

**SPECIAL MEETING OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP
9 OCTOBER 2009 – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

PRESENT

Elaine Brown, NHS Grampian
John Ferguson, Moray Council
Shelley Flett, Moray Council
Rebecca Kail, Moray Area Forum
Alastair keddie, Moray Council
Alastair Kennedy, Joint Community Council
Hugh Mackie, Grampian Police
Councillor Eric McGillivray, Moray Council
Anita Milne, MVSO
Bridget Mustard, Moray Council
Geoff Ramshaw, Citizens Advice Bureau
Carin Schwartz, Moray Area Forum
Ian Todd, Moray Council

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor L Bell, Eileen Bush, Rae Cameron, Mike Devenney, Sandra Dow, Councillor G Hamilton, Councillor G McDonald, Sharon Milton and Councillor J Russell

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the special meeting to agree the remit and role of the group and then to consider any changes to the membership as a result of the discussions. He then asked Bridget to explain the purpose of the day.

Bridget explained that the remit and membership of the 5 strategic theme groups were reviewed in May to align them with the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) priorities. This resulted in changes to the theme group membership as well as membership considerations at the Community Planning Board. Given this the only strategic group within the community planning structure who has not reviewed their remit and membership is the community engagement group. The purpose of this meeting then is ensuring that this group is aligned to assist the partnership to meet its SOA commitments.

2. REMIT

Bridget opened the discussion by stating that the remit of the group was developed with the assistance of a consultant about a year ago. In reviewing that remit it would still seem to be valid and she suggested that this is still retained as the full remit of the group. However, since the remit was lengthy Bridget suggested that the group consider concentrating their efforts on a few areas. These areas are:

- Encourage information exchange
- Improvements to community engagement
- Developing engagement networks/systems

During discussion the meeting noted the work being undertaken for the Better Community Engagement pilot and the need to link into this project. Thereafter the meeting agreed to concentrate their efforts on the above three areas.

3. ROLE/ AGENDA LAYOUT

Bridget then explained that the membership of the group was originally established to include partners, elected members, community groups and theme group chairs. Currently these roles are not being carried out as they were intended. Given this Bridget suggested that one way of enabling the four elements of the group to be fulfilled is to encourage involvement within the meetings. She suggested that space on the agenda be given to the four strands by structuring the agenda as follows:

- Overall community planning issues
- Partners
- Community groups
- Theme groups

During discussion the meeting asked for further information to be submitted to the next meeting of this group on strategic assessments and their link into the SOA to enable this group to be involved in setting priorities.

4. MEMBERSHIP

Following from the above discussion, the meeting then considered the current membership in light of the proposals. After discussion it was agreed that the current membership is appropriate.

5. BUDGET CONSULTATION - MORAY COUNCIL

Alastair Keddie joined the meeting for this item to seek suggestions from the group in relation to carrying out a consultation exercise on the proposed budget savings for Moray Council. Alastair then outlined the current budget pressures faced by the Council and the process which was undertaken to identify potential savings to achieve a balanced budget position.

He advised that the administration group has been working on the budget for 5 months. The administration group will present their savings proposals to the meeting of Full Council on 4 November. After which a consultation exercise on the proposals will be undertaken from 5 November to 15 December. Feedback from the consultation will be considered in January in time to inform the budget setting on 11 February 2010, which is a requirement for all councils to set their budget by this date.

Alastair advised that he would like to consult the community on the proposals but wishes the process to be managed to ensure that a balance response is received for input in the budget setting process.

The meeting then discussed the difficulty in consulting on such a complicated issue. They suggested that some capacity building for community groups on the budget would be necessary to fully appreciate the implications and reply meaningfully to the consultation. In response Bridget advised that the Community Planning Board agreed to submit an application for match funding for a pilot participatory budgeting project which will build the understanding of the budget with communities. Unfortunately this project will not be available in time for this consultation. Bridget stated that she will submit details of the project to the next regular meeting of this group.

The meeting then discussed possible road shows but Alastair explained that the council does not have the resources to undertake this type of exercise. It was also suggested that it would assist the understanding of the budget if some cost of services, average of cost of services and graphs could be provided. Again this type of resource implication to provide that detail may not be possible at this stage. Given this, Alastair invited a small group of the representatives at this meeting to assist with the format of the consultation document. This small group consisted of a representative from MVSO, Joint Community Council and the Moray Area Forum.

Alastair advised that the Citizens Panel will be used to consult on the budget as will the equalities forum. He further advised that the council staff will be consulted through our internal procedures. He is also meeting with the statutory community planning partners for their input. He then opened up the discussion to the meeting to suggest how to engage with the community.

After further discussion on how to carry out a consultation at this time, it was agreed that the consultation should be considered by existing groups. All other groups and individuals will be encouraged to submit their views through these groups. The co-ordination of the consultation will be carried out as followed:

- Joint Community Council will co-ordinate responses from the community councils
- Moray Area Forum will co-ordinate response from the Area Forums
- MVSO will co-ordinate responses from the voluntary sector
- General public will be encouraged to contact either their Area Forum or community council

In addition it was suggested that the patient participation forum and tenants' forum could be used. Further consideration needs to be given to how to capture the community associations' comments.