

Management Committee

Date: 02 December 2020

Agenda Item: 4



Area Community Planning Groups

1. Purpose

This paper presents key matters arising during the Area Community Planning Group meetings that were held virtually in November 2020.

2. Recommendations

The Management Committee is asked to:

- a) note the Highlights detailed at 4.0;
- b) consider the concerns raised by the Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group regarding the lack of clarity and guidance around befriending and the lack of communication with voluntary organisations;
- c) consider what difference the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child legislation could make to decision making and engagement within the Community Planning Partnership framework; and
- d) consider the concerns raised at the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Island Community Planning Group regarding the poor attendance of partners at the meeting.

3.0 Background

There are four Area Community Planning Groups, one in each of the Council's administrative areas (Bute and Cowal; Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands; Helensburgh and Lomond; and Oban Lorn and the Isles).

In accordance with decisions made by the Management Committee in June 2017 the groups are supported by staff from the community planning and community development team in all areas, with administrative and governance support for meetings provided by the Committee Services team.

The meetings scheduled for May and August 2020 were cancelled due to the ongoing pandemic. Officers from Committee Services and Community Development met with Chairs and Vice-Chairs on 15 September 2020 to discuss future meeting arrangements. It was agreed to move forward with meetings in November and that these would be held on a virtual basis with the agendas for each looking broadly similar.

The meetings were all held virtually with broad agreement that the meetings were successful and inclusive. Other than Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands Area Community Planning Group, participation at the meetings was similar to what would be expected under normal circumstances.

4.0 Highlights

All groups considered:

- CPP Management Committee Update.
- Health and Social Care Partnership - Caring for People COVID-19 Community Response and Annual Update
- Verbal updates from Area Community Planning Group Partners involved in resilience projects relating to the COVID-19 response
- UK withdrawal from the EU
- Local Government Boundary Commission Proposals

Highlights from specific meetings were as follows:

Bute & Cowal

Cathleen Russell advised Colglen Community Council had hit the ground running in response to Covid-19 as they had an established resilience plan in place and encouraged all community councils do likewise. The Community Council had also undertaken a mapping exercise with the resulting data shared with the doctor's surgery for prescription and food package deliveries.

Mags Todd updated the Group on the key activities of the Crossroads for Young Carers Cowal and Bute which included; continued support to all young carers by supplying food and activity packs, laptops and tablets.

The Department for Work and Pensions advised that all sites remained open to vulnerable customers and that customer care calls were offered to ensure all claims were processed and paid on time. The Group noted that the key focus was on getting people back to work which included working closely with Skills Development Scotland and the Kick-start programme.

SURF Dunoon Area Alliance (DAA) provided a summary of their work in responding to Covid-19 which included circulating information on business resilience and responding to business and community needs. DAA also advised of the Cycling Friendly Town initiative.

Police Scotland advised that it was business as usual throughout the pandemic but routine business did disappear during the early phase which enabled them to increase visible patrolling. Current issues were based around the increase of visitors to the area, wild camping and access issues.

Watch Commander James Sullivan, on behalf of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, advised that there had been a slight increase in false fire alarms but there had been no fire casualties. The Watch Commander further reported that there had been a reduction in home fire safety visits due to Covid-19. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had also assisted with referrals from partners agencies including the Council and NHS during the shieling process with food parcel and medication delivery.

Colin Moulson, on behalf on Dunoon Presents, explained that despite all events being cancelled they were still able to host Dunoon's first drive in cinema in July and have been given permission to use the old Gas Works for future events. The Group noted that they were hoping to host Christmas markets in December and large events next year which included the Argyll Rally and a triathlon. The Group further noted that Dunoon Presents helped to secure £12,500 worth of business grants from the Scottish BID resilience fund. Mr Moulson confirmed that the organisation was looking at changing direction from hosting events to providing more direct support for business in the likelihood that current restrictions around events are to continue for some time.

Helensburgh & Lomond

Garelochhead Station Trust detailed their response to Covid-19 which included supporting the Caring for People community effort, delivering comprehensive online services, providing information by post to those without internet, providing face to face support to trustees and providing birthday cakes to local members.

Ruth Cairns provided an update in relation to Community Learning and noted that aside from moving much of the learning process online, a large amount of work had been carried out by the team in connection with the local Digital Connections and national Digital Inclusion projects. Ruth provided details of the requirement for devices for children who were undertaking home learning during the first period of lockdown and also for those who were isolated and required support with connectivity and learning how to use the devices.

Colin Crichton advised that Live Argyll were in the process of following a phased reopening plan, noting that swimming lessons had recently been reintroduced and requests had been made for an enhanced fitness class programme. Colin noted that

libraries continued to operate in phase 3 of the reopening plan, with people allowed to browse and use a click and collect service.

Allan Comrie, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) advised that the ongoing message during the pandemic had been for people to avoid using public transport, which had caused problems for SPT as well as rail and bus operators. Allan praised Argyll and Bute Council for continuing to operate a school bus service in a safe and largely normal manner.

Inspector Roderick MacNeill, Police Scotland advised that despite the ongoing Covid19 pandemic, Police Scotland retained a good level of resources with minimal absence. Inspector MacNeill noted that during the strict lockdown the vast majority of people had adhered to the no travel guidance. Inspector MacNeill outlined details of the issues which had occurred in relation to the high number of visitors to the area, particularly around the National Park during the summer months and advised that a lot of partnership working had been undertaken with the National Park around camping, littering and traffic management.

Inspector MacNeill advised that there was an increase in traffic within pubs in the area due to people visiting from the neighbouring West Dunbartonshire local authority which had been placed in tier 3, while Argyll and Bute had been placed in tier 2.

Inspector MacNeill advised that Police Scotland would likely be returning to a presumption of non-attendance as Covid19 numbers continue to rise, noting that this meant that low level matters would be dealt with over the phone. Inspector MacNeill emphasised that anything requiring officer attendance would still receive it and PPE was available. Inspector MacNeill advised that during the strict lockdown, warrant activity had been curtailed, however this had now resumed with good results. Inspector MacNeill advised that Anti-Social Behaviour figures had risen this year because all calls for people reporting breaches of Covid guidance were recorded as public nuisance calls. Inspector MacNeill reiterated that the vast majority of people within the area had been complying with guidance and there had not been reports of a lot of house parties or large gatherings.

Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP) Rosie Sumsion advised that in terms of the Scottish Youth Parliament, there were usually three sittings each year in person, however this had not been possible due to lockdown restrictions. MSYP Sumsion noted that the AGM had been held recently, where a new chair, vice chair and board were appointed. MSYP Sumsion advised that the annual campaign of the SYP this year would focus on the Covid response in relation to the rights of young people. MSYP Sumsion enquired as to what difference new United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child legislation would make to decision making and engagement within the Community Planning Partnership framework. The Group

agreed this would be raised at the next Community Planning Partnership Management Committee meeting.

Jayne Burnett advised that Visiting Friends was a volunteer befriending service that matched volunteers with one client at a time, with referrals welcomed from the HSCP, individuals and their families. During the pandemic the organisation had had to respond to changing advice and had supported volunteers to safely meet with their clients where possible. Jayne noted that volunteers were trained to recognise potential Adult Protection issues and to be aware of healthy boundaries when volunteering.

Jayne advised that the Group had felt supported by Argyll and Bute Council due to the weekly meetings held and assistance with applying for funding, however the Group had been disappointed at the lack of contact or support from the HSCP. The Group recognised the importance of the role of befrienders within local communities and agreed that this, along with the lack of frequent communication around current guidance to voluntary organisations be raised with the Management Committee.

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands

The Group considered and agreed to appoint Rachel Whyte (Islay Community Council) as Vice-Chair to the Group.

Catherine Kennedy, Transport Co-ordinator for Mid Argyll Community Transport Volunteers provided information to the Group around their response throughout the Covid19 pandemic, such as: the delivery of prescriptions; delivering food parcels and obtaining and delivering shopping for those in need. Catherine outlined the way in which shopping for clients had changed to meet the government guidance and noted that during the Covid19 pandemic the group had a larger than usual client list. Catherine advised that the group had received financial assistance from government resilience group funding, the funding for which ended on the 30th August when a small charge had been introduced for clients.

Catherine expressed concern that during lockdown all information which was being disseminated appeared to be geared towards those who were on social media and the internet, while a lot of the group's clients were not. Catherine noted that many clients relied on the group for information and phoned daily to request updates.

The Group considered updates from West Kintyre and Campbeltown Community Council Community Council detailing their response to Covid-19 which included producing scrubs and face coverings, commencing local shop deliveries for those in need and seeking additional support for those in the area through Shopper-Aide.

Rachel Whyte, Islay Community Council advised that Islay had benefitted from having a resilience group in the area that had undertaken a huge amount of work in response to the Covid19 pandemic, such as erecting signage and the

implementation of hand sanitiser stations across the island. Phil Dickinson, Craignish Community Council added that the Community Council was acting as a portal of information, signposting available services, and worked to ensure no one was missed who required support.

Antonia Baird, Community Development Officer, advised that many groups within the MAKI area had spontaneously organised themselves in a number of compassionate and creative ways to suit their community's needs, such as providing shopping, collecting and delivering prescriptions and co-ordinating activities to prevent isolation and loneliness. Antonia advised that people could be referred to local community organisations via the Caring for People helpline and that this had resulted in many new connections being made and the needs of individuals being met by their communities.

Councillor Armour advised that he had been a co-ordinator for the Kintyre Resilience Group which had been set up by Eric Spence of the South Kintyre Development Trust prior to lockdown. Councillor Armour noted that the group had attracted more than 150 volunteers within a week, who were then split into areas to provide support. Councillor Armour advised that the community and local business had pulled together and continue to work well. Councillor Armour also expressed concern at the poor attendance of partners at the meeting. The Group agreed that it would be beneficial to highlight this at the next Community Planning Partnership Management Committee Meeting.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles

The Group considered the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Group and agreed that the report be continued to the next meeting when the Group's membership would be considered.

Joan Best, Crossroads North Argyll, advised that many of the Crossroads staff had been working from home throughout the crisis, providing support to unpaid carers such as delivering shopping and prescriptions.

Lynn Campbell, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), advised that Oban was one of the hardest hit areas in the UK during lockdown, with an increase in caseload of 300% and advised that partnership working had been important in managing this. Lynn provided details of a video chat service pilot which would run on the 18th of November and noted that Oban Job Centre had been selected to trial this with customers.

Inspector Mark Stephen, Police Scotland advised that the Police had faced significant challenges and changes to the way they worked during Covid-19 and in light of regular changes in guidance, noting that the Police focus was on ensuring that there were sufficient resources in place to attend priority 1 and 2 calls. Inspector Stephen outlined a new system whereby low priority calls could be dealt with by call

centre teams to ensure that there are enough staff available to deal with emergency calls.

Inspector Stephen provided an update on the upgrade to the custody centre and the training of officers in Mull, Tiree and Oban to use appropriate equipment to deal with significantly violent situations without the need to wait for teams coming from other areas. Inspector Stephen confirmed that Police Scotland's policy continued to be to explain, engage and encourage before resorting to enforcement.

Gary Cringle, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service advised that although there had been a national spike in domestic fire incidents, this did not appear to have been the case in the local area. Gary confirmed that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had coped well throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, noting that there had been a small increase in accidental dwelling fires linked to the increase in time people were spending in their homes. Gary advised that there had been a decrease in the number of Road Traffic Collisions in the area which the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had to respond to, likely due to a decrease in traffic.

Grant Young advised that Mull Safe and Sound was a mental health and community isolation support group which was started in September 2016. Grant provided details of the way in which the Group had to adapt to Covid-19 and changing national guidance, advising that the Group had circulated leaflets with the assistance of the postal service which had included contact numbers for organisations. Grant noted that throughout the lockdown period, the core focus of the Group was on keeping in contact with their members and keeping them safe by sending out care packages and letting them know that support was still available.

4.1 Further Actions

It is requested that the Management Committee note the report and to consider the concerns raised by the Helensburgh and Lomond and the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Island Community Planning Groups regarding the lack of clarity and guidance around befriending, the lack of communication with voluntary organisations and the poor attendance of partners at the meeting.

The Management Committee are also asked to consider what difference the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child legislation would make to decision making and engagement within the Community Planning Partnership framework.

5.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	Meetings of the Area Community Planning Group held in February covered various Outcomes.
Consultations	No prior circulation of this report.

Resources	No direct resource implications however consideration of the issues raised and following courses of action may have a knock on effect on finance and/or staff resource
Prevention	Contributes to the prevention agenda
Equalities	Contributes toward reducing inequalities

For More Information:

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References: n/a

Appendices: n/a