

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 OCTOBER 2002

THE COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ANGUS COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Report by the Chief Executive

ABSTRACT

This report proposes that the Council approve the draft Policy Statement on the Council's Relationship with Angus Community Councils.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee:-

- i approve the draft Policy Statement on the Council's Relationship with Angus Community Councils;
- ii instruct the Chief Executive to undertake a consultation exercise with Angus Community Councils on the draft policy statement;
- ii instruct officers to discuss the draft policy statement with the Angus Community Planning Partners; and
- iii note that the Chief Executive will bring forward further reports on these arrangements, as appropriate.

2. BACKGROUND

The system of Community Councils that exists in Scotland was introduced at the 1975 reorganisation of local government and the environment in which Community Councils operate has changed quite considerably since then.

In June 1999, the McIntosh Commission in their report, dealing with the relationship between the new Parliament and local government, recommended that the system of Community Councils be retained and that Community Councils should be regarded as a "*valuable asset to the democratic life of Scotland*".

3. CURRENT SITUATION

There are currently various arrangements in place relating to the Council's working relationship with Community Councils and these include:-

a Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils

The amended Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils was approved by Angus Council at its meeting on 24 August 2000.

The Scheme introduced a number of changes such as model constitutions and standing orders and sought to realign council ward boundaries and those of Community Councils. This was seen by Angus Council and most Community Councils as an important element in emphasising the link between Community Councils and Angus Council ward councillors. The Scheme became operational from October 2000 in conjunction with the expiry of the three-year term of office. Community Council elections were run in accordance with this Scheme and the revised boundary areas in October 2000.

There are now 26 Community Councils in Angus all of which are operational.

b Good Practice Agreement

As part of its Best Value development, Angus Council has carried out a review of corporate communications with Community Councils. One of the recommendations in the improvement plan stemming from that review was to develop a Good Practice Agreement with Community Councils. Its aim is to demonstrate the commitment of both Angus Council and the Community Councils in the area to work together for the good of the community. It was agreed that the Good Practice Agreement be subject to review by the Community Councils and Angus Council at regular intervals and at its Bi-annual meeting with community councillors in June 2002 Angus Council agreed that it would set up a short-life working group with community council representatives to review the Good Practice Agreement.

c Funding

Community Councils receive an annual administration grant from Angus Council in October of each year. The amount of the grant is based on the population of the community council area:-

Band	Population	Amount of Grant at October 2002
1	0 - 999	£275
2	1000 - 4499	£300
3	4500 - 9999	£580
4	10,000+	£670

In addition each community council also receives a photocopy grant (£100 as at October 2002).

d Bi-annual Meetings with Community Councils

Angus Council has a programme of bi-annual meetings with community council representatives. The purpose of these meetings is to allow Community Councils to comment generally on matters of concern. Angus Council may also use these meetings to sound out Community Councils with regard to general proposals where developments are likely to affect local communities in general. They also provide a rare opportunity for all 26 Angus Community Councils to meet collectively.

e Community Council Contact Officer

The Decentralisation Officer within the Chief Executive's Department of Angus Council is the designated community council liaison officer who acts as the corporate point of communication for Community Councils and provides advice to Community Councils.

4. PROPOSALS

In Committee Report 1275/02 of the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 October 2002 relating to the review of the Council's Decentralisation arrangements, it is recognised that the Council's relationship with Community Councils could be strengthened and it proposes that a Policy Statement on the Council's Relationship with Community Councils be drafted for further consideration by the Council and its community planning partners.

There is a need to manage a "bottom-up" approach to community planning, feeding in to the Angus Community Plan, across its five themes, and to build in an annual review process. The Council is currently exploring how best to take local community planning forward including the active involvement of Community Councils in this process as representatives of their communities.

In looking at improving relations between the Council and Community Councils it is proposed that the following broad areas require to be considered:-

- i Making the Council more approachable for Community Councils
- ii Area Forums and Community Councils
- iii Elected Member relationship with Community Councils
- iv Community Councils and Local Community Planning
- v What does Angus Council want from Community Councils?
- vi What do Community Councils want from Angus Council?

In light of the above a Policy Statement on the Council's Relationship with Community Councils has been drafted and is attached as an appendix to this report.

5. CONCLUSION

The Council is well aware of the statutory role of Community Councils in gathering and representing community views, as well as carrying out many other tasks of benefit to their areas. The Council appreciates the importance of Community Councils, and it is recognised that the Council's relationship with Community Councils could be strengthened.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION

All Chief Officers Management have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8. HUMAN RIGHTS

There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

A B Watson
Chief Executive

Note: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this paper.