

**ANGUS COUNCIL****POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Report by Chief Executive****COMMUNITY PLANNING****SUMMARY**

This report outlines the contents of the Joint Working Group Report on Community Planning.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:

- (i) notes the contents of the Joint Working Group Report on Community Planning;
- (ii) notes the oral report from the Chief Executive on the seminar for key agencies in Angus;
- (iii) remits it to the Chief Executive to liaise with key agencies to bring forward proposals for the development of a community plan for Angus by September 1999 in line with the contents of the Joint Working Group's Report.

In July 1997, the Secretary of State and COSLA agreed to set up a Joint Working Group of officials with the following remit:

- To study existing best practice in Councils' partnerships with other bodies (including the public sector, voluntary sector and the private sector) in planning, providing for and promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of the communities they serve;
- Having regard to Councils' status as the focus of democratically elected leadership for their areas, to consider how to develop their role in working together with other bodies to plan for, promote and meet the needs of their communities, including possibilities which would need legislation for their implementation; and

- As a result of this study, to propose to Scottish Office Ministers and COSLA options for how Councils' community planning role might be developed.

The report of the Community Planning Working Group was published in July 1998.

The report's most important proposal is that the key agencies involved in promoting the well-being of the communities they service should come together at Council area level, in a process animated by the local authority, to develop a vision of the key issues facing the area and how they are collectively going to address them. In doing so, the agency should develop a "Community Plan" which would set out their shared vision for meeting the needs of the area.

The report highlights the plethora of existing statutory and non-statutory planning exercises and the growing diversity and complexity of partnerships in which Councils are engaged. It suggests that although there is a lot that can be learned from existing experience and practice, "there is at present a lack of structured overview across the various agencies about how they collectively could best promote the well-being of their communities." One of the main benefits of the community planning process is that it should "enable partners to rationalise the number of separate plans and partnerships in which they are involved, and help to make the planning process more accessible to the public." Even where the community plan does not replace them, it should help to shape and integrate other multi-agency plans.

The report concentrates on outlining the form that a community plan should take, and its place in the community planning process at the Council area level. The community plan should be a document in which the Council and key agencies "set out their shared vision of the priorities facing an area, and the respective and complementary contributions each partner would make towards attaining that vision."

A fairly detailed framework is provided. For example, community plans should be between 20-30 pages long, they should cover a period of no less than 5 years and probably no more than 10 years, and partner agencies should undertake an annual review.

Whilst concentrating on the community plan document, the report recognises "the process of coming together, involving communities, agreeing and then reviewing the document as being at least as important as the document itself." It stresses that Councils should have the lead role in the community planning process but that they should facilitate rather than command it. The community plan should be endorsed and owned by the Council and other participating agencies. It stresses the need to involve and consult their local community in the development of the community plan and provides a brief checklist of some of the initiatives used by Councils to seek the views of communities.

Whilst the report concentrates on community planning at the Council area level, it envisages that a more local approach should also be pursued through local

community plans. It is at this level that the most direct and meaningful community involvement might be possible.

The framework might look something like this, with plans at more specific levels being integrated with the overall plan:

<b>Level</b>	<b>Type of Plan</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Strategic	Community plan for Council area	Agreeing shared vision
Specific	Topic plans e.g. community care	Implementing the shared vision
Local	Planning for local communities and communities of interest e.g. regeneration of particular estates	Delivering the shared vision at the local level and addressing local concerns.

The report briefly considers what powers might be needed to make community planning happen and recommends that in order to give community planning high political importance, it should become a statutory duty for local authorities to work with a range of partners to draw up at regular intervals a community plan. The Secretary of State for Scotland in the letter accompanying the document states that he hopes and expects that the Scottish Parliament will adopt the report's proposal for legislation to affirm this community planning role for Councils and their partners.

Five pilot areas – Edinburgh, Highland, Perth & Kinross, South Lanarkshire and Stirling – have agreed to pioneer the approach and produce community plans by December 1998. Other Councils are being asked to prepare community plans by the end of September 1999.

A seminar for key agencies in Angus has been arranged for the morning of Tuesday 8 September 1998, and an oral report on the outcome thereon will be made to the Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting later that day.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications at this stage.

## **CONSULTATION**

The Directors of Finance and Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

A B Watson  
August 1998

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 Report

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