DISSOLUTION OF THE ROYAL BURGH OF ARBROATH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

REPORT BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

ABSTRACT

This report seeks approval to formally dissolve the Royal Burgh of Arbroath Community Council

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Council:

(i) Approve the dissolution of the Royal Burgh of Arbroath Community Council under the terms of Section 14(b) of the Angus Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

2. CURRENT POSITION

2.1 The Royal Burgh of Arbroath Community Council has been experiencing operational difficulties since November 2012. The Council’s Community Engagement Officer had been working with the Community Council from that time until March 2013; providing training and support at their monthly meetings. However, in March and April this year a number of resignations were received which reduced the recorded membership numbers to five, well below the required minimum membership of ten. It was agreed that with membership numbers below the required minimum that no public meetings should be held over the summer. During this period of moratorium, the Community Engagement Officer continued to work with the remaining members in the development of an improvement plan to ensure the effective operation of the Community Council with improved ability to discharge its statutory duties when public meetings hopefully recommenced in September.

2.2 A meeting was arranged for September where co-options were to have taken place to bring recorded membership numbers up to the required minimum of 10 thus making the Community Council viable. Allowing community councils to co-opt to restore numbers in this way has been allowed the past to facilitate the continued sustainability of local community councils. However after some concerns were raised with the Community Liaison Officer by local members that this process of co-opting members to raise membership numbers up to the minimum was not in the best interests of the local community in Arbroath given the issues which the Community Council has faced in the past this meeting did not take place to allow other options to be explored.

2.3 Section 14(b) of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils allows the Council to dissolve any Community Council should it fail to hold a meeting for a period of 3 consecutive prescribed meeting dates; or its membership falls below the prescribed minimum for a period of 3 consecutive prescribed meeting dates, even if during this period the Community Council takes action to address the situation. After discussion with the Community Engagement Officer and the Returning Officer (Community Council Elections), local members considered that it would be more appropriate for approval to be sought from the Council to formally dissolve the Royal Burgh of Arbroath Community Council and request that an interim election be held.
3. **PROPOSALS**

3.1 Section 7(f)(iii) of the Scheme allows for an interim election to be held if membership numbers of any Community Council falls below half of the maximum permitted membership.

3.2 It is therefore proposed that the Royal Burgh of Arbroath Community Council be formally dissolved under the terms of Section 14(b) of the Angus Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils forthwith and a request is made to the Returning Officer (Community Council Elections) to make arrangements to hold an interim election. Any existing members of the Community Council who wish to continue as a Community Councillor would, of course, be eligible to stand for re-election assuming that they still meet the eligibility criteria.

4. **RISKS**

This report does not require any specific risk issues to be addressed.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional financial implications for Angus Council arising from this Report but some savings on e.g. administration grants will arise if the Community Council is not reformed.

6. **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Human Rights implications arising from this Report.

7. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The issues dealt with in this Report have been subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8. **CONSULTATION**

The Chief Executive, the Strategic Director – Communities, the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance and the Head of Legal & Democratic Services have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

9. **CONCLUSION**

This report seeks approval from members to formally dissolve the Royal Burgh of Arbroath Community Council and request the Returning Officer (Community Council Elections) to make arrangements to hold an interim election.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

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

L&DS/SCH/SDC