

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of the BI-ANNUAL MEETING of **REPRESENTATIVES of ANGUS COUNCIL with REPRESENTATIVES of COMMUNITY COUNCILS** held in the Canmore Room, Municipal Buildings, Forfar on Wednesday 10 December 2008 at 7.30 pm.

Provost Ruth Leslie Melville MBE in the Chair.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Provost Leslie Melville welcomed those present to the meeting.

She stressed the importance of these Bi-Annual meetings to Angus Council and to Community Councils and expressed the hope that this meeting would be of particular interest having regard to the presentation to be made by Susan Wilson of the Community Health Partnership.

Provost Leslie Melville then introduced Rachel Green who had recently been appointed as Senior Community Planning Officer with Angus Council.

At this stage Councillor Myles took the Chair.

2. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of the Bi-Annual meeting of 11 June 2008 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Update on Training (Article 3(a) refers)

It was reported that financial training for members of Community Councils would still be organised early in 2009 subject to demand. In addition, a survey would be undertaken at that time requesting Community Councils to identify the type of financial training which would be of most use to them, together with any other possible training needs.

(b) Update on Scottish Government Review of Community Councils and Association of Scottish Community Councils (Article 3(b) refers)

It was reported that Angus Council's response to the Scottish Government's Model Scheme of Establishment and Code of Conduct for Community Councillors had been approved by the Strategic Policy Committee on 17 June 2008.

The consultation exercise by the Scottish Government's Working Group was now completed and a Model Scheme based on the results of the consultation exercise was expected in early 2009.

(c) Review of Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils (Article 5 refers)

It was noted that following the report of the Joint Working Group on the Review of the Community Council Scheme to the last bi-annual meeting, and in anticipation of the publication of the model scheme by the Scottish Government in January 2009, it was proposed to arrange for the Joint Working Group to meet early in the New Year in order to finalise the preparation of a suggested draft revised scheme.

4. COMMUNITY MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION REDESIGN PROJECT

Councillor Myles introduced Susan Wilson, General Manager, Angus Community Health Partnership who had agreed to give a presentation to the meeting on how NHS Tayside proposed to change the way in which it delivered some services in Angus.

Ms Wilson highlighted the background to these proposed changes which highlighted a need for a shift in the balance of care, demographic changes, consideration of inequity across Angus and ensuring that services working to capacity.

She advised that a renal dialysis unit would start in Arbroath early in 2009 and palliative care centres were being introduced in Arbroath and Forfar.

Ms Wilson then indicated the emerging themes from this exercise which were:-

- Care as close to home as possible where safe to do so
- Good information about what is available in Angus
- Equity of access to services across Angus
- Increased rehabilitation in the community
- Better communication between health and social care staff
- Improvement to transport links to assist access
- Improved services for people with dementia
- More involvement of carers
- More local palliative and end of life care

Ms Wilson concluded by reminding those present that they could participate in on-going discussions through local forums and the web-page on the internet; she also stressed that she would be happy to come along to individual Community Council meetings to discuss issues specific to local areas.

Following questions Ms Wilson was thanked for her interesting and informative presentation.

5. MATTERS RAISED BY COMMUNITY COUNCILS

(a) Funding

It was reported that Community Councils currently received a grant for administrative purposes, based on population figures with an additional grant available to enable them to communicate electronically.

There was a wide variation throughout Angus on this issue with the closing balances of Community Councils ranging from over £8,000 to less than £200 at the end of 2006/2007.

Councillor Myles stressed that resourcing of Community Councils was determined by Angus Council and the Council would be prepared to consider this further, subject to available finance.

The Joint Working Group might then be in a position to move forward on this issue in a more equitable manner and in conclusion, Councillor Myles stressed than feed-back on funding would be welcomed and would be considered.

(b) Stagecoach/Strathtay Bus Service

Councillor Myles introduced Martin Hall, Operations Manager with Stagecoach/Strathtay who was prepared to answer questions on the operation of the Stagecoach/Strathtay bus service through Angus.

A number of questions were raised, including:-

- Attitude of some bus drivers, especially when connections were required to be made by passengers
- Condition of some of the buses
- Timing and reliability
- Criteria for bus timetables

In response to these questions, Mr Hall advised that he would be happy to attend individual Community Council meetings to discuss local issues relating to bus operations

He also advised that he would welcome feed-back from Community Councils, generally, on the operation of bus services and following a suggestion by Councillor Whyte, indicated that he would be happy to look at these issues through local Angus Councillors as well as Community Councillors.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Sickness Absences in Angus Council

Following recent press reports at the cost of staff sickness absences to Angus Council, Councillor Myles and the Chief Executive confirmed that they recognised the figures which in Angus, was less than most Scottish local authorities and while not being complacent, the Council was constantly attempting to improve the situation.

(b) Community Empowerment Action Plan

Following a question by Ralph Morris of Carnoustie Community Council, the Chief Executive confirmed that a report would be produced on the implications of the Community Empowerment Action Plan and any issues arising for Community Councils would be addressed.

(c) Data Protection Act

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of the Bi-Annual meeting of 11 June 2008, it was noted that the Strategic Policy Committee of Angus Council had agreed to reimburse Community Councils for the annual registration fee with the Information Commissioners Office in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Chief Executive reminded those present that guidance had been issued and was available at any time for Community Councillors but stressed that it was a matter for individual Community Councils to decide whether they wished to proceed with registration.

(d) Planning Applications

With reference to Article 6(b) of the minute of the Bi-Annual meeting of 11 June 2008, the Director of Infrastructure Services confirmed that following a review of the consultation period for planning applications, a report was being submitted to Angus Council on 18 December 2008.

He advised the meeting that following consultation, the timescale for responses by Community Councils to planning applications was proposed to remain as at present.

Councillor Myles confirmed that the matter had been thoroughly investigated but it was vital not to hold up the planning process.

7. CLOSE

Provost Ruth Leslie Melville and Councillor Myles expressed their sincere thanks to everyone for their attendance and for the valuable contributions made and expressed good wishes to all those present for the forthcoming Christmas and New Year period.

It was agreed that the date of the next Bi-Annual Meeting would be Wednesday 10 June 2009 at 7.30pm in the Canmore Room to which all Community Councils would be invited to be represented in the usual way.