

**REPORT TO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP ON 13 AUGUST
2009**

SUBJECT: CONSULTATION UPDATE

BY: COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The report seeks to update the Community Engagement Group on the changes to the consultation on the establishment of a Community Support Unit within the Moray Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Community Engagement Group note the progress and the change of approach taken to the consultation in response to feedback from Stakeholders groups.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10 March 2009 it was agreed to establish a Community Support Unit within the Moray Council and to review funding to support the engagement of community councils and area forums. It was also decided that both the proposals should be put out to public consultation and that following consideration, the committee agreed that the Community Engagement Group would circulate the proposals for consultation.
- 3.2 At the Community Engagement Group meeting held on the 23 April 2009 it was agreed to circulate the proposals for the new staffing. Written comments were invited from the consultees.
- 3.3 Questionnaires were to be issued and drafts were circulated to the Implementation Group of the Community Engagement Group. Feedback from members of the Community Engagement Implementation Group and the Community and Voluntary sector indicated that the questionnaire was not appropriate for the process under way.
- 3.4 Following a meeting with the Moray Forum on 9 June 2009, with the Joint Community Councils of Moray and MVSO it was proposed that as an alternative to a questionnaire there was an opportunity to use the development of the new unit as an opportunity to ensure a more

integrated approach to ensuring that community engagement is developed in Moray and to carry out a more detailed and useful consultation.

- 3.5 It was agreed that rather than provide a questionnaire that it would be more effective to use the new unit to engage with communities to determine the needs of communities for the service provided and to ensure that the new unit does not duplicate the work being carried out by voluntary organisations in local communities. It would also provide an opportunity to undertake a coordinated and effective mapping of community engagement in Moray.
- 3.6 It was proposed that the new unit should focus their work during the transitional period from August to October in making contact with Forums, Community Councils, Associations Village halls, other community groups, learner's voluntary organisations and with partners to establish levels of need and existing provision.
- 3.7 A meeting was held on 1 July 2009 in Lhanbryde at which staff from the new unit, community and Voluntary organisations were invited. This exercise was seen as a first step in carrying out a detailed mapping and consultation exercise that would be carried out with Community Support Unit staff.
- 3.8 This mapping exercise will contribute to the mapping exercise currently underway as part of the Community Engagement Action Plan.
- 3.9 It is envisaged that this process should be completed by September and a report outlining the findings will be brought to the next Community Engagement group.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

a) Community Plan / Theme Plans / Partner Plans

The Community Support Unit will contribute to National Outcome 11 in the Single Outcome Agreement; "we have strong resilient communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others" and to National Outcome 15; "our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs".

b) Policy and Legal

The Local Government Scotland Act 2003 requires that the community Planning Partnership engage with community bodies and organisations as part of the Community Planning process. In April 2008 the Scottish Government (SG) and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) issued a joint statement of commitment to community empowerment.

c) Resources (Financial, Staffing and Risks)

The staff of the Community Support Unit will be used to undertake the amended consultation process

d) Consultations

Consultations will be carried out with the groups outlined in the report - Forums, Community Councils, Community Associations, Village Halls, other community groups, learners, voluntary organisations and with partners.

5. CONCLUSION

The consultation process agreed at the last meeting has been amended in response to feedback from the voluntary and community sector and a more detailed consultation and mapping exercise is now being carried out by the Community Support Unit.

Author of Report: John Ferguson Community Planning and Development Manager

Background Papers:
Ref: