

Proposal for the formation of CPP Community Engagement Sub-Group

1. Community Engagement

1.1. Community Engagement is a Theme in the Community Plan and is an element of the SOA through stakeholder involvement and the FAB Plan. It is a priority for Local Area Community Planning Groups and Thematic groups to ensure that effective Community Engagement takes place at both levels. The CPP has agreed a Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan.

1.1. Local community planning groups have been developed to ensure that local needs are addressed and communities can have a voice within the community planning structure. There are four Local Area Community Planning Groups, one for each of the Council's administrative areas. Local community planning provides one way for individuals, organisations and communities to work together to influence the ways in which local services are planned and strategic decisions are made.

1.2. Thematic Groups also have a community engagement responsibility. As part of the community engagement framework thematic groups are expected to demonstrate that engagement activities have influenced the development of thematic priorities, that there has been an effective dialogue around outcomes and that there is an ongoing commitment to improvement.

2. Best Value²

2.1. Argyll and Bute Council and its community planning partners will be assessed, through the Best Value process, on its commitment to Community Engagement.

2.2. BV2 will be taking a close look at Community Engagement. The BV2 Toolkit Assessment Matrix for Community Engagement will assess under 5 headings

- Commitment and culture
- Understanding communities' needs and aspirations
- Involving communities in decision making
- Planning and monitoring
- Change and impact resulting from engagement

2.3. Supporting evidence will be gleaned from interviews with senior managers, elected members, members of committees (Council and Partners), community reps and other community members. Looking at what constitutes Basic, Better and Advanced practices (appendix 1) it seems that understanding/recognition/limited consultation/desire to involve will get a Basic, and if we're looking to get Better or Advanced we'll need to demonstrate that there is

commitment to building capacity (both organisational and community), that communities know what's going on and feel they are influencing decisions. They'll be looking for evidence of targeted engagement, a clear two-way dialogue, understanding and use of multi-method approach and actual evidence (cyclical) of service provision changing to meet needs.

- 2.4. When it comes to the evidence sources we'll be able to cite the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan and the Local Area Community Planning Forward Together events but beyond that we're not coordinated in our approach, we know there's a lot of activity going on but how do we evidence that?
- 2.5. There's currently a lot of activity around community engagement but little in the way of coordination. As it becomes part of everyone's responsibility it has the potential to become nobody's responsibility.
- 2.6. The CPP is working closely with the Scottish Government's Better Community Engagement Project to develop learning resources to support community engagement at a number of levels in the community planning process. This includes looking at effective consultation, keeping elected members informed and aware of developments, developing training on providing feedback and ways of demonstrating how community engagement has been heard and acted upon. The main focus of this work is at Local Area Community Planning level.
- 2.7. Much as we are trying to reduce the number of groups we have there is a strong need for the formation of a coordinating group at CPP level that will ensure we all work together, effectively, to improve community engagement. Not just how we engage but also improving the skills and competencies across a broad range of stakeholders.

3. Proposed CPP Community Engagement Sub-group

- 3.1. In order to ensure we can evidence the progress being made in Argyll and Bute to improve and coordinate our community engagement activities the proposal is to form a CPP Community Engagement Sub-group.
- 3.2. The aim of the CPP CE Sub Group would be:-
 - To demonstrate a coordinated approach to community engagement, maximising opportunities for synergy among the community engagement activities of partner organisations, avoiding duplication and ensuring best value and most efficient use of resources for community engagement.
 - To agree strategic priorities for community engagement activity and develop an overview of community engagement activity.
 - To develop a shared understanding of the community engagement activity and to develop the capacity of the partner organisations and communities to engage effectively with each other.
 - To promote the use of the national community engagement standards when partners are undertaking community engagement activity.
 - To develop a common comprehensive database of community engagement activity and contacts in conjunction with Local Area Community Planning Groups and the Third Sector Partnership (this is underway as proposed consultation diary at LACPG level)
- 3.3. If these aims were to be fully achieved we would all need to work together, with everyone having a part to play in making the group effective. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group would play a key role in delivering the aims of the Community Engagement Strategy.

- 3.4. The Community Engagement Sub-group would, where appropriate, work through existing structures and partnerships to ensure that engagement activities influence any future direction for the Argyll and Bute CPP area.
- 3.5. The membership of the group should be at strategic level and involve representation from the voluntary and community sector through the Third Sector Interface. Membership should be kept under review and ensure that it continues to reflect the links with other key strategies within the CPP.

4. Measuring Progress and Achievements

- 4.1. It is important that community engagement activity is monitored effectively, not least for BV2. In order to understand if we are achieving our aims and objectives we would have to use a variety of methods to monitor and evaluate our activities and capture details of how community engagement is impacting on the shaping of services and changing service delivery to meet the needs of communities.
- 4.2. We also need to be clear that the engagement we support is worthwhile, has a clear purpose and the findings can be used to influence planning and service delivery decisions.
- 4.3. The framework developed for the Community Engagement Strategy takes into account the need to measure and report progress. Through the Community Engagement Sub-Group this would be further developed to measure:
 - The range and areas of community engagement and whether they reflect the local priorities.
 - The inputs – the number of activities undertaken and organisations involved
 - The outputs – the number of people trained or developing new skills
 - The outcomes – the impact that any engagement activity has made on services or planning.
 - The quality of engagement activities.
 - Whether the National Standards are being followed.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. That the CPP Management Committee endorses the formation of a CPP Community Engagement Sub-group.
- 5.2. That a Partnership Agreement be developed to ensure that the group has a clear role and purpose. (appendix 2 – Draft Partnership Agreement)
- 5.3. That the Community Engagement scorecard be further developed with input from the Community Engagement Sub-group.

Appendix 1 - Best Value Toolkit: Assessment Matrix - Community Engagement

Extract from Section1. Does the organisation demonstrate a commitment to engaging with communities?

	Basic practices	Better practices	Advanced practices
1.4 Is community engagement seen as a partnership commitment?	Leaders and managers recognise the need to engage with communities in a jointly with other partners, but in practice this is seen as the exception rather than the rule.	The organisation can demonstrate that it actively collaborates with partners in engaging with communities across a wide range of activities.	Community engagement is led at a partnership level as appropriate, in which the organisation plays a lead and active role.

Appendix 2 - Draft Partnership Agreement

1. Name of partnership:

1.1. CPP Community Engagement Sub-group

2. Aims and Objectives:

- 2.1. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group will be the Community Planning Partnership’s (CPP) lead strategic partnership for community engagement. It will ensure that the CPP is kept informed on priorities for action for community engagement as well as undertaking and leading on tasks on behalf of the CPP.
- 2.2. ‘Community Engagement’ is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address the decisions on the issues affecting the well being of those people.
- 2.3. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group will take the lead in ensuring the delivery of the CPP Community Engagement Strategy, the community engagement elements of the SOA and other relevant strategic documents.

The aim of the CPP sub-group is:

- To demonstrate a coordinated approach to community engagement, maximising opportunities for synergy among the community engagement activities of partner organisations, avoiding duplication and ensuring best value and most efficient use of resources for community engagement.
- To agree strategic priorities for community engagement activity and develop an overview of community engagement activity.
- To develop a shared understanding of the community engagement activity and to develop the capacity of the partner organisations and communities to engage effectively with each other.
- To promote the use of the National Standards for Community Engagement when partners are undertaking community engagement activity.

- To develop a common comprehensive database of community engagement activity and contacts in conjunction with Local Area Community Planning Groups and the Third Sector Partnership.

3. **Membership**

3.1. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group will have a minimum of ****%** representation from the voluntary and community sector. Membership will be kept under review, at least annually, and ensure that it continues to reflect the links with other key strategies within Argyll and Bute.

4. **Accountable to:**

4.1. Community Planning Partnership Management Committee.

5. **Management Structure:**

5.1. The chair and vice-chair are both elected annually. The Chair of the Sub-group will be from a partner organisation and will represent the group at regular meetings of the Management Committee, as well as at other relevant meetings.

6. **Decision making process:**

6.1. The Partnership will always aim to reach a consensus on issues as they arise, though in the event of a failure to reach consensus, the Chair may opt to conduct a simple majority vote. The Chair will have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

7. **Resources:**

7.1. There are no pooled resources for the CPP Community Engagement Sub-group. CPP Partners will provide meeting rooms and administrative support.

8. **Day to day management of partnership:**

8.1. Membership of the CPP Community Engagement Sub-group is kept under review at least annually to ensure it continues to reflect the links to other key strategies with Argyll and Bute.

8.2. Meetings are held approximately every quarter with additional ad hoc topic meetings when necessary.

8.3. Meeting dates are scheduled for a whole year.

8.4. Minutes are sent out after the meeting and also with the agenda for the next meeting.

8.5. The minutes are approved at the start of each meeting.

8.6. The Council's **I&OD** team will support the CPP Community Engagement Sub-group.

8.7. Meeting dates, minutes, and other associated documents will be available on the council's website.

9. **Monitoring and review**

9.1. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group will agree a forward work programme based around the Community Engagement Action Plan outcomes:

- Community Planning structures and mechanisms are strengthened
- Communities are involved at a local level
- Individuals and groups have the capacity to engage in Community Planning
- Experience, knowledge, skills, resources and funding is coordinated

9.2. Progress against these outcomes will be monitored, along with providing the performance information required for the CPP and in particular the monitoring of the Local Area Community Plans.

10. Exit strategy

10.1. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group is a sub-group of the CPP. In the event of this changing, the CPP Management Committee would work closely with the voluntary and community sectors in Argyll and Bute, through the Third Sector Interface, to ensure the continued representation of their views through the appropriate channels.

11. Risk Management

11.1. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group will identify risks that could affect the achievement of its outcomes, and put in place measures to mitigate those risks.

12. Equality and Diversity

12.1. This CPP values and celebrates the diversity of people in Argyll and Bute. We recognise our role in support of the Vision for Argyll and Bute and celebrate the many diverse communities within the area. The CPP Community Engagement Sub-group and all CPP groups and partnerships have a commitment to provide equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination and disadvantage. We see this as a major strand in our aim to improve quality of life in Argyll and Bute. Members of the CPP Community Engagement Sub-group will not tolerate the less favourable treatment of anyone on the grounds of their gender, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or faith or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

13. Commitment

13.1. By approving this agreement members are showing commitment to the CPP Community Engagement Sub-group and achieving its key aims and objectives.

13.2. This Agreement does not establish or evidence a partnership in law between the parties and, by way of example only; neither party is liable for the debts or any other obligations of the other party.

13.3. A copy of this Agreement shall be signed on behalf of the Partnership by the Chair, and approved by the Partnership as a whole, as recorded in the minutes.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____