

REPORT NO. 520/98

ANGUS COUNCIL**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

12 MAY 1998

Report by Chief Executive

MEMBER/OFFICER GROUP REPORT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**ABSTRACT**

This report (i) reminds members of their decision to set up a Member/Officer Group on Community Development; (ii) advises that the report of the Group has come forward; and (iii) suggests how this might best be addressed.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Report of the Member/Officer Group on Community Development is attached to this paper and it is recommended that the Committee:-

1. supports the contents of the Member/Officer Group Report on Community Development - amended to include any further member comments;
2. agrees that the Report be circulated for information/comment to all Committees of the Council;
3. agrees that the Report - as with previous such Reports - be printed for appropriate circulation;
4. remits it to the Chief Executive to bring forward to an early meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee proposals at to how:-
 - (i) the Report's various recommendations should be implemented as systematically and corporately as possible;
 - (ii) the implementation of the Report might best be monitored.

2. BACKGROUND

It will be recalled that the Council set up a Member/Officer Group chaired by Councillor Mrs Sheena Welsh on Community Development with the following remit:-

- (a) to draft a working definition of Community Development, making clear the role of Community Education in the process;

- (b) investigate Community Development policy and practice elsewhere and produce a community development policy statement and strategy for Angus;
- (c) investigate ways in which the Council's current practice on decentralisation, at a corporate and departmental level might be enhanced by adopting a Community Development approach;
- (d) to liaise with the voluntary and community sector in Angus on the extent to which Community Development is used as an approach with that sector's work.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any financial implications will be addressed when the Chief Executive brings forward his proposals on implementation/monitoring.

4. CONSULTATION

The Directors of Finance and Law and Administration have been consulted in the compilation of this Report

A B Watson
Chief Executive

16 April 1998

ABW/WDS/BAK

ANGUS COUNCIL

MEMBER/OFFICER GROUP ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT - COUNCILLOR SHEENA WELSH

Given many of the statements set out by the Council in the early days of its life, it will be no surprise to an outsider that the Council decided to give consideration to the issue of "Community Development". The statements and sentiments as set out in the Council's seven key themes, and the Council's Scheme of Decentralisation clearly emphasise the desire on the part of the Council to be a listening and responsive Council, and to make every effort to "empower" our citizens. I am honoured to have been asked to chair the work of this Member/Officer Group on Community Development and would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Group for their commitment (and very hard work) over the past six months.

The views as set out in the report that follows are the unanimous views of that Member/Officer Group, and I hope our work will help to establish a more inclusive society here in Angus.

Signature.....Councillor Sheena Welsh (Chairman)

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP

The following people served as members of the Member/Officer Group on Community Development:-

- (a) Councillor Sheena Welsh (Chairman);
- (b) Councillor Helen Angus;
- (c) Councillor Glennis Middleton;
- (d) Councillor Kathleen Ritchie;
- (e) Councillor Tiny Young;
- (f) W Strachan, Policy Officer (Lead Officer), Chief Executive's Department;
- (g) Jim Butler, Housing Department;
- (h) Sheena Reekie, Principal Community Education Officer, Education Department;
- (i) Gordon Mackintosh, Head of Operations, Social Work Department;
- (j) David Valentine, Economic Development Manager, Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Development;
- (k) Stewart Wilkie, Senior Development Officer, Department of Planning, Transport and Economic Development;
- (l) Ian Wilson, Committee Services Manager, Department of Law and Administration; and
- (m) Fiona Anderson, Committee Officer, Department of Law and Administration.

3. GROUP REMIT

The remit given to the Group by Angus Council was:-

- (a) to draft a working definition of community development, making clear the role of community education in the process;
- (b) investigate community development policy and practice elsewhere and produce a community development policy statement and strategy for Angus;
- (c) investigate ways in which the Council's current practice on decentralisation, at a corporate and departmental level might be enhanced by adopting a community development approach;
- (d) to liaise with the voluntary and community sector in Angus on the extent to which community development is used as an approach with that sector's work.

4. APPROACH

The Member/Officer Group, from the outset, agreed that it was important to develop a practical working document which would act both as a useful policy tool for Angus Council, and as a strategy action paper.

The Group felt it was important that they should not try to "re-invent the wheel" and consequently, approaches have been made to all local authorities in Scotland asking them about their Community Development policy statements and/or examples of good practice. A large number of local authorities responded to this request, and these examples were studied by the Member/Officer Group.

It was agreed at an early stage, by all members of the Group, that each member would accept responsibility for working in small teams to draft papers for the final document. As a result, the breadth of this paper reflects the breadth of views and interests expressed within the membership of the Member/Officer Group.

5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The idea of a community development approach towards providing services, improving communities and alleviating disadvantage has the support of many National Governments throughout the world.

Community Development was given credibility as far back as 1947 by the United Nations which went on to establish a unit specifically to deal with Regional and Community Development in developing countries.

The last 30 years has seen Local Government play a major part in Community Development. Many programmes using a Community Development approach have been initiated.

Of outstanding significance is the work undertaken by Strathclyde Regional Council which identified Community Development as one of its major strategies to combat multiple deprivation. Community Education reinforces many of the objectives of Community Development which stresses the potential of individuals and communities for life long growth and development.

The Community Development movement in Scotland has undertaken projects and programmes in areas of rural under-development as well as in urban areas. SCVO established its Rural Community Development Committee in 1965 to promote a national policy. In this respect, the Councils of Social Service, Community Associations and village halls have been working within the approach to Community Development in 1965 namely, "the processes by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of Government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress".

There have been many organisations in Scotland working within a Community Development perspective. These include local authorities, statutory bodies and voluntary organisations.

The Voluntary Sector has had a more prominent role in Community Development over the past 20 years. This is in some way due to Government funding policies which at times have been more favourable to voluntary organisations than to local authorities. An example of this has been the availability of urban programme funds, urban aid and more recently Scottish Rural Partnership Funding arrangements.

Furthermore, these developments have led to a change in view where community initiatives are no longer seen as short-term innovatory projects but as a necessity to meet changing conditions.

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - DEFINITION - A WAY OF WORKING - OPERATING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

A Definition

Community Development is an approach to strengthening communities. It seeks to involve local people in working with others to increase their capacity to influence and determine the outcomes of social, environmental and economic changes affecting the lives of their communities.

Some Values and Principles

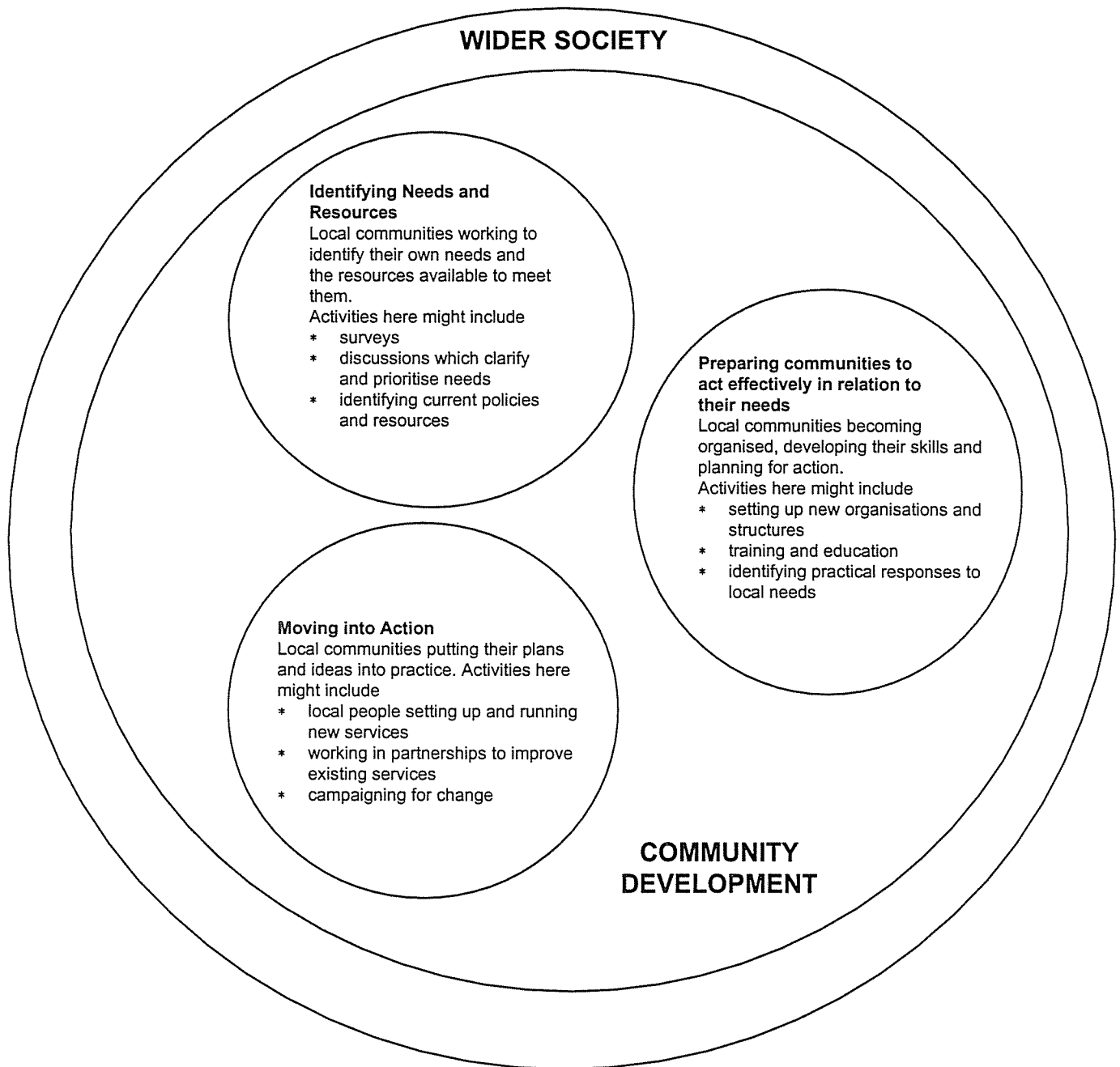
Implicit in this definition are the basic values which underpin community development approaches. These are:-

- a belief in the potential of people to be effective in identifying and addressing their own needs;
- a commitment to equality and the reduction of inequality;
- a belief in the potential of partnership with communities and within communities.

These three core values are consistent with the Council's Key Themes.

A MODEL

- Community Development exists within a wider environment which has a direct influence on the impact of the approach
- Community Development needs to be properly supported, including Officer access to support, finance, and a commitment to change



Some Characteristics

Community Development is:

- an **educational** approach through which people explore their current circumstances, develop understanding and acquire skills;
- about **positive action** with people taking responsibility for improving the quality of life in their communities;
- **co-operative**, with people working together to set and achieve shared goals;
- a **long-term** process where the results, in terms of change within communities, take several years to achieve;
- a **continuous** process, with new needs being identified and progressed all the time. There is no point at which a community is fully developed!

Outcomes

The ultimate aim in Community Development approaches is the creation of equitable and sustainable communities.

Progress towards this aim can be seen in:-

- individuals and community groups growing and developing in a way which enables them to take greater control over their lives;
- the establishment of community organisations which undertake a range of work, including running services and representing the views of local people in a variety of arenas;
- improved links between local communities, the Council and other agencies;
- improved local services, which reflect the needs of communities;
- increased satisfaction with community life.

7. DEPARTMENTS WORKING TOGETHER - A CULTURAL SHIFT

To determine whether a cultural shift is necessary, we must first recognise the public perception of "The Council".

In the words of Robbie Burns, "..... To see oorselves as ithers see us".

The public envisage the Council as all encompassing. We are 'responsible' for everything, and 'to blame' for everything.

A cultural shift evolved when the two authorities, Tayside Regional Council and Angus District Council, merged, which means there is not, or should not be, any 'passing the buck'. Although this is welcomed by the public, there is still a degree of confusion evident, but this will be addressed, in part, by the setting up of an Access Office in each Burgh where information is accessible across all services.

All departments must recognise that they have a responsibility to support community development. As an example, Community Education plays a vital role in enabling small communities to function constructively and develop. Whilst this is welcomed by the public, there are occasions when it is perceived that the Council does not fully achieve this leadership role.

Two of the Council's Key Themes are important in the context of cultural shift, i.e.:

- to aim to provide excellent public services, maximising the use of available resources to meet local needs;
- to develop partnerships.

Maximising available resources requires departments to share or pool scarce resources and staff skills, and adopt a 'corporate' approach towards addressing community issues and problems.

Developing partnerships necessitates the forging of links between the Council, its services, and its communities, along with internal partnerships between departments and external agencies, the voluntary sector, and bodies such as Police and health authorities.

The single tier authority has enabled service departments to work more co-operatively, and there are many good examples which did not exist to the same degree under the old two-tier system.

The Council's decentralisation strategy is also assisting the process of departments working together, and the further development of area forums should provide an interface for dialogue between communities, members and officers.

The development of Area Service Teams led by Senior Officers should also be a significant step forward in giving a lead to all staff on the necessity for departments to develop co-operative and collaborative working. This will endorse and consolidate current good practice between departments and act as a spur to further developments. Central to all of this is effective dialogue and listening between the Council, its Officers and the people of the communities of Angus.

8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY

As stated earlier in this Report, Community Development work has been undertaken by, in the main, the Social Work and Education Departments of Angus Council. Outwith the local authority, the voluntary sector have had an important role to play and have been heavily involved in community development.

Reference has also been made in the Report to the ethos and values established by Angus Council through its Key Themes, Strategic Statement, Decentralisation Scheme and Customer Care Strategies, all of which reinforce the Council's view of the central role of the community. For the past two years, significant efforts have been made to seek out the views of communities and to encourage them to take greater control over their own future and development.

If the Council are to be successful in promoting Angus as an area where people are encouraged to take control of their own situations and work together for the common good, then it is essential that all departments of the Council adopt a Community Development approach to their work. Inevitably, there will be certain people working within the Authority, across a number of Departments, who will have a much greater involvement/interface with community groups and organisations and with groups which formally represent the community such as Community Councils or Area Forums. Clearly, they will have a significant community development role to fulfil. However, it is important to ensure that community development is not perceived as the responsibility of these officers and these officers alone; this Member/Officer Group would therefore encourage all Members and Officers of the Council to ensure that Community Development is one of their core functions whose influence is reflected throughout all their work with individual citizens and their communities.

9. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Whilst recognising the contents of the previous section of this report, we must recognise that some staff work more closely with community groups than others. One of these groups is the Community Education Service. The Scottish Office Education Department Circular 6/95, which provides guidance to new Authorities on their responsibility for Community Education, identified as one of the essential functions of Community Education:

- Educational support for community development

Community Education Workers have the skills to work with people in an educational way which:

- is informal and non-threatening;
- is geared to individual and community needs;
- draws on the experience of the learner, with the focus on learning, not teaching.

Characteristics of the Community Education Service

Within Angus Council, the Community Education Worker:

- is based within the local community;
- works directly with community groups and individuals;
- links with other departments and outside agencies to tackle community issues.

Role of the Community Education Worker

The role of the Community Education Worker is primarily an educational one, and will include:

- networking with community and voluntary organisations;
- assisting communities to identify and clarify issues of concern;
- helping communities work collectively and effectively;
- encouraging and identifying potential community leadership;
- assisting individuals and community groups acquire necessary skills and confidence to tackle and progress issues;
- engendering a sense of independence within communities;
- recognising and addressing the potential for learning;
- providing opportunities for learning within a safe (learning) environment;
- developing a range of locally based training and educational opportunities, e.g. Educational Guidance, Basic Skills/Adult Basic Education, training for Community Action - Committee Skills.

10. LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Council's Economic Development Strategy is rightly focused on stimulating the mainstream economy. The overall aim is to safeguard existing jobs and create new and sustainable job opportunities to match the aspirations of local people and improve their prosperity and well-being. Programmes are aimed at:-

- helping existing businesses
- encouraging new business formation
- helping local people become more competitive
- promoting inward investment

Community Development can play an important part in the realisation of these aims by responding to community aspirations and opportunities as well as local needs which the mainstream economy has so far failed to address. Moreover, the consequences of unemployment, social disadvantage and exclusion are fundamentally a social and welfare issue which underpin the Council's role in economic development.

In terms of Local Economic Development it is, therefore, intended to promote and facilitate Community Development Initiatives which are viable and sustainable by focusing on those aimed at:-

- creating real jobs
- improving competitiveness and employability of local people
- training and upskilling local people
- plugging gaps in local services
- pump priming projects which are uneconomic for the private sector
- recognised communities and groupings
- identifying and addressing the needs of communities and groupings

Much is already being done in this regard, but there is a need to audit current activity. We should also identify possible areas for collaborative work where local economic development can be linked with more traditional economic activity.

In order to ensure local ownership and a meaningful dialogue with local people it is essential to establish an operational link between economic development activities and the mechanisms for local forums established elsewhere in this Community Development Plan.

A proactive approach will be applied to projects which are targeted at special geographic areas, specific social groupings and other socio-economic needs which are recognised under local, national and European programmes as being eligible for support. The following are examples of such schemes:-

- European Programmes
- Welfare to Work - New Deal Initiative
- Training for Work and Special Needs Programmes
- Regeneration Programmes (e.g. Urban Aid)
- Business Shop Angus
- Rural Partnership

This local Economic Development policy for Community Development acknowledges the wide range of models in existence (e.g. Local Exchange Trading Schemes, Co-operative, Community Development Trusts, Community Businesses) and the variable success of such models. In seeking to outline the main aims and key priorities for community development it is intended to consider individual projects (both proactive and reactive) on their own merits, subject to resources being available, to ensure a "value for money" approach to implementation.

11. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - DECENTRALISATION

The Area Forums which were established in Monifieth and Montrose have been hailed as a success by the public. There have been five public meetings in Montrose with an average of sixty members of the public attending each meeting, and during that time there has developed a marked change in how people perceive the forums and consequently respond to them.

At present, Area Forums attract those who are used to being vocal. As a Council we must look to attracting the wider views of the community, by encouraging individuals of the public from all sections of the community, including the villages and rural areas surrounding the Burghs. We must get the message across that everyone can contribute either by putting items on the agenda or attending the meetings and expressing their views.

We will have to address how to encourage the less confident members of the public to develop the ability to speak out. It will take time to build up confidence and trust.

12. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - CURRENT PRACTICE ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

Appendix I sets out current Council activity related to Community Development.

13. DECENTRALISATION - THE ROLE OF THE CITIZEN

Angus Council should encourage and support all citizens to:-

- (i) fulfil individual and collective potential, and
- (ii) influence decisions.

The citizen contributes to community life in two ways:-

- (a) as an individual, and
- (b) as a group member.

Angus Council should recognise it is a basic right **not** to participate while accepting the necessity to support and adequately resource Community Development activities.

Many areas of Angus lack formal representation through community councils or other representative community groups. The Council should promote the development of locally based groups in such areas.

Such groups should be encouraged to participate in Area Forums.

14. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - THE WAY FORWARD

The contents of this report suggest that a further number of pieces of work need to be considered and undertaken. The following is suggested as a practical way forward to deal with some of these issues, and it is further suggested that these remits should be included in the appropriate departmental development and officer action plans for 1998/99.

1. Working in a way which promotes community development:

- (a) all staff across all departments who come into contact with community groups should be trained as appropriate (e.g. Direct Training through Guidance notes) on how to encourage the involvement/participation of Community Groups and organisations;
- (b) a large number of departments own/utilise a range of resources and skills in terms of the potential promotion of community development in Angus. An audit should be undertaken of these resources and skills, and suggestions made as to how these might be shared and utilised more effectively;
- (c) work needs to be undertaken as to what type of "internal" partnerships could be established to support community developments both in terms of geographic or client based community development issues;
- (d) Area Service Teams provide an excellent avenue through which to promote the concept of community development across a range of departments, and

- (e) the Council should promote community development through all its partnerships with external bodies.

The Chief Executive's Department should be instructed to undertake this series of work.

2. Local Economic Development:-

- (a) there is a requirement to undertake an audit of local economic activity in Angus;
- (b) there is a need to identify opportunities for linking activities set out in (a) above with mainstream economic development work;
- (c) there is a need to develop plans and strategies (with targets) for taking forward the issues set out in the local economic development section of this paper.

The Economic Development Team within the Chief Executive's Department should be instructed to undertake the work.

3. Developing and Supporting Community Organisations:-

- (a) Area Forums which will be established, across Angus, will enhance the opportunity to develop and support community organisations;
- (b) Area Forums and in particular the Area Forum "teams" should be instructed to identify ways of supporting the less vocal/confident groups in Angus to make their views known at the Area Forum meetings;
- (c) the Community Education Service should be instructed to identify existing community development support resource and identify gaps in position both on a client based and a geographic basis;
- (d) the Community Education Service, and the Partnership Officer, should be instructed to liaise with voluntary organisations in Angus to assist them to develop Lottery and other external funding applications to obtain community development resources to fill the gaps identified above.

4. Role of the Citizen:-

- (a) in order to provide opportunity for each individual to contribute, the Council should actively encourage the formation of Community Groups in areas where no such mechanism exists at present. The Community Education Service should be instructed to develop a strategy for implementation in this regard;
- (b) once established, Angus Council undertakes to identify the support requirements of such groups, and to investigate possible avenues for providing such support. Community Education should be instructed to take the lead in this regard.

A wide range of departments are involved in the following wide range of activities:

- Area Forums
- Community Council liaison
- co-ordination of support for voluntary organisations
- development/support for twinning links
- co-ordination of "social strategy" projects
- CCTV initiative support
- Arbroath Community Regeneration Initiative - Community Development Project

- Arts Forum
- Museums & Heritage Forum
- Angus Festival of Arts - developing

- Adult Education Associations
- Parent Teacher Associations
- Early Intervention Project (Schools)
- Mainstream Community Education Service
- 'CAFE' project support

- Citizens Advice Bureau Support
- Recyclers User Group Support

- Tenant and Resident Associations - accommodation or administrative support
- community meetings arranged when major works planned
- newsletter (1 per year) circulated to advise communities on changes to rents, smoke alarm programmes etc.
- Tenant participation to get higher profile/priority in future
- Action Groups - accommodation and administration support
- Rural Challenge programmes
- community transport
- Seafest event

- support for Angus Sports Council
- participation in Tayside Sports Development Group
- joint projects/grant support for numerous clubs
- user committees at sports centres/being extended to other leisure centres
- Saltire - working with the Strathairlie community

- Carnoustie 200 celebrations (1997)
- restoration of Mid Links, Montrose as community project
- partnerships with local football clubs
- community woodlands/National Treeweek
- events at Country Parks
- participation/partnership with Rotary Clubs re development of playgrounds - community forums

- support for voluntary organisations
- Childcare, Rural Outreach, Community Childminding funding
- Citizens Advice Bureau support
- Community Service
- welfare rights support
- Community Care Service
- Community Safety Partnership with Tayside Police and Tayside Fire Brigade
- Partnerships with Village and other Community Halls.

WDS/YEG

7 April 1998

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