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MINUTES of MEETING of MID ARGYLL PARTNERSHIP held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD on WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillor Sandy Taylor (Chair)

Councillor Donald MacMillan

Attending: Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer
Sybil Johnson, Senior Planning and Strategies Officer
Allan Brandie, Research and Development Officer
Kelly Ferns, Empty Homes Officer
Antonia Baird, Community Development Officer
Anna Watkiss, Development Officer
Rod Buchanan, ACHA
Ben Tustin, SEPA
Kerry Baxter, Fyne Homes
Tracey Shields, Fyne Homes
Sergeant David Ferguson, Police Scotland
Jeanette Laughton, Ardrishaig Community Council
Edward Laughton, Ardrishaig Community Council
John Woods, Ardrishaig Community Council
Lynda Syed, Furnace Community Council
Andrew Wilson, North Knapdale Community Council
Iain Ritchie, North Knapdale Community Council
David Kent, South Knapdale Community Council
Andrew Davies, Inverary Community Council
Betty Rhodick, Lochgilphead Community Council
Andy Bunton, Lochgilphead Community Council
Leonard McNeill, West Lochfyne Community Council

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor Robin Currie, Councillor Anne Horn, Councillor Douglas Philand, Jim Malcom, Dunadd Community Council and Mary Smyth, Craignish Community Council.

2. MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2014

The Minutes of the Mid Argyll Partnership held on 10 December 2014 were approved as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Chair informed the Partnership that he had contacted the relevant Officer regarding the issue of rats in Victoria Terrace, Ardrishaig. They had investigated and conducted a survey on the problem. If relevant, tenants would be contacted about the

findings.

Councillor Taylor reported that he had responded directly to Leonard MacNeil regarding his concerns about the repair and improvement of the Tullochgorm War Memorial would report on the Council's response at the next meeting of the West Lochfyne Community Council.

The Chair expressed his appreciation at the number of representatives attending the meeting. The Partnership provided an ideal opportunity for Community Councils to feed into Community Planning Partnerships and then into the Council.

It was hoped that by focussing the Agendas on each of the Single Outcome Agreement options, that this would give them the potential to bring local community aspirations into the planning process.

Decision

The Partnership noted the position.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

Leonard McNeill expressed his dissatisfaction with the Council website when responding to consultations. He found the Scottish Police Service consultation particularly onerous, and commented on the volume of documentation which required to be read in relation to the consultation to be excessive. He suggested that a more "Plain English" approach should be taken when encouraging the public to engage in consultations.

He also informed the Partnership that he had put in a Freedom of Information request for figures of the number of public consultations there had been and the number of people who had responded to these consultations.

In contrast, Edward Laughton considered the Councils website relating to the consultation on the Argyll and Bute Onshore Renewables as being too simplistic.

At this point, the Chair informed the Partnership that the Council website was an award winning design website and he was optimistic that a suitable compromise for presenting consultations on line could be reached.

Decision

The Partnership agreed that;

- (i) a report be brought to the next meeting of the Partnership which would outline how the Council consults with communities; and
- (ii) an officer from the Council's media team be invited to attend the next meeting of the Group to provide information about the Council's website policy.

5. MAKI SOA

The Partnership considered a report which was a record of additional information gathered through the SOA:Local workshop process which was not contained within

the local delivery plan.

Discussion took place on the workshops which had been held in November 2014 and February 2015. The Community Development Officer informed the Partnership that all outcomes from the meetings were recorded and were contained in the report under the local outcomes as aspirations of the community. The SOA was a live document and could be revised later in the year.

In response, there was some dissatisfaction expressed that community councils had not received an invitation to the February workshop, with comments made that communities had been denied the opportunity to contribute to the SOA as a result.

The Chair asked the Partnership to welcome the opportunity for communities to make links into the community planning process and focus at a more “local” rather than “strategic” level. He acknowledged that the November meeting had not been particularly well organised or attended and lessons had been learned from that. It was hoped that the Partnership could bring their ideas to the next workshop on how to make a difference within local communities and that this would get fed into the process.

The Partnership felt that due to the size of the SOA it was difficult to identify what sections actually applied to community councils.

Decision

The Partnership agreed that a workshop take place on the morning of 29 April 2015, with the Mid Argyll Partnership meeting taking place in the afternoon.

6. OUTCOME 2 - WE HAVE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

(a) STRATEGIC HOUSING

- (i) Feedback on Scottish Government response to Local Development Plan – Strategic Housing Need/Infrastructure

The Group welcomed Sybil Johnson, Senior Planning and Strategies Officer to the meeting who gave a presentation on;

- the Local Development Plan Adoption Process;
- the Development Plan;
- the Role of Development Plan;
- what the LDP aims to deliver;
- Challenges and Key Objectives;
- Strategy/Policies;
- Action Programme; and
- Community Planning Delivery of the LDP

The Development and Infrastructure Team was currently in the process of identifying funding and also key partners who could help ensure that a local development plan for Lochgilphead was a viable option. The amount of Government funding available for a plan would be identified

around April/May 2015, following which a Development and Infrastructure Officer could assist the local community to draw up an action programme to be put in place by May/June 2015.

The Partnership was of the opinion that local development of the Mid Argyll area had been “left behind” whilst many other communities in the rest of Argyll and Bute had benefited through the CHORD project.

The Chair thanked Sybil Johnson for her presentation.

Decision

The Partnership agreed to invite a representative from Craignish Community Council to their next meeting to provide information on how they developed their community plan and the legal procedures which required to be followed.

Councillor Donald MacMillan left the meeting at this point.

(ii) Strategic Housing Need Assessment

The Group welcomed Allan Brandie, Research & Development Officer to the meeting who gave a presentation on “An Introduction to the Housing Need & Demand Assessment (HNDA), Local Housing Strategy (LHS) & Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)”.

The Partnership was informed of;

- the requirements of The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- the Strategic Process;
- the Housing Need & Demand Assessment (HNDA);
- the Strategic Vision;
- the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP); and
- key LHS/SHIP Resources

It was recognised that there was an ageing population in Argyll and Bute and extensive research had been undertaken to quantify and register the level of need and housing support types that may be required.

The focus was also on promoting population growth, and encouraging people to live and work in the area.

The Partnership thanked Allan Brandie for his presentation

Decision

The Partnership agreed that research data on the number of elderly householders in the Argyll and Bute area and potential solutions to the future provision of housing accommodation and care be brought to a future meeting and workshop session of the Partnership for discussion

(iii) Empty Homes Initiative

The Chair welcomed Kelly Ferns, Empty Homes Officer to the meeting who briefed the Partnership on empty homes and;

- the Empty Homes Strategy;
- the number of empty homes in Argyll and Bute
- action to bring homes back into use
- support for empty home owners; and
- reporting empty homes

The Partnership thanked Kelly Ferns for her presentation and noted that the Councils Empty Homes Plan had won two awards.

Decision

The Partnership noted the position.

At this point the Chair ruled and the Partnership agreed to vary the order of business and that Item 6 (d) Broadband on the Agenda be the next item to be discussed.

(b) BROADBAND

The Chair welcomed Anna Watkiss, Development Officer - Projects & Renewables to the meeting.

(i) Community Broadband Scotland

Anna Watkiss gave a summary of on-going broadband projects and the Economic Development Action Plan. This included;

- next generation broadband to communities within the Highlands and Islands area which would not benefit from the commercial rollout of fibre optic services;
- current building backhaul (spine) infrastructure;
- what this means for Mid Argyll;
- how the new fibre access network will be deployed;
- information on the Community Broadband Scotland initiative; and
- information on the availability of support to develop online skills.

Decision

The Partnership noted the position.

(ii) Presentation

Anna Watkiss updated the Partnership on “The Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) programme which was being delivered through two regional projects, these being Community Broadband Scotland and The Highlands and Islands project.

The Partnership thanked Anna Watkiss for her presentations.

Decision

The Partnership noted the update.

The Chair ruled and the Partnership agreed to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting re-convened in Committee Room 1, Kilmory, and Rod Buchannan, ACHA, Kerry Baxter and Tracy Shields, Fyne Homes, Andrew Wilson, North Knapdale Community Council, David Kent, South Knapdale Community Council, and Andrew Davies, Inverary Community Council did not return to the meeting.

(c) SCOTTISH WATER UPDATE

The Partnership considered a report which provided information on the role of Scottish Water in Argyll and Bute, investments and projects going forward.

Decision

The Partnership noted the position.

(d) SEPA UPDATE

The Partnership considered a report on the SEPA West Highland & Argyll Operations Team.

During discussion, Ben Tistan, SEPA confirmed that he was awaiting an update from Scottish Water regarding the problem with raw sewage at the pumping station in Ardrishaig. He also informed the Partnership that SEPA could be contacted on their 24 hour call line.

Decision

The Partnership noted the report.

(e) COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION

A presentation by Antonia Baird, Community Learning and Development Officer and a report by Mid Argyll Transport Volunteers were considered.

The Partnership was informed that Community Transport was provided by a not for profit organisation, for people who had difficulty accessing mainstream public transport. Also, they were advised of;

- the evidence of need and benefits;
- mapping Community Transport in MAKI;
- the Red Cross transport service;
- funding; and
- barriers and issues

The Mid Argyll Transport Volunteers report provided a background to the group, its membership; usage; finance; and case studies.

Discussion took place on the lack of and also type of transport facilities in some rural communities, which was having a detrimental effect on the health of local residents as they were unable to access a number of services, including social meetings.

Decision

The Partnership agreed to invite Douglas Blades, Public Transport Officer to a future meeting to discuss “the availability of transport to serve our communities”.

7. OUTCOME 6 - PEOPLE LIVE IN SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

(a) COMMUNITY SAFETY

Sergeant David Ferguson, Police Scotland informed the Partnership that the Policing Plan would be available on the Police Scotland website by the end of April 2015.

He outlined plans which had been put in place to reduce crime within the community. These included Road Safety; Shop A Dealer Scheme; warning against Bogus Workers; marine theft; and reacting to local intelligence in relation to persons carrying weapons.

The Partnership praised the Police for their informative updates at community council meetings.

Decision

The Partnership noted the position and that Inspector Julie McLeish would transfer from Oban to take up post in Lochgilphead on 23 March 2015.

At this point, the Chair invited John Woods, Ardrishaig Community Council to speak about his work with Community Action Mid Argyll (CAMA).

The Partnership was informed that CAMA was an organisation which aimed to reduce the harm caused by alcohol. Following its success in Lochgilphead and Ardrishaig it was expanded to all of Mid Argyll.

However, because of a change in Argyll and Bute’s addiction services the management of the fund meant that it was no longer possible to offer alcohol or drug counselling.

A consultation exercise had been about to be launched in Tarbert, similar to ones which had been carried out in other parts of Mid-Argyll, the information from which would contribute to the Council’s Licensing Policy (which was due to be renewed).

He would continue to look for funders, and would work for 6 months on a reduced salary. In the meantime, he was seeking assistance from community councils with the consultation exercise.

Decision

The Partnership agreed that John Woods contact each community council, and that he be invited to speak at their meetings about the work of CAMA and this in turn would assist with completing the consultation exercise.

8. THEMES FOR NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the themes for the next meeting would be; Outcome 3 – Education, Skills and Training to maximise opportunities for all, and Outcome 4 – Children and Young People have the best possible start.

Decision

The Partnership agreed;

- (a) to discuss Outcomes 3 and 4 at their respective community council meetings, and bring back to the next meeting of the partnership ideas which could benefit the local community; and
- (b) that Carol Keeley, Emergency Planning Officer a representative from Police Scotland come to a future meeting of the Group to discuss Community Safety and Community Resilience.

9. INVITATION TO NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO SIT ON MID ARGYLL, KINTYRE AND THE ISLANDS CPG

An invitation from the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islands Area CPG to the Mid Argyll Partnership to nominate a representative on their Group was considered.

Decision

The Partnership agreed to nominate the Chair of the Mid Argyll Partnership to be the nominated representative on the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islands Area CPG.

10. COMMUNITY

(a) Ardrishaig

Jeanette Laughton informed the Partnership that;

- (i) there had been an amicable resolution to for Ardrishaig Community Council and Scottish Canals to continue to work together;
- (ii) work was ongoing to regenerate Ardrishaig;
- (iii) they were still awaiting erection of the “30 mph” flashing signs;
- (iv) there was a new raised flower bed in Ardrishaig; and
- (v) there had been repairs to the windows in the former Ardrishaig Parish Church Hall and a new heating system had been installed.

(b) Furnace

Lynda Syed explained that;

- (i) they were seeking a 40 mile an hour speed limit;

- (ii) there had been repairs to the pavements;
- (iii) there were concerns about on-going coastal erosion;
- (iv) there were concerns about the recruitment of doctors for the GP Surgery, and this was being resolved through the appointment of 3 doctors in Lochgilphead who would help to cover the area by early summer;
- (v) discussions were being undertaken with West Lochfyne Community Council about windfarms; and
- (vi) a succesful "clubercise" evening had been held.

(c) Lochgilphead

Betty Rhodick informed the Partnership that an event was being held on 20 June 2015 for Armed Forces Day. If any veterans did not have their badge then they should contact her and complete a form. They would be presented with their badge on the day.

(d) West Lochfyne

Leonard McNeill informed the Partnership that information would be coming out in the press about windfarm and tidal schemes in the area.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Decision

The Partnership noted that the next MAP meeting would take place on 29 April 2015.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair;

(a) confirmed that he would issue a note to all Group Leaders to ask Elected Members to flag up to all community councils any meetings which would be of importance and relevance to them;

(b) requested community councils to submit items to him which they wished to discuss at the next workshop; and

(c) agreed that all presentations from this meeting be emailed to partners.

Decision

The Partnership noted the position.

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