

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 13 AUGUST 2019

NEW ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROUPS

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

This report requests the Committee to consider the introduction of new measures to support community groups involved in voluntary litter picks and removal of fly-tipping within Angus.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approves the introduction of a Letter of Comfort for community groups who organise voluntary litter picks and similar activities within Angus.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This report contributes to the following outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:

PEOPLE

- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 A motion was brought before Angus Council on 20 June 2019 by Councillor Braes, the motion read as follows: *To ask officers to introduce a free Community Volunteer Permit Scheme. This to aid community groups and individuals receive prompt and efficient service at Angus Council Recycling Centres following litter picks and fly-tipping removal on behalf of communities.*

3.2 Council remitted the Director of Communities to bring forward a report to the Communities Committee outlining what action could be taken to offer voluntary groups greater support when carrying out organised litter picks and similar activities within Angus.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 There are a number of very active groups within Angus who regularly organise events such as community litter picks, and associated activities including the removal of fly-tipping from affected areas. It is recognised that these groups do extremely valuable work, and consequently the Council is keen to offer them as much support as possible to enable them to continue this good work.

4.2 The groups that are routinely involved in this type of activity tend to be well established, and have developed relationships with Council Officers over many years. Communications generally work well, although it is accepted that the existing system is informal and relies on a certain level of awareness from community groups about what is expected from them in terms of disposing of any waste generated from their activities. It is also recognised that recent changes to Recycling Centres, and in particular the removal of general waste from the four smaller centres, and increased emphasis on recycling at the three others has introduced a new dynamic.

- 4.3 Given that the current informal system works relatively well, it is important that any changes are proportionate and do not place an unnecessary or unreasonable administrative burden on either the groups or the Council. It is also important given the financial climate that any new arrangements are introduced at minimal cost, with minimal ongoing revenue implications.
- 4.4 It is therefore considered that the introduction of a Letter of Comfort would offer the best solution under the circumstances. This could be a standard template which could be emailed to groups upon request, and produced by them to allow access to any of the Council's Recycling Centres. It should be noted, however, that the usual site rules would apply, and where practicable groups would be expected to attempt to sort recyclable items from non-recyclable items prior to disposal.
- 4.5 It would be proposed that the Letter of Comfort should be discretionary, and the decision whether to request one or not would be a matter for the group themselves. The Letter would be valid for a period of 6 months, but there would be no restriction on groups applying for renewal after that period. Information relating to how to make a request will be provided on the Council's website.

5. RISKS

There are no significant risks associated with this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

7. EQUALITIES

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective.

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 the above report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Stewart Ball, Director of Communities
EMAIL: BallSL@angus.gov.uk