ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL	**PLANNING PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	**MEETING DATE: 21st DECEMBER 2011**

COMMUNITY COUNCIL WORKSHOPS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report draws Members attention to a series of recently convened planning workshops which were held across Argyll and Bute for the benefit of Community Councils.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Members note the content of this report and support future Community Council engagement in the planning process.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Community councils are a statutory consultees on all planning applications in their area. In moving towards the new plan-led system under The Planning Act etc (Scotland) Bill 2006, it has been crucial to engage Community Councils more actively at all stages in plan preparation and development management process.

3.2 We have a good relationship and interaction with the majority of our Community Councils and representations submitted during the formulation of the Local Development Plan and during individual planning applications highlight that there is an interest and willingness to engage with planning matters. Notwithstanding this, we are aware that there has been a number of new Community Council Councillors elected in the past 12 months and a number of significant changes in terms of planning legislation so workshops were set up to train, assist and get feedback from our Community Councils on planning related matters. These workshops were a progression from the 2010 Community Council presentations held the previous year.

3.3 Evening meetings were held in:-

- Inveraray (25th Oct) – Argyll Hotel
- Oban (26th Oct) – Regent Hotel
- Garelochhead (10th Nov) – Route 81
- Dunoon(15th Nov) – Queens Hall
- Campbeltown (17th Nov) – Council Chambers, Town Hall

3.4 Letter and emails were sent to all Community Councils inviting them to attend any session and allowing them to suggest any pertinent discussion topics. We had around 30+ delegates attend from:-

- Ardchattan CC
- Kilninver & Kilmelford CC
- Connel CC
- Mull CC
- Appin CC
- Seil & Easdale
- Southend CC
- Campbeltown CC
- Sandbank CC
- Helensburgh CC
- Cove and Kilcreggan CC

3.5 The workshops were chaired by the Development Manager taking the form of an informal speakeasy where delegates were encouraged to raise questions and provide examples of situations from their communities. The training workshop was divided into topics and included an introduction to development management, the planning process, role of Community Councils, using the e-planning system and how to make an effective representation. We used real examples of applications to highlight issues and train delegates. At the end of each session there was an open Q&A where both strategic and application specific matters were raised with the Development Manager.

3.6 Verbal feedback from the sessions has been very positive and shall be followed up by questionnaire. An action plan to address issues raised shall also be drawn up and fed back next year.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Engaging effectively with our Community Councils is a cornerstone of a modern and inclusive planning system. They have a key role as a statutory consultee and representing local views. Ensuring that they are enabled through having knowledge and skills to make representations is essential. The workshops are seen as pivotal in providing these skills and should be continued in future years.

IMPLICATIONS

PERSONNEL	Officer time to undertake evening CC meetings
FINANCIAL	None rising directly from the report
EQUALITY	Area based engagement
LEGAL	None