

ANGUS COUNCIL**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 8 DECEMBER 1998****COMMUNITY COUNCILS - UPDATED GUIDANCE****REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE****ABSTRACT**

The Scottish Office has just issued an updated Guide Book for Community Councils. This report highlights matters arising from the guidance and suggests remitting further consideration to a Working Group.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:-

- (a) notes the contents of this report and the guidance issued by the Scottish Office; and
- (b) remits consideration to the Working Group of Members and Community Council Members set up to consider the review of the Angus Council Community Council Administrative Scheme.

Note: A copy of the Guide Book is available in the Members' Lounge.

2. BACKGROUND

The Scottish Office has been considering for some time now a review of the "Blue Book" - the guidance issued by the last Government on Relationships between Local Authorities and Community Councils.

The Scottish Office has now issued a "Mauve Book" updating that guidance.

3. DETAILS

COSLA and the Association of Scottish Community Councils have supported the publication of the booklet.

The foreword notes that one of the Government's key aspirations is to bring Government closer to the people.

"Community Councils are an important part of this", says the booklet. "They are the most local tier of statutory representation. They can be a powerful voice for the communities, and a creative agent for change. To reach their full potential they need commitment to - and from - the communities they serve. They need a strong relationship with the local authority and public recognition of the value of their role."

The booklet notes the developments in Scotland in terms of introduction of the new Parliament and goes on: -

"We believe that promoting the best of what is happening at Community Council level is an important part of that agenda."

The booklet again provides a checklist for action by authorities on good practice and also a checklist for action by Community Councils.

With regard to the checklist for Councils, most of the items are already either in place so far as Angus is concerned or may be taken account of during the present review of the Administrative Scheme which is being undertaken by a Working Group of Councillors and Community Councillors.

The checklist for action by Community Councils suggests they should "positively support Local Government and try to establish close, constructive relationships with their local authority, with their local Councillors and with other organisations active in the area".

It also suggests recognising the importance of developing a wider range of contacts than simply with the local authorities. It also refers to the need to actively seek the views, opinions and aspirations of the full cross-section of the community and being able to demonstrate the steps taken to consult the community when appropriate.

Much of the advice which is contained is a repeat of the earlier views expressed in the "Blue Book", but certain elements of the book should be given further consideration in depth e.g. voting procedures. It is therefore suggested that the appropriate method of dealing with the matters arising would be to remit consideration to the Working Group.

One interesting omission from the new book is a reference to Common Good Funds. The Blue Book said "some Councils already effectively delegate some local decisions on matters such as spending Common Good Funds on amenity provision by taking the view of the Community Councils and then voting to implement it at a Council Committee". This reference is deleted in the new guidance.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from recommendations at this stage.

4. CONSULTATION

All members of the Management Team have been consulted in connection with this report.

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 replied upon to any material extent in preparing this report.

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IR/BAK

17 November 1998