at MAP but, again, young people, senior citizens, the business community and social enterprises are not well represented at this partnership.

3. DETAIL

3.1 Attendance. Sixteen MAKI LACPG members had confirmed attendance at the training and a further six had made tentative expressions of interest. On the day, seven people attended the training, as follows:

Rod Buchanan, ACHA
Cllr Rory Colville, Third Sector Spokesperson and Chair of the KIWG
Andrea Henderson, Furnace Community Council
Janet Laughton, Ardrishaig Community Council
Jim Malcolm, Dunadd Community Council
Cllr Donnie McMillan, LACPG Chair
Cllr John Semple

There were no representatives from the islands.

The training was led by Council staff: Audrey Baird, Community Development Officer for MAKI and Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Partnership Manager. Margaret Fyfe, Community Development Manager and Laura MacDonald, Community Development Officer for Oban, Lorne and the Isles also attended.

3.2 Content. The training was split into two sections with the first focusing on community planning structures and processes in Argyll and Bute, and the role of the MAKI Local Area Community Planning Group and its Area Community Plan. There was general agreement that the objectives of the MAKI LACPG were good in principle but that the LACPG may not be the best vehicle to deliver those objectives. There was also a suggestion that community planning partnership members should contribute funding to support community planning and this would enhance involvement. There was also a general feeling that LACPG meetings look and feel like Council meetings and questions were raised about whether they could be organised differently.

The participants then broke into workshops to look at which groups were/were not represented at the MAKI LACPG, Mid Argyll Partnership and Kintyre Initiative Working Group. The workshops were run using an engagement technique called 'Circles' that will feature in the Better Community Engagement Resource Pack being produced for the Community Planning Partnership.

A discussion of community council representation in community planning partnership structures followed. Janet Laughton reported that Ardrishaig CC has good attendance at its meetings by organising stakeholder talks on a variety of issues at each meeting and promoting the meetings widely.

Eileen Wilson, Community Planning Partnership Manager, spoke about the Public Sector Improvement Framework Assessment Form and urged people to complete and submit it by March 31.

The second part of the training outlined some of the proposed content of the Better Community Engagement Resource Pack and introduced participants to a technique to establish priorities 'Daddy or Chips?' and some evaluation techniques for audiences of all ages.

3.3 Parking Bay. The training also introduced participants to an engagement technique called the 'Parking Bay', which was used throughout the training session to record issues that could not be dealt with on the day but were pertinent to community planning in Argyll and Bute and should be raised and addressed at future meetings. Issues raised through the Parking Bay were:

- i. Give community planning groups a big budget. There's no money on the table!
- ii. Need buy-in from community representatives for community planning
- iii. So many groups, so many titles and no clarity on who is responsible for what and what the decision-making process is, ie, who, how and where are decisions actually being made?
- iv. Let every community council have one representative at LACPG meetings and allow them to speak
- v. Community Councils are swamped - can they have more support?
- vi. Change the name of the Community Planning Partnership (*it's confusing – make it more understandable*). *Note: this issue arose several times during the day*
- vii. Change the way the meetings are run
- viii. Community Councils in Mid Argyll already attend Mid Argyll Partnership meetings. Customer Services, elected members, other statutory bodies are all there – why do CCs also need to attend the LACPG?
- ix. There needs to be a smaller MAKI management group
- x. Community Councils already exist – they are community planning
- xi. Start from the bottom and work up!
- xii. Engagement at any level is constrained by resources and legislation – this is a challenge but need not be insurmountable
- xiii. Be proactive, not reactive
- xiv. Community Councils hate jargon
- xv. Membership of the LACPG has to be addressed soon
- xvi. Could area partnerships take on the LACPG?
- xvii. Residents association, community councils, SWRI, village hall committees, Argyll & Islands NFU, ACHA – community planning needs to have an overall view of all community groups

3.4 Evaluation. Comments raised at the evaluation were:

- i. Good training spoiled by lack of representation
- ii. Appreciate the time and effort to run this programme

- iii. Good to know LACPG is being re-thought
- iv. Useful to focus a bit on priority groups, eg, young and elderly, and how they might be more involved (with community planning)
- v. Really good discussion, I wish it had happened 2 or 3 years ago.
- vi. Please lay the MAKI LACPG to rest.

4. CONCLUSION

Participants felt that community planning will not work at MAKI area level and that it needs to be more localised.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	None
5.2	Financial	None
5.3	Personnel	None
5.4	Equalities Impact Assessment	None
5.5	Legal	None

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