

CRAIGNISH COMMUNITY PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the adoption of the current Argyll and Bute Local Plan an approach was made by Craignish Community Council to the council's Policy Development Manager to see how best the local community could influence the future of land use planning for the Craignish area. Given the complicated and at times confrontational planning history of the area it was suggested that the community might like to prepare its own Community Plan that could be approved as non statutory planning guidance and ultimately inform the content of the emerging Local Development Plan. It is further hoped that this approach to land use planning can be rolled out to other communities, where appropriate, and linked to other forms of community development plans or strategies that seek to deliver a sustainable economic, social and environmental future for the communities concerned
- 1.2 This report contains the finalised Craignish Community Plan for approval by the Executive to allow it to be considered as a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications in the Craignish area and where it does not comply with existing land use policy be used to inform the future content of the emerging Local Development Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive approve the finalised Craignish Community Plan for use as non-statutory planning guidance, as contained in **Appendix A** attached to this report.
- 2.2 That the Executive note that the finalised Craignish Community Plan once approved will be used to further inform the content of the emerging Local Development Plan for the Craignish area.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The previous approach to the preparation of forward planning documents in Argyll and Bute has been the preparation of draft documents, such as a local plan, and then asking local communities and individuals to react to them at the end of the process. The approach taken here turns this concept on its head by engaging with local communities from the outset to help them develop a land use plan that they want with guidance and support from council planning officers.

- 3.2 This new approach came about through Craignish Community Council approaching the council's Development Policy Manager and asking for advice on how they as a community could better influence the content of the emerging Local Development Plan. The suggestion put forward was for the community council to appoint a local steering group, hopefully drawn from a spectrum of different interest groups of the Craignish community, in order to produce its own community plan covering land use issues.
- 3.3 Craignish Community Council accepted this as a possible solution and appointed a steering group following a public meeting. With the group appointed guidance was then given to the group to help inform the content of the new plan and how the views of the local community could be best captured. It was then decided that this could be best achieved through the holding of an open day in the village of Ardfern with various presentations and workshops taking place. The information gained at this event then went on to inform a comprehensive questionnaire prepared by the steering group that was sent to every household in the Craignish area. A further questionnaire was also aimed at young people and the needs of local businesses. The cost of this work was met by the community council itself assisted by a small administration grant paid from existing council budgets.
- 3.4 In total 147 local people replied to the questionnaire which gave the steering group a wide range of information to inform the content of their plan. The analysis of this questionnaire is attached to this report as **Appendix B**, and was this information was subsequently used to inform the draft plan that was submitted for further public comment and then the finalised plan (21 November 2011) as attached to this report.

4.0 THE WAY AHEAD

- 4.1 Following approval by the Executive it is intended that the Craignish Community Plan be used to inform the decision making process in the Craignish area for future planning applications initially as non statutory planning guidance and then used to inform the emerging Local Development Plan particularly where planning policy currently differs from the current Development Plan.
- 4.2 In addition, the plan can also be used to inform the council and its community planning partners on the priorities of the local community with regard to land use issues and the provision of future facilities within the Craignish community. For example, it is hoped that the plan could be the basis for discussion around the provision of new waste water treatment facilities in the village of Ardfern with Scottish Water.
- 4.3 It is further hoped that the Craignish plan can serve as a good practice example for other communities to learn from and bring forward their own community plan for their own area. Currently, development policy officers are also working with a number of rural communities to help develop their own ideas for the future of their area in terms of sustainable land use. Notwithstanding this it also needs to be noted that this process requires considerable community commitment to reach the final goal and can also be labour intensive for the council's planning policy service to ensure communities are adequately supported as they develop their plan. It also needs to be recognised that there will still be people in every community that do not support a finalised plan and that their voice also has a right to be heard following publication of the Local Development Plan.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Craignish Community Plan has been developed by a local steering group formed with assistance by Craignish Community Council and the council's Development Policy Manager. The plan, as contained in **Appendix A** of this report, contains the community's land use vision for their area that once approved by the Executive will be used initially as non statutory planning guidance and then to inform the content of the emerging Local Development Plan. It is also hoped that this plan, which represents a new way of producing land use planning documents in Argyll and Bute, will serve as an example that other communities can learn from as they seek to deliver a sustainable economic, social and environmental future for their own communities.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

Policy	– As per content
Financial	– As per content
Personnel	– As per content
Equalities Impact Assessment	– None anticipated
Legal	– As per content

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