

REPORT TO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP ON 18 FEBRUARY 2010

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY COUNCIL INAUGURAL MEETING - OUTCOMES

BY: MORAY COUNCIL - CORPORATE POLICY UNIT MANAGER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The Community Engagement Group is asked to consider the outcomes from the inaugural meetings of the newly formed Community Councils.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **The Community Engagement Group is asked to:-**

- (i) Note the common issues across the Community Councils;**
- (ii) Note that those specific areas which the Community Council itself can address will be carried out with the support of the Community Support Unit; and**
- (iii) Agree to progress the areas highlighted for the Community Planning Partnership to carry out namely:-**
 - (a) Involvement in decision making;**
 - (b) Look at developing a partnership between the Community Council and RAF; and**
 - (c) Improve processes and procedures for the Community Council across partner organisations.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 All 16 Community Councils had an inaugural meeting between October 2009 and January 2010. At that meeting they were asked to complete a questionnaire asking the following questions:-

- (i) Their reasons for joining the Community Council**
- (ii) What they would like to change about their community**
- (iii) What they would like to achieve in their term of office**

3.2 Arising from the questionnaire returns received the majority of representatives stated that they joined the Community Council to make a difference in their community. Community Councils should be seen as a valuable community planning partner who can contribute to the aims of the Single Outcome Agreement at a local level.

3.3 In relation to what the Community Council wanted to change and achieve there were four common themes:-

- (i) Communication
- (ii) Community Engagement
- (iii) Comments on specific services
- (iv) Other

3.4 Within communication, Community Council common issues were:-

- (i) Support for rural communities, local projects and Community Councils themselves;
- (ii) Awareness of town activities, environmental issues, decision-making and again Community Councils themselves; and
- (iii) Liaison and working with other agencies through
 - (a) Improved procedures and processes;
 - (b) Better Council services;
 - (c) Partnership with the RAF;
 - (d) Involvement in decision-making; and
 - (e) Fairness on service distribution i.e finance and planning

3.5 Highlighted as areas for improvement in relation to Community Engagement, Community Council suggested focusing on:-

- (i) Developing more groups;
- (ii) Developing more event;
- (iii) Becoming proactive in the community;
- (iv) Developing community pride or spirit; and
- (v) Increasing more Community Council membership

3.6 Specific services were mentioned for areas of improvement. These were:-

- (i) Roads/planning i.e speed limits, safer school buses, maintenance, roundabouts, A96;
- (ii) Tourism;
- (iii) Elderly;
- (iv) Young people;
- (v) Cleaner area;
- (vi) Sheltered housing; and
- (vii) Anti-social behaviour

3.7 Interestingly the majority of services mentioned targeted services delivered by the Council and earlier improving Council Services itself were highlighted. This could reflect the stronger knowledge Community Councils have of Council services and the statutory requirement Community Councils have to comment on licensing and planning issues although the bulk of their enquiries are roads related. However it does also indicate a potential lack of awareness of other Community Planning partners services.

3.8 Other comments made reflected individual's views that the Community Councils role was to safeguard or represent their communities interest.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

This initiative 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, Risks, Staffing and Property)

The resources to support Community Councils is in place. There may be small amounts of funding required to support any developments.

(d) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with Alastair Kennedy, Tracey Rae, Ian Todd and John Ferguson whose comments have been incorporated into the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The survey highlighted areas which the Community Councils want to change or achieve within their communities. The Community Planning Partnership should recognise these areas and support the Community Councils to achieve them.

Author of Report: Bridget Mustard, Corporate Policy Unit Manager
Background Papers: Questionnaire held by Tracey Rae
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