

# **Moray Community Council Scheme Review**

## **Consultation responses received during first stage**

(Period – 24 September 2020 – 19 November 2020)

The first stage of the public consultation is to invite comments on the existing scheme 2017-2021 and associated documents to inform the review and redrafting of the CC Scheme for 2021-2025.

During the first stage, four responses were received, two from Community Councils and two from individuals.

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### **19 November 2020**

#### **Findhorn and Kinloss Community Council**

Question: CC Boundaries – can alterations be made to boundaries to realign or merge community councils to make them more reflective

Response: We consider that the location and characteristics of F&KCC, serving two distinct villages and a small rural area, does not lend itself to merging with the adjacent Community Councils.

However there are a couple of areas on the Eastern boundary of the F&KCC where groups of housing are split between F&KCC and the neighbouring Community Council. We appreciate that in this area the boundaries are following the Ward Boundaries. However we would appreciate the consideration of modifying the boundaries in these areas to ensure that groups of houses are served by the same community council.

There is a disparity between the Community Councils which are for towns and those which mainly serve a rural area - in terms of demographics and different needs. Elgin CC serves a very large population when compared to rural CCs such as Dyke and Landward. Alternative approach may be to split the larger towns into sectors and then extend those areas out into the rural areas beyond - giving a more equitable split of population and more diversity of needs.

Question: Membership – is there an appetite to increase membership of community councils

Response: We believe that the current maximum number of members (10) and the equal split of members between Findhorn (5) and Kinloss (5) is appropriate and do not seek any revision at this time.

Question: Co-options – does the procedures or the amount of co-options need to be restructured

Response: We would like to see a review of the co-option process where the limits on co-option are removed or the time that a co-option member must serve before becoming a full member is reduced. We believe that this will assist some community councils who may experience a high turnover of members (for reasons outwith their control) to maintain a viable number of members to hold meetings and to best serve their community.

Question: Meetings – how you meet

Response: We meet on a monthly basis, 10 meetings per year with a ‘holiday’ in July and December. Face to face meetings in a setting where members of the community can attend is our preference.

However we believe that the Scheme should now include the use of online meetings when physical meeting is not permitted (due to COVID-19). We also appreciate that the ability to meet online for some meetings (particularly in winter) may support community councils in more remote rural areas and enable them to recruit more members.

Question: Grants – is the way that the grant allocated fair does it need to be more evenly distributed.

Response: We understand that the current grant is partially based on the number people living in the Community Council area - which may lead to towns having more than sufficient funds to hold their meetings and being able to deliver more benefits to their community than the more rural community councils. This appears to be an imbalance but without knowing the level of grant received by each community council it is difficult to comment any further or propose any change.

We are also concerned about the future level of funding provided by Moray Council to community councils to deliver what will become an enhanced supporting role to our community.

We believe that the question of grants warrants further investigation and more in-depth discussion, with a clearer indication of Moray Council’s future funding intentions and would welcome this during the Stage 2 consultation.

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**18 November 2020**  
**Finderne Community Council**

The Scheme works well for Finderne Community Council. The only comments to make are:

**Section 6 – Membership**

We would not want to increase the membership, as we struggle for Community Council members as it is.

**Section 13. Meetings**

We would want to make it clear that holding meetings remotely should be acceptable, using video and/or telephone conferencing facilities.

#### Section 15. Resourcing a Community Council

We would recommend some relaxation in the restrictions on spending the administration grant. Our administration expenses are currently low, and it would be better if some of this grant could be used on other things in the communities' interest.

On behalf of Finnerne Community Council,  
Howard Davenport (Secretary)

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**17 November 2020**

**J. Fernandes**

Hi there,

In response to the consultation about community councils, I would like to make the following suggestion: why not scrap them altogether?

In Moray, there are so few people interested in being a community councillor that no election was needed anywhere. The fact that it is a voluntary position creates a bias in favour of people who have time, men and pensioners.

In Moray, the people currently in community councils only represent themselves, and therefore community councils are undemocratic. The community councils cannot fulfil their statutory duty to "represent the views of their local community."

Kind regards,  
J Fernandes

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**10 November 2020**

**S. Milne**

I would like to make some suggestions relating to the Moray scheme for the establishment of community councils:

- Following the Covid emergency, it has become clear that the ability to communicate online has become a key requirement for anyone assisting in the community. I would suggest that all community councillors be offered training in the use of email, as a minimum, and also if possible, in Zoom or other meetings software.
- Given that meetings can now be held on a virtual basis, that this is promoted, and used to encourage people who would not otherwise consider joining a community council to put themselves forward. I note that my local community council consists, in the main, of people who are retired or who do not have children. The ability to attend a meeting

from home might encourage these with work / caring responsibilities to participate and hence widen the diversity of community councils.

I hope these comments are helpful.

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