

13th June 2007

BUTE AND COWAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report outlines recent progress in taking forward localised Community Planning in Bute and Cowal.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Management Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and to consider the request for partnership funding for development of the talk site website.

3.0 DETAIL

3.1 The Committee will recall that following evaluation of community planning in the Bute and Cowal area it was agreed that each of the five themed issues raised at the seminar held in Strachur in December 2006 would be progressed where possible by an existing partnership group, and that a small management group would track progress of issues and provide feedback to those who attended the seminar, community groups and any other interested party. It was further agreed that feedback would be provided by way of a 6 monthly newsletter, and that a follow up/further planning seminar would be held in late 2007.

3.2 Progression of actions has been taking place over the 6 month period since the Strachur seminar, and the management group will be meeting in late June to collate progress reports and ensure these are issued during the Summer to all attendees. At this time people will also be asked to start considering the issues which they would wish to see discussed at this year's seminar, likely to be held in late November.

3.3 In relation to progressing the clearly expressed desire of the seminar in Strachur for better communication amongst partners and community groups and the need to develop effective consultation tools for the areas groups and community organisations, the Bute and Cowal Community Planning Management Group is proposing to undertake a pilot initiative to develop a talk site website as a consultative tool, and to enable community groups to publicise their work and activities. The site enables groups to publish ideas which they are developing for their community/group, and for members of the community to give feedback, both positive and negative, in relation to ideas and initiatives. It is envisaged that the provision of such a website would prove very successful in an area such as Bute and Cowal, particularly among young people and groups, who frequently are unable to communicate their ideas and developments face to face due to their rural location.

To progress this, investigations were carried out into where this type of toolkit has been effectively developed, and a very effective community talk board exists at www.dennistoun.co.uk. The group have met with the person responsible for the development of the Dennistoun site, who has provisionally agreed to set up a similar site for the Bute and Cowal area.

The set up of such a site would require identification of a lead client (likely to be the local community planning group), and an overall editor for the site who would act as a gatekeeper and agree which groups could run the individual pages. Thereafter page editors would need to be identified for every organisation who wished to have a page on the site, these editors taking responsibility for the content of their individual web page. It is envisaged that page editors could be from Community Councils and other Community groups.

The cost of the ICT to set up a community talk board would be £500 and there would then be the initial costs of setting up the structure to run, monitor and maintain the site. Communities Scotland have agreed to provide £1000 towards set up and early costs of the initiative, provided match funding is made available from partner organisations.

The provision of such an innovative community development and consultation tool is seen as significant in developing localised community planning and cross working in a rural area such as Bute and Cowal, and the Community Planning Management Committee is asked to consider favourably this request for partnership funding of £1000 to enable the pilot development to proceed.

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