

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & LINKS TO COMMUNITY PLANNING

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Community Planning Group (MAKI ACPG) held in August 2015 there was a request made that the Community Governance Team produce a note about the purpose of community planning together with an update on the progress made in relation to the mechanisms being put in place to support engagement with local communities.
- 1.2 This report aims to provide the Group with a copy of the prepared guidance note and also sets out the work which the Community Council Liaison Officer is progressing to ensure communities are being engaged in the community planning process.
- 1.3 The Governance and Law Service has given an undertaking to prepare a development plan for community councils by 31st March. Details of the work undertaken so far are detailed in the main report at paragraph 4.5 together with information about training opportunities to support community councils in effective engagement within their communities (Paragraph 4.6)

The report recommends that the Group endorse the note on community planning and notes the work being undertaken in supporting communities.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At the last meeting of this Group, a request was made that the Area Governance Manager take forward the development of a guidance note which sets out the purpose of community planning. In addition, a request was also made to update the group on the mechanisms being put in place to support engagement with local communities.
- 2.2 In response to the request, a note is attached at Appendix 1 which outlines the back ground to the CPG and how community groups/councils can participate. Details are also included of the work currently being undertaken to develop community councils in effort to better support their communities.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Group endorses the guidance note attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That the action currently being taken forward in regard to supporting engagement with local communities is noted.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Group considered an item on “Island Communities” at their last meeting which followed on from a previous discussion about how the ACPG could better engage with communities.
- 4.2 Prior to the August meeting, the Area Governance Manager and the Community Council Liaison officer held discussion with representatives from Islay and Jura Community Council (with Colonsay being unable to attend) to discuss whether there would be merit in establishing a caucus type arrangement so one person could potentially represent a number of communities at the ACPG meetings.
- 4.3 During the discussion, it was put forward by the community council representatives that they could see no benefit to having a caucus type arrangement, but that there was a need to make the role of the ACPG clearer. In addition the possibility of appointing a community planning liaison role from within the membership of the community council and some issues about the timing of meetings were raised as options to improve linkages /engagement.

- 4.4 Having noted this, the MAKI ACPG requested that a guidance note be produced for circulation. This has been drafted and is attached at Appendix 1. In addition, the Group requested an update on the mechanisms being put in place to support engagement with local communities.
- 4.5 The Council's Community Council Liaison Officer (CCLO) has been tasked with preparing a development plan for community councils by 31st March 2016. The plan will be centered on providing community councils with the skills, knowledge and tools to enable them to engage effectively with their communities and be able to represent the views and opinions of those communities. At the moment it is premature to comment on the content of the plan as the first stage of the consultation has only recently taken place. A second stage consultation will commence in November which will feedback on the ideas/suggestions proposed by community councils and invite them to consider a draft plan that will be based on their input.
- 4.6 As well as consultation on the development plan, the CCLO is taking forward provision of training on Governance, Planning, Local Government Finance and, most relevant to this report, Community Engagement. The Council's Community Development Officers will be delivering bespoke training developed following an early consultation with community councils about what they wanted this training to focus on. The first of those sessions will take place in Helensburgh on 11th November 2015 and while there is commitment to run a session in Mid Argyll, no date is yet confirmed for this.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The request to prepare a guidance note about the purpose of the Community Planning Group has been undertaken and the document is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The Group may wish to endorse this note as well as noting the update providing details about supporting community engagement.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – Complies with Best Practice Guidance for Community Councils
6.2 Financial - none
6.3 Legal - none
6.4 HR – None, all work undertaken was from existing staff resources.
6.5 Equalities – None
6.6 Risk - None
6.7 Customer Service - None

Executive Director of Customer Services
Policy Lead – Councillor Currie
28 October 2015

For further information contact: Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer,
Kilmory, Lochgilphead (Tel. No. 01546 604331)

What is Community Planning?

The concept of community planning has been around for quite some time although was formalised by the Scotland Act 2003. The ethos of community planning is to assist public agencies to work together with communities to plan and deliver better services to make a real difference to people's lives.

Community Planning aims to bring all public service providers, as well as other organisations such as Scottish Natural Heritage, Third and Private Sectors, together in one forum (the Community Planning Partnership and locally the Area Community Planning Partnerships), with a common goal of joint working for the benefit of the community. It's important to note that while typically communities are generally considered to be residents of towns and villages, it can also be about communities of interest such as groups of elderly or young.

The Scottish Government agreed a 10 year Single Outcome Agreement for Argyll and Bute in 2013. This Agreement clearly defines the local priorities in Argyll and Bute and sets 6 local outcomes which form the focus of the community planning meetings. The outcomes are:

- Outcome 1 – The economy is diverse and thriving
- Outcome 2 – We have infrastructure that supports growth
- Outcome 3 - Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all
- Outcome 4 – Children and young people have the best possible start
- Outcome 5 – People live active healthier and independent lives
- Outcome 6 – People live in safer and stronger communities

Why should Community Councils engage?

Community Councils have a statutory duty to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable (as well as undertake other appropriate duties!) It follows that they have a key role in community planning to ensure that their geographic communities are able to contribute to local priorities and services which affect everyday lives, making sure that people and communities are genuinely engaged in decisions made about public services which affect them.

How to engage

There are a variety of ways which community councils can engage with community planning in Argyll and Bute including participation in a local group such as the Mid Argyll Partnership and Cowal Transport Forum which are core partners of the Local Area Community Planning Groups. Where they exist, community councils can feed into local Community Council Caucus meetings or alternatively they can link directly to Area Community Planning Groups (which currently meet quarterly in February, May, August and November)

If you have any enquiries about **community planning** please contact Rona Gold, Community Planning Manager (rona.gold@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or 01436 658862

or for information on **local community planning partnership meetings** please contact Shirley MacLeod, Area Governance Manager (Shirley.macleod@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or 01369 707134.