

**Proposed New Way of Working**

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**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide information on the current working arrangements Community Councils have in place in other areas with regards to linking into Area Community Planning Groups and to recommend new ways of working which would facilitate participation with key strategic partnerships within the area such as Area Community Planning Groups (ACPGs) while taking into account the fact that community councillors are volunteers with a variety of demands on their time

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 Members are requested to consider the contents of the report and to adopt the new way of working outlined in section 5.1

**3. Background**

3.1 The Mid Argyll Partnership has provided a forum for networking and collective working over the years since the Group was first established.

3.2 The Partnership has regularly reviewed its way of working to take into account of changing external environments and, at the meeting held on 28 September 2016, the Group discussed whether there were more appropriate ways of working given the increasing number of requests for community councils to link into a variety of strategic partnerships in the area

3.3 Members invited officers to put together a report which made suggestions for new ways of working which would facilitate participation with key strategic partnerships within the area such as Area Community Planning Groups (ACPGs) while taking into account the fact that community councillors are volunteers with a variety of demands on their time.

3.4 Whatever the Group decide, it should be pointed out that in terms of the local government budget settlement, there are 20% savings to

be taken from the Governance and Law Service from next year's budget and as a result of this, the service will unlikely be in a position to have staff resources available going forward to support partnership groups to existing levels. This should be taken into consideration by the Group when determining any future arrangements.

#### 4. Detail

4.1 All Community Councils are members of their Area Community Planning Groups in their own right.

4.2 Information on the current working arrangements Community Councils have in place in other areas with regards to linking into Area Community Planning Groups is detailed below:

**Bute & Cowal** – A Community Council Caucus formed to allow all 12 Community Councils opportunities to network and to consider whether collectively they wish to propose items to feature on the ACPG agenda. The Caucus also agrees which community councillors will attend the ACPG and other partnership meetings and provide feedback to the other CCs afterwards.

The Council provides a meeting venue in Dunoon and in Bute and facilitates the VC connection between the 2 venues. The Caucus appoint their own Convener and Secretary and the latter prepares the minutes, sets the meeting schedule and provides detail of the meetings to the Council. The Council then books the venues and VC facility. No other administrative support is provided by the Council.

When considering what items to put forward, consideration is also given to whether the Caucus has any suggestions for how things may be resolved/taken forward. From time to time, officers receive an invitation to attend the Caucus meeting but the group is largely self-sufficient.

**Helensburgh & Lomond** – Individual Community Councils link directly to the local ACPG and other strategic partnerships within the Helensburgh & Lomond area.

**Oban, Lorn & the Isles** – As above although there has been some discussion about establishing a Community Council Caucus as there are a number of matters which are ongoing and affect a number of community councils. The Council is not involved in progressing this and has not been asked to provide any support the proposed Caucus.

## **5. Conclusions and Next Steps**

5.1 A Caucus style approach to networking and collective working would work well for the Mid Argyll Partnership and is a return to the original purpose of the group. Being run by the members, it would provide an independent informal forum where discussion about items of common interest and collective action could be taken on an ad hoc basis as required by the matter in hand.

5.2 Community Councils would be able to attend the MAKI Area CPG on an individual basis should they wish to do so as well as providing input via the Caucus. This would enable direct input into local community planning matters and associated strategic discussions.

5.3 The Community Council Liaison Officer would be able to provide support and guidance during the transition between the current arrangements and a Caucus style arrangement and the Council would be able provide admin support to facilitate the initial meeting.

### **For further information please contact:**

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