

Appendix 1

MORAY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONSULTATION PROCESS

Objectives

- To ensure that the proposals for community engagement support in Moray take account of the views of key stakeholders.
- To ensure that this consultation adheres to and is an exemplar for the implementation of the national standards for community engagement

Parameters of Consultation

There are effectively two elements to the consultation;

- **Staffing Support** (see appendix (A))
- **Financial Support** (see appendix (B))

Staffing Support: The decision on the establishment of a Community Support Unit has been taken and the consultation is about how the unit is established and it can effectively serve its purpose.

Financial Support: Three options were outlined by the Council but that decisions would be taken on the funding after the proposals were consulted on fully and once the answers were received from community groups then the Council could consider and decide what option would be best for community groups.

Timescales

The key steps in the implementation of this proposal are as follows:

- Policy and Resources Committee 10/3/09 – Agreement to consult and the beginning of the consultation process
- Meeting with all Staff affected by changes will be arranged as soon as possible following the Committee decisions on 10 March 2009. (Initial meetings have taken place to outline proposed changes and clarify the consultation process.)
- Consultation process, unions and stakeholders (See consultees). April – July 2009
- Seek agreement on the proposals at The Policy and Resources Committee on 25 August 2009

Consultees

Staffing proposal- Staff, Trade Unions, Community Planning Partners, Area Forums, Community Councils, The Voluntary Sector, Learners and learners groups.

Funding proposal - Moray Joint Community Councils, Moray Forum Community Councils, Local Area Forums and Community Councils. Moray Community Planning Partnership.

Methodology

Written comments will be invited from individuals and organisation in list of consultees. Questionnaires will be issued on each of the two proposals. Meetings have been held with staff and trade unions and further meetings will be arranged if requested by consultees. VOiCE will be used to assist planning and evaluation of the process of the process.

Appendix (A)

COMMUNITY SUPPORT UNIT STAFFING

Background

The recent restructuring of community planning has highlighted the need for effective community engagement and support being given to the community in order that they can fully participate in the process of community planning.

The establishment of the Community Engagement Theme Group with its clearly defined role and remit provides an opportunity to develop the quality and level of community engagement in Moray.

The Government is increasing their focus on developing community empowerment and there are greater expectations on Local Authorities to encourage and support this process. The Audit Commission has given clear indications that the new Local Government audit process will include an audit of community engagement processes. The Moray Council's Strategy on Consultation and Community Engagement commits the Council to develop its community engagement in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement.

There are a variety of supports in place that provide support to the community and voluntary sector to participate in community planning. The variety of sources of support can be confusing to new community groups, voluntary organisations or individuals seeking to become involved in community activity.

Area Forums receive direct support from the equivalent of three full time staff however they have had to cover 8 School catchment areas across Moray and this has led to a difficulty in providing adequate support and as a consequence the development of the forums has been hampered. Area Forums in Moray have highlighted the shortcomings of the current levels of support and the need to enhance that level of support. These staff are currently managed through the Community Learning and Development Service in Educational Services.

The current support for community councils is limited. The Joint Community Councils is supported by a 14 hour per week liaison worker post and this worker gives limited support to individual community councils. This does not include administrative, capacity building or development work. The Speyside Council, Community Associations and village hall committees in Moray receive limited support and have no dedicated staff support. Individuals or organisations that wish to organise a new initiative or to tackle issues in their area also may find difficulty in identifying support

The Council needs to consider the most effective route to provide community capacity building support and advice to community councils, associations, village halls and area forums, small local community groups and voluntary organisations. Currently MVSO and the Council are the main source of support and information to the community on funding and organising. The Community Learning and Development (CLD) and Planning & Development section provide a range of support to community organisations, advice, capacity building and training. The recognised capacity building skills of a section of the staff of the adult team of CLD successfully provides limited support across the geographic and thematic range of the community.

Community Support Unit

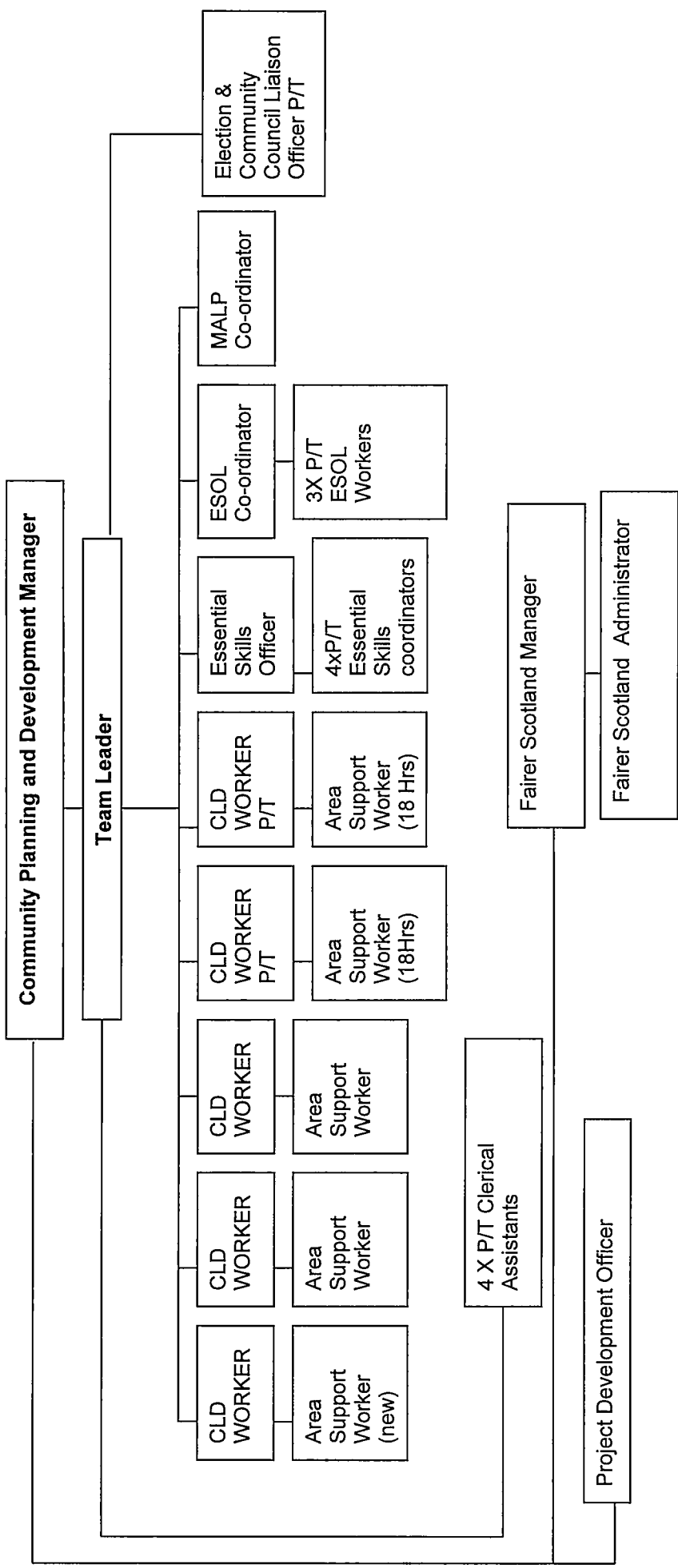
It has been agreed to establish a Community Support Unit that will provide support and capacity building assistance to area forums, community councils, village hall committees and other community groups and organisations. It would also support new community based initiatives (see structure diagram).

The Community Support Unit will consist of the current Community Learning and Development Adult team, the current Fairer Scotland Staff, the Community Council Liaison officer and a Project Development officer and this unit will be transferred to the Chief Executives Department. The unit will support systematic community engagement in the community planning process and provide a central focus for community organisations and the voluntary sector seeking support and development from the Council. Minor redirection of the work of some of the staff highlighted and re targeting with a focussed remit based on the development of community engagement and capacity building would be given. Adult Learning Co-ordinator posts will be deleted and savings will be used to create a fourth community support worker. It is also proposed at this stage that Essentials Skills, ESOL (English As Second Language) staff and MALP (Moray Adult Literacy Partnership) staff

The unit would provide both developmental and administrative support to area forums, community councils, community associations and village hall committees. Support would also be provided to local community groups and organisations, new initiatives and developments using area forums and their development of local action plans as the focal point for that support. A community learning approach would underpin the work of the unit. The new unit would work in partnership with a wide range of community planning partners e.g. MVSO and the Planning & Development section of the Moray Council to ensure improved support and sustainability to community groups.

It is essential that the process is inclusive and that the process of engagement goes beyond the "usual suspects". The linking of the Fairer Scotland Fund staff and Community Learning and Development will ensure that a more inclusive approach is undertaken.

STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



Appendix (B)**MORAY COUNCIL FINANCE PROPOSAL 15/04/2009**

The Policy and Resources Committee of the Moray Council at their meeting on the 10th of March 2009 agreed to consider the levels of funding to community engagement structures in Moray in order to improve the quality of council support. There were three options put forward but it was agreed that these options should be seen as a basis for discussion and as a base to build an effective fund that the consultation process should allow for more effective solutions to be put forward. It is clear that in the current financial situation the budget available will remain the same and that solutions need to be based on the overall budget figure of £25,600.

Option 1

Community Councils and Area Forums are given a grant of £1000 each. An amount of £500 would be for administration costs and the remainder as a grant to support projects initiated by the group. £500 each would be allocated to the Moray Forum and to the Joint Community Council.

Option 2

To provide a £500 basic grant and per capita amount to Area Forums and Community Councils based on the current per capita formula for Community Councils. £500 each would be allocated to the Moray Forum and to the Joint Community Council. This would provide the same amount as at present to Community Councils and will leave an allowance for a small development fund to be available to groups.

Option 3

Combining Community Council and Area Forum grants and allocating a base grant of £1500 for the area and a per capita amount per area (aligned to Area School Group areas.) £500 each would be allocated to the Moray Forum and to the Joint Community Council. The Area Forums jointly with the Community Councils then allocate this across the area. This would allow for example some areas to provide support to community associations or other specific community engagement organisations.

There is scope to consider other sources of funding to supplement this Community Engagement Fund through other relevant funding sources e.g. Fairer Scotland Fund and Leader. Partners could also be asked to contribute to this development of local community planning. There is a genuine desire on the part of the Moray Council to work with the organisations affected by this proposed change and that a collective solution is found that ensures effective use of public money in supporting community engagement.