

2c) The difference your project will make:

<p>What difference do you hope this project will make? (maximum 500 words)</p>		<p>☞ Explain who you hope will benefit and in what way eg. young people, older people, disadvantaged groups</p>
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2d) Who will benefit from your project?

<p>How many people will benefit from this grant?</p>		<p>☞ An estimate is fine if you cannot give an exact number</p>
<p>Where do most of these people live?</p>		<p>☞ Please tell us the ward name or local area where most of the people live</p>

2e) If your project relates to building or landscaping work:

Who owns the land or the building that you plan to work on?			If you need planning permission for your project, make sure that you have it before you apply to us. If you don't have planning permission it is unlikely that we'll give you a grant. You will also need to send us copies of any plans, maps etc.
If yes, do you have any of the following (please tick):	Lease Agreement (please also tell us how long the lease is for)		
	Planning Permission (please include copy of the approval letter)		
	Written permission from the owner		

2f) Start and end dates:

Proposed start date:		We would expect your project / activity to be completed within 12 months from receipt of your grant award. Your start date should be at least 2 months after you send the application. We cannot award grants for activities that have already taken place
Proposed end date:		

Part Three – Financial Information

3a) Total cost

Please give the total estimated cost of the project:	£
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3b) Grant request

Please state the level of grant you are requesting:	£
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3c) Breakdown of costs for your project:

Item or activity	Cost	Amount requested from Falkirk Council Community Grant Scheme	Remember to include VAT where it applies. Please list all the items or activity associated with your project. You should list all costs even if you are not asking us to fund all the items. Please use additional sheet if necessary.
Total			

3d) Other funding

If applicable, please tell us if you are applying to any other organisation for this project, and what stage your application has reached. Also, tell us about what income you think your project will make and any funding contribution your group is making.

Source (eg. name of funder, ticket sales, raffles)	Amount	Progress	If the total project cost is more than the amount you are asking for, please tell us where the rest of the money will come from eg. other funders, ticket income, raffles, own fundraising, group funds etc.

<p>If your current cash reserves exceed the amount of grant you are asking for, please tell us why you are not using your own funds:</p>		<p>☞ Please clearly explain what reserves have been set aside for, particularly if they are in excess of one year's running costs.</p>
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<p>Please tell us about any non-financial contributions your group is making to the project/activity:</p>		<p>☞ This can be an 'in kind' such as volunteers' time or the use of a building</p>
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3e) Publicity

<p>If appropriate, please tell us how and where you plan to publicise and advertise to make sure as many people as possible know about this project and its aims.</p>		<p>☞ You must acknowledge the grant by including our logo on materials associated with the project.</p>
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3f) Other information

<p>Please use this space to provide any other information which will support your application. You may want to include a draft programme:</p>	
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<p>Please give comments on this application form and guidance:</p>	
<p>Did you find out about our grants through any of the following – please tick all that are relevant</p>	<p>Falkirk CVS <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Colleagues in CLD (Youthwork, Adult Learning, Community Work) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Our Website <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other (please describe)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Part Four – Declaration

Declaration and Terms and Conditions

Before you submit your application you must read and agree the following Terms and Conditions of Award. Two signatories for the group should then sign the declaration, which confirms that the organisation understands and agrees to the Terms and Conditions.

Within the Terms and Conditions ‘we’ and ‘our’ refers to the applicant organisation. ‘Falkirk Council’ refers to the service providing the resources for which you are applying.

1. The Award

We will use the Award as described in our application form. Any changes must be agreed in writing and in advance by Falkirk Council.

We understand that any resource awarded must be used within the agreed period, which will normally be one year from the date of the Award letter or as otherwise stated within the Award letter.

We will tell Falkirk Council immediately in writing of anything that significantly delays, threatens or makes it unlikely that the Award will either not be used within the agreed period or not be used for the purpose described in the application.

We understand that we may be asked to produce regular progress reports on the use of the Award. We also understand that a final report must be completed and submitted to Falkirk Council within 3 months of all Award expenditure being incurred.

We understand that Falkirk Council will not increase the Award if we overspend, and that any unspent Award at the end of the agreed period should be returned to Falkirk Council.

We are aware that any equipment which has been awarded to us is under the charge of our organisation and must be regularly maintained and insured to its full replacement value and kept in a secure premise.

We understand that the amount and schedule of payments will be indicated in the formal offer of grant, and that no expenditure should be incurred until the offer of grant has been received, signed and returned to Falkirk Council.

We agree that in any publicity or public presentation about the funding it is essential to include an indication that the project was supported by Falkirk Council.

We understand that there is a possibility that Falkirk Council's internal or external auditors may wish to audit funded projects. We agree that any Officer may be required to make themselves and any relevant documentation available for any visit by Auditors at reasonable notice.

2. The Organisation

We will advise Falkirk Council in writing of any change to our constitution and provide a copy of the revised document.

We will advise Falkirk Council in writing of any changes to our bank or building society bank account.

We will keep all financial records and accounts, including receipts for items bought with the grant for two years from the completion of the project for which funding has been awarded. We understand that this does not release us from our legal responsibility to keep records for longer periods.

We will make all financial records available for inspection by Falkirk Council if requested.

We agree to meet all legislation regulating the way that we operate, the work that we carry out, the staff that we employ and the goods that we buy, particularly, but not exclusively covering the areas of Equal Opportunities, Data Protection, Disclosure Scotland, Employment and Health & Safety.

If appropriate to the Award, we agree to comply with Falkirk Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and any other guidance as advised by Council Officers. A copy of all such guidance will be supplied by Falkirk Council.

We understand that Falkirk Council will make public information about our Award.

We understand that we have a duty of care to our members and the public and will ensure that adequate Public Liability Insurance is in place to provide indemnity to our organisation and its members. We will provide these documents to Falkirk Council on request.

If appropriate, we will ensure that adequate Employers Liability and Property Insurance is in place. We will produce these documents for Falkirk Council on request.

We understand that Falkirk Council will not accept liability or be liable for any damages or injuries associated with projects for which the Council has provided equipment or granted an Award.

3. Leases of Property

We understand that in order to be eligible to receive an assisted let, we must be an organisation delivering services benefiting a local community, or communities, within Falkirk Council administrative area.

We understand that entry will not be granted to any property until a formal lease with Falkirk Council is concluded to the satisfaction of the Director of Development Services and the Chief Governance Officer, or their delegated Officers.

We understand that the Lease Agreement will be between our group and Falkirk Council and will be used as described in the application. We will not hand the property to any other organisation.

We will ensure that the terms and conditions of the lease will be fully complied particularly with regard to the payment of rent, use, repairs and maintenance, insurance and sub-letting.

We understand that if any of the terms of the Lease are breached, Falkirk Council shall commence proceedings to terminate the Lease and that the full rental value of the property shall become payable from the date of entry up to the Lease Termination date.

4. Falkirk Council may withhold an Award or ask for repayment, in whole or in part for the following reasons:

If we fail to keep to these conditions in any way.

If members of our governing body, volunteers or staff act or supply information at any time during the application process or project which is dishonest, significantly incorrect or misleading.

If for any reason the organisation ceases to exist, any unused Award will be returned to Falkirk Council. We will return any equipment or other assets bought with the Award to Falkirk Council or, with prior agreement of the Council, transfer the equipment or assets to another organisation with similar aims and objectives.

If we sell any asset purchased with an Award, we will notify Falkirk Council in writing and return an agreed proportion of the sale proceeds agreed with Falkirk Council.


If any equipment or asset is stolen, lost or damaged we will replace it or return monies obtained for insurance to Falkirk Council.

Declaration by Main Contact


I confirm that the information I have given on this application form is accurate and complete. I acknowledge that if I give misleading or inaccurate statements on behalf of the group or organisation we may not receive any grant or it may be withdrawn and have to be refunded to Falkirk Council.

I confirm that I have read the Guidance Notes and that I understand and accept the Terms and Conditions of the Award.

PLEASE PRINT:

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss):				 This must be completed by the <u>same</u> person as named in Question 1
First name:				
Surname:				
Signature:		Date:		
Position within the organisation:				

Authorisation by Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss):				 This must be a <u>different</u> person to the one named in Question 1
First name:				
Surname:				
Signature:		Date:		
Home address:				
Phone number (daytime):				
Email address:				
Position within the organisation:				

Data Protection Act 1998

Please note that any information supplied on this form may be held, and processed for information purposes. The Council is a registered Data User with the Office of the Data Protection Register.

Checklist

Before sending us your application, please check that you have done the following:



Answered all the questions on the application form	
The main contact from Question 1 has signed the Declaration	
The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer (where they are not the main contact) has authorised the application	
Copied this application to keep for reference	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the constitution or set of rules that your group has adopted. Your group must have this document to receive a grant from us. • A dated copy of your most recent yearly accounts verified by an independent person. New groups should provide a projected statement of income and spending for the next 12 months. This means an estimate of where you will get money from to run your group, from things like membership fees, fundraising and grants. Tell us how much money you expect to raise, as well as your expected costs for the next year. This could include things like the cost of hiring your building and buying equipment, or travel costs. • A copy of your group's most recent bank account statement. Please provide copies for all accounts you hold. This account must be in the name of your group, and at least two unrelated people must sign each cheque or withdrawal. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the pages in your passbooks showing your group's name, account number and current balance, stamped and signed by your building society. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are a new group which has only just set up a bank account, a signed letter from your bank or building society on their headed paper. This letter must show your account name, number and sort code. <p>Depending on your project / activity you may also need to send the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of any plans, maps or drawing etc related to your application for work on a building or land • Copy of planning permission if appropriate 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two quotes for any work to be carried out or items to be purchased over the value of £500 • A copy of your Child Protection Policy/Vulnerable Adults Policy where appropriate • A copy of contents/ employer's liability/public liability insurance policy where appropriate • Confirmation that other statutory/licensing consents have been received (where appropriate) 	
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PLEASE NOTE THAT APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED UNTIL ALL OF THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS ARE RECEIVED BY THE EXTERNAL FUNDING UNIT



Falkirk Council

COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

Introduction

Falkirk Council's Community Grant Scheme aims to support community groups and voluntary organisations to deliver projects that make a positive difference to communities across the Falkirk Council area.

We would like to support projects that can contribute to one or more of the goals of Falkirk Council as set out within our Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017. These are:

- Further developing a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy
- Continuing to improve health, safety and well being of our citizens and communities
- Increasing our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination; and
- Enhancing and sustaining an environment in which people want to live, work and visit.

The Community Grant Scheme can offer support up to a maximum of £5,000 towards community-based projects that can usually be completed within a 12-month period.

If you would like to discuss your project before you apply, please contact:

Falkirk Council's Corporate Policy Unit (Funding)

01324 506065

e-mail: funding@falkirk.gov.uk

Further details about Falkirk Council's Community Grant Scheme and how we assess your application can be found in the Guidance Notes which also have useful information and contacts to help you apply.

FALKIRK COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME

GUIDANCE NOTES

What is Falkirk Council's Community Grant Scheme?

Falkirk Council can provide support to constituted, not-for-profit groups and organisations to deliver projects that will make a positive difference to our local communities. We aim to support projects that can meet one or more of the following priorities as set out within our Corporate Plan 2012 - 2017:

- **Further develop a thriving, sustainable and vibrant economy**
In relation to the Community Grant Scheme, we want to encourage people to work together for the interests of their community. This could be people who live in your local area, as well as people who share a common interest or need.
- **Continuing to improve health, safety and well-being of our citizens and communities**
We want to support local projects that improve people's opportunities, general well-being and welfare especially those who are most disadvantaged in the community. We would also like to encourage projects that enable more people to take part in activities that improve general health and well being.
- **Increase our efforts to tackle disadvantage and discrimination**
We want to encourage projects that promote equality of opportunity for all and enable people to have better chances in life. For example, people with disabilities, at risk of poverty and people at risk of/or experiencing social exclusion.
- **Enhancing and sustaining an environment in which people want to live, work and visit**
We want to encourage projects which enhance local amenity spaces and their biodiversity and initiatives which raise awareness of sustainability issues generally. (Please note projects that fit into this theme should in the first instance contact Falkirk Environment Trust on 01324 504816).

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR FUNDING?

Q. Can your group demonstrate the project/planned activity will make a positive difference to communities (geographically or by interest group) within the Falkirk Council area and contribute to one or more goals of the Corporate Plan?

Q. Is your group constituted and not for profit?

We also expect organisations with a membership to be open to all and allow anyone to join in, unless there is a good reason why this is not appropriate.

Q. Does your group hold a UK-based bank or building society account that requires at least two people who are unrelated and do not live at the same address to sign cheques or make a withdrawal?

Q. Can you explain the need for your project?

Q. Can you send an application at least 8 weeks before your project start date and complete your project/activity within one year from when you receive the grant?

If you have answered **“Yes”** to all these questions, then you are eligible to apply to the Community Grant Scheme.

If you have answered **“No”** to any of the above or would like a further discussion about your project idea, please contact Falkirk Council’s External Funding Unit on 01324 506065/506260 or email funding@falkirk.gov.uk

WHO CANNOT APPLY?

- Companies that aim to make a profit (eg private sector organisations)
- Parent Council Groups
- Individuals

WHAT CAN WE FUND?

CFEE Falkirk Council Community Grant Scheme: Guidance Notes

Your project could combine a range of different activities as long as you can demonstrate the positive difference it will make. **Please note these are only examples and not an exhaustive list as every project will be different.**

- buying new equipment & materials
- hiring equipment
- providing training courses
- start-up costs – we would expect you to provide a plan of your proposed activities in the first year to justify the level of start-up costs you are requesting
- administration/running costs – we expect you to demonstrate that any contribution towards these costs will help you to deliver the day-to-day work of your group
- fees for sessional work – we would expect this to be someone who is engaged by your group to undertake a specific piece of work related to your project. This could be, for example, someone whose expertise is required to deliver a training course.
- support for running a conference or seminar – we would expect you to clearly demonstrate the local benefits and how this will make a positive difference in the community
- small-scale refurbishments/improvements to buildings that will be of benefit to the wider community
- marketing/publicity materials – we would expect you to have a clear rationale in relation to the requirement for printed materials
- support towards cost of venue hire
- outings, activities and projects that can clearly demonstrate a positive difference to those participating

WHAT WE WILL NOT FUND

- items that only benefit an individual – for example, scholarships and personal clothing for individuals, equipment that is not shared
- lap-top computers
- payments to individuals, including support for fundraising events
- any goods or services that you buy or order before we confirm our grant

- activities promoting religious or political beliefs
- projects where the beneficiaries are resident outwith the Falkirk Council area
- routine repair and maintenance costs
- endowments, loan payments, bank charges
- the cost of buying a second-hand vehicle
- alcohol
- travel costs for exchange visits abroad
- honoraria or payments to group members for services
- activities or projects funded through Joint Working Agreements with Falkirk Council
- activities or projects from which Falkirk Council funding has recently been withdrawn or to replace a shortfall in a Council service budget or to meet increases in charges for Council facilities
- VAT that you can recover – you may need to pay VAT on purchases you make as part of your project. You must only include VAT in the amount you request from us if you cannot claim it back from HM Revenue and Customs. If you later find that you can recover VAT that we have included in our grant you must repay this amount to us.

Please note the above list is not exhaustive, therefore if you have **any** questions about the eligibility of your project or activities within it, please contact the External Funding Unit prior to submitting your application

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

We want to ensure that the Falkirk Council Community Grant Scheme can support as many locally based projects as possible, therefore we will not award more than a total of £5,000 (in one or more grants) to an organisation in any 12-month period. This will apply from the date we confirm our grant offer. Once you have spent your grant and we have received your end of grant report you are welcome to apply again. Each application will be considered on its merits so there is no guarantee that we will make another grant to the same organisation

The total cost of the project can be more than £5,000 but you will only receive a maximum of £5,000 towards it and the activity should normally be completed within a 12-month period.

In exceptional circumstances we may consider offering a higher level of grant up to a maximum of £10,000. If you consider your project to be “exceptional” please contact the External Funding Unit for a further discussion prior to submitting your application.

Whilst we can support up to 100% of your eligible project costs, we would expect you to try and provide some contribution towards your project. This can come from a range of sources for example; your own funds, donations, fundraising activities you undertake such as raffles, charitable trusts, lottery funds and government funding schemes.

When considering your application we will also take into account the overall financial position of your group. It is considered good practice for groups to retain a certain level of reserves. However you should clearly explain within the application form what you are planning to do with this money particularly if the funds are in excess of one year’s running costs. If you have not set aside this money for anything in particular, it is unlikely we will award all or any of the grant you have asked for. We are also unlikely to fund a project that brings in as much or more income than the cost of the project.

HOW DO WE ASSESS YOUR APPLICATION?

Completed application forms should be returned to Falkirk Council's External Funding Unit. We will check your application form and additional documents to ensure all the requested information is provided. If your application is not complete, we will contact you to get the missing information, and we may have to send the form back to you. An incomplete form is the most common cause of delay, so please use the checklist at the end of this guidance to make sure that you have sent all the required documents.

Once we are satisfied your application is complete, we will send you a letter of acknowledgement within five working days, which will provide you with a unique reference number for your project. You should use this reference number in any correspondence relating to your grant application.

The application will then be assessed by a panel which comprises representatives from Council Services who will consider:

- **the need for your project/activity**
- **what difference your project/activity will make and who will benefit**
- **whether you meet one or more of our priorities**
- **if you have already received a grant**
- **your organisation's overall financial situation**
- **the total project cost**
- **value for money**

You should expect to hear a decision within 8 weeks from the time we receive a completed application; therefore it is essential you consider this timescale when submitting your request.

At present there are no deadlines for applications.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE WE MAKE A DECISION?

If your application is successful, we will send you a grant award letter confirming:

- **the level of grant award**
- **the project/activity our grant is supporting**
- **any specific conditions of grant**

You should spend the grant within one year from the date on our award letter, and complete an end of grant report. We will ask for copies of receipts and invoices to verify expenditure as well as evidence of attendance figures at events and evidence of publicity.

If during the lifetime of your grant there are any changes to the planned project/activity we would expect you to inform us of these to ensure the original grant conditions are still being met.

If your application is not successful, we will write to you highlighting the main reasons why your application could not be supported.

All decisions made by Falkirk Council are final.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

You can get an application form

- By calling Falkirk Council's External Funding Unit 01324 506065/506260
- By e-mailing: funding@falkirk.gov.uk
- Via the website at www.falkirk.gov.uk

Completing the Application Form

Please ensure you read these Guidance Notes before completing the application form.

Apart from the person filling in the form (the “main contact”), you will need to get one other person to authorise it. This should normally be the Chairperson, Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer of your group. The main contact and authorising contact should not be the same person. By doing so, you are agreeing to our conditions as set out in the terms and conditions, which forms part of the application form, should your project be approved.

Please make sure you complete the application form as fully as possible. If we need additional information from you this may result in a delay to the processing of your application.

Send the form, enclosing your supporting documents to:

External Funding Unit
Corporate and Neighbourhood Services
Falkirk Council
Municipal Buildings
Falkirk
FK1 5RS

Or you can complete your application and e-mail it with any attachments to funding@falkirk.gov.uk. Please note we will also require a signed copy of your form.

We need at least 8 weeks to process your application so please ensure you send a completed form in plenty of time.

Checklist

CFEE Falkirk Council Community Grant Scheme: Guidance Notes

Before sending us your application, please check that you have done the following:



Answered all the questions on the application form	
The main contact from Question 1 has signed the Declaration	
The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer (where they are not the main contact) has authorised the application	
Copied the application to keep for reference	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a copy of the constitution or set of rules that your group has adopted. Your group must have this document to receive a grant from us. • Send a copy of your most recent yearly accounts verified by an independent person. New groups should provide a projected statement of income and spending for the next 12 months. This means an estimate of where you will get money from to run your group, from things like membership fees, fundraising and grants. Tell us how much money you expect to raise, as well as your expected costs for the next year. This could include things like the cost of hiring your building and buying equipment, or travel costs. • A copy of your group's most recent bank account statement. Please provide copies for all accounts you hold. This account must be in the name of your group, and at least two unrelated people must sign each cheque or withdrawal. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the pages in your passbooks showing your group's name, account number and current balance, stamped and signed by your building society. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are a new group which has only just set up a bank account, a signed letter from your bank or building society on their headed paper. This letter must show your account name, number and sort code. <p>Depending on your project / activity you may also need to send the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of any plans, maps or drawing etc related to your application for work on a building or land • Copy of planning permission if appropriate • Two quotes for any work to be carried out or items to be purchased over the value of £500 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of your Child Protection Policy/Vulnerable Adults Policy where appropriate • A copy of contents/employers liability/public liability insurance policy where appropriate • Confirmation that other statutory / licensing consents have been received (where appropriate) 	
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PLEASE NOTE THAT APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE PROCESSED UNTIL ALL OF THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS ARE RECEIVED BY THE EXTERNAL FUNDING UNIT

PLEASE READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY

You must read, understand and accept this section before you apply to us.

All our decisions on applications are final.

- Once we have paid a grant, we are not committed to give you any more funding for the same project.
- The application form does not necessarily give all the information we need to make a decision on your application. We can ask you for extra information.
- Do not try to influence the success of your application by approaching any of our staff or elected members after you have submitted your application.
- We may use the name of your group and the project in our own publicity material and may ask your group to participate in a photo call.
- By authorising the form, you agree that all the information is true and that the enclosed documents are current, accurate and approved or adopted by your group.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. PROJECTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

It is your responsibility to have acceptable safeguarding protection policies and procedures in place for children, young people and vulnerable adults. Children 1st have useful information on their website in relation to developing a suitable policy, as have the NSPCC. CVS Falkirk and District can also assist with queries in relation to the development of a suitable child protection policy.

In relation to vulnerable adults, you can also download the 'Forth Valley Inter-agency guidelines' (PDF, 139KB), which provides information in relation to adult protection within the Forth Valley area. Please contact Falkirk Council Social Services on 01324 506070 if you are concerned about an adult at risk of harm.

2. DISCLOSURES

It is your responsibility to ensure that anyone working with children, young people or vulnerable adults is a member of the scheme set up under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 which came into force on 28 February 2011. Voluntary groups are required to ensure that PVG scheme membership is in place when staff and volunteers are dealing with children or vulnerable people. PVG checks for volunteers in Scotland are free.

For further information on PVG and what the current requirements are for your group, please contact:

Central Registered Body In Scotland
Jubilee House
Forthside Way
Stirling
FK8 1QZ

Tel: 01786 849777
Fax: 01786 849767

Email: info@crbs.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Falkirk
Unit 6
Callendar Business Park
Falkirk
FK1 1XR

Tel: 01324 692000
Fax: 01324 692001

Email: info@volunteerfalkirk.org.uk

3. EVENTS

Falkirk Council will consider funding for public community events. This can take the form of support in-kind, advice on event planning, management or organisation or grant support. If you are considering organising an event, you should contact the External Funding Unit in the first instance **BEFORE** submitting a grant application to discuss your support requirements.

You can also contact the Events and Promotions Officer, Falkirk Community Trust, on tel: 01324 50006939 Fax: 01324 506181

USEFUL CONTACTS

Falkirk Council Community Learning & Development Team

The Community Learning and Development Team can provide capacity building support in terms of the development of new groups, training to Committee members, information on community events, and support in the development of constitutions.

Sealock House
2 Inchyra Road
Grangemouth
FK3 9XB
Tel: 01324 506604

Falkirk Council One Stop Shops

Falkirk Council has developed a network of One Stop Shops to provide local information and advice on all our services. One Stop Shops are open from 9.00am – 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Please visit the website at: www.falkirk.gov.uk

CVS Falkirk and District and Volunteer Centre Falkirk

CVS Falkirk and District and Volunteer Centre Falkirk is the third sector interface for the Falkirk Council area and is an independent, local charity providing information, training and support to those working and volunteering in the community and voluntary sector in the Falkirk Council area. The third sector interface is your local first point of contact for any support or issues affecting your group or organisation.

Unit 6, The Courtyard, Callendar Business Park,

Callendar Road,
Falkirk,
FK1 1XR
Tel: 01324 692000
Fax: 01324 692001
email: info@cvsfalkirk.org.uk
website: www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk

Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national body representing the voluntary sector. There are 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland involving around 130,000 paid staff and approximately 1.3 million volunteers. The sector manages an income of £4.1 billion. They provide a range of services to voluntary sector

organisations in relation to policy development, funding advice, legislative change affecting the voluntary sector.

Mansfield Traquair Centre,
15 Mansfield Place,
Edinburgh,
EH3 6BB
Tel: 0131 556 3882
email: enquiries@scvo.org.uk
website: www.scvo.org.uk

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is the independent regulator and registrar for Scottish charities. They regulate over 23,500 Scottish charities including community groups, religious charities, schools, universities, grant giving charities and major care providers.

They are a Non-Ministerial Department and form part of the Scottish Administration.

2nd Floor, Quadrant House,
9 Riverside Drive,
Dundee,
DD1 4NY
Tel: 01382 220446
email: info@oscr.org.uk
website: www.oscr.org.uk

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Falkirk Council is committed to providing you with high quality services which are: -

- Accessible
- Accountable
- Responsive
- And provide
- Value for Money

AS A COUNCIL WE WILL:

- answer your calls and respond to your requests and queries promptly and in a friendly and professional way
- provide you with a corporate complaints procedure which is accessible and easy for you to use
- provide you with relevant, accurate and up to date information relating to all our services through our website and our publications
- provide you with feedback mechanisms in all of our services and demonstrate how we have used your feedback to improve service delivery
- involve and consult with you, and demonstrate how we have incorporate your views into Council planning and decision-making processes
- set customer service improvement targets for all our Services, and publish annually for you, our performance in relation to these.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU:

Falkirk Council has respect for all its customers and in return we expect you to:

- treat us politely and with respect
- be patient, we will do all we can to keep waiting times to a minimum
- not use aggressive behaviour or inappropriate language, as this will not be tolerated
- provide us with the information we need to help you
- be on time for an appointment and let us know if you need to cancel
- let us know if you need an interpreter or information in other formats

IMPROVING OUR SERVICE TO YOU:

At Falkirk Council we aim to provide high quality services to everyone in our community, but sometimes we might not reach the high standards you expect. We take complaints seriously, and by telling us when things go wrong you will be helping us to improve our services.

Falkirk Council values your opinion: help us to help you by using the complaints procedure. We want you to be happy with our services and your comments and opinions play an important part in how we improve our services to you.

CFEE Falkirk Council Community Grant Scheme: Guidance Notes

MAKING A FORMAL COMPLAINT

You can make a formal complaint:

- online using the **online complaints form** at www.falkirk.gov.uk
- by emailing **contactcentre@falkirk.gov.uk**
- in person at your local **One Stop Shop**
- by phoning **01324 506070**
- by faxing **01324 590201**
- in writing to the **relevant Council Service**



Falkirk Council

COMMUNITY COUNCIL APPLICATION FOR ADMINISTRATION GRANT

Name of Community Council:.....

1. Contact Details

Name:..... Position:

Address for correspondence:

.....

..... Post code:

Tel. no. (daytime) Email:

2. Office bearers:

Convenor:Depute Convenor

Secretary:.....Treasurer

3. Bank account details:

Bank name and address:

.....

Name of account:.....

Account number:..... Sort Code:

Please list everyone who can authorise transactions from your bank account(s):

.....

.....

.....

4. Have you submitted audited accounts for previous financial year? Yes / No
5. Have there been any changes to your constitution since you last applied? Yes / No
If “Yes”, please include a copy of the amended constitution with this application.
6. Have you submitted a copy of your most recent bank statement or other documentation confirming your bank account details? Yes / No
7. Have you held an Annual General Meeting in the past twelve months? Yes / No
9. How many other meetings have you held within the last year?
10. What arrangements do you have to engage with your local community, e.g. through newsletters, meetings, etc?
.....
.....
.....

Declaration

We confirm that the information we have given on this application form is accurate and complete. We acknowledge that if we give misleading or inaccurate statements on behalf of the community council, we may not receive any grant or it may be withdrawn and have to be refunded to Falkirk Council. We confirm that we understand and accept the Terms and Conditions of the Grant.

Signatory 1

First Name.....**Surname**.....

Position

Signature.....**Date**.....

Signatory 2

First Name.....**Surname**.....

Position

Signature.....**Date**.....

If you have any queries about completing the form, please contact Falkirk Council’s External Funding Unit on 01324 506065 or email funding@falkirk.gov.uk. Please return the completed form to: External Funding Unit, Corporate & Neighbourhood Services, Falkirk Council, Municipal Buildings, West Bridge Street, Falkirk FK1 5RS

Data Protection Act 1998

Please note that any personal information supplied on this form may be used in a number of ways, for example, to make funding decisions, to contact you and for statistical analysis. The Council is registered as a data controller on the Data Protection Public Register held by the Information Commissioner’s Office.

Terms and Conditions

Within the Terms and Conditions 'we' and 'our' refers to the applicant organisation.

1. The Grant

We will use the Grant to assist with the cost of administration and other basic functions.

2. The Organisation

We will advise Falkirk Council in writing of any change to our constitution and provide a copy of the revised document.

We will advise Falkirk Council in writing of any changes to our bank or building society bank account. Cheques and withdrawals will be signed by two unrelated people who do not reside at the same address.

We will provide properly audited accounts in support of our application(s) which will show all income received from Falkirk Council.

We will keep all financial records and accounts, including receipts for items bought with the Grant for two years from the date on which the grant was awarded. We understand that this does not release us from our legal responsibility to keep records for longer periods.

We will make all financial records available for inspection by Falkirk Council if requested.

We understand that a core part of our purpose is to represent the views of our local community. We will make sure that we communicate with our community and we will provide information to the Council about how we have done this

We agree to meet all legislation regulating the way that we operate, the work that we carry out, the staff that we employ and the goods that we buy, particularly, but not exclusively covering the areas of Equal Opportunities, Data Protection, Disclosure Scotland, Employment and Health & Safety.

We understand that Falkirk Council will make public information about our Grant.

We understand that we have a duty of care to our members and the public and will ensure that adequate Public Liability Insurance is in place to provide indemnity to our organisation and its members. We will provide these documents to Falkirk Council on request.

If appropriate, we will ensure that adequate Employers Liability and Property Insurance are in place. We will produce these documents for Falkirk Council on request.

We understand that Falkirk Council may withhold a Grant or ask for repayment, in whole or in part for the following reasons:

- If we fail to keep to these conditions in any way.
- If we supply information at any time during the application process which is dishonest, significantly incorrect or misleading.
- If for any reason our community council ceases to exist, any unused grant will be returned to Falkirk Council.

Other Councils' arrangements – summary as at 5 December 2012

Council Area	Grant Available	Additional Information
Aberdeen City Council	£500 plus 11p per capita	
Angus	Admin grant £375-770, plus £100 photocopying grant plus £240 electronic communication grant	A grant aid may also be accessed for one off projects and £26000 has been budgeted to allow CCs to purchase computer equipment
Argyll and Bute	£300 (up to 500) £400 (501 - 2000) £500 (2001 - 5000) £700 (5001 +)	A discretionary grant based on electorate figures is also available. This is payable at a rate of 10p per elector and is aimed at addressing the shortfall of funds particularly for our larger CCs. Other forms of support are available the Council meets the costs of Public Liability Insurance for all of its CCs and offers a printing/photocopying service both at the Council HQ and in each of our Area Offices.
Clackmannanshire Council	population under 3000 = £400. population over 3000 = £600	
East Lothian Council	£350 plus per capita sum	Community Council also entitled to funding from Local Priorities fund for local initiatives based on per capita
East Renfrewshire Council	£200 plus 3p per head of population	
Eilean Siar	£500 Administrative Grant (this is generally used to pay for a Clerk); and £500 Social Grant (this is generally used to assist with the cost of a community Christmas meal for the elderly).	'Challenge Fund Grant' has been open to all community councils and pays up to a maximum of £2,000.

Falkirk Council	£250 core funding and per capita funding (ranging from £18 to £810)	CCs may access community funding for one off projects
Fife Council	£400 plus 12p per head of population	
Glasgow	£500 plus £0.01 per head of population.	Community Councils may also apply to a discretionary grant scheme for extra administration costs like newsletters. The maximum grant is £400 and around 10 to 15% of community Councils receive the grant per year.
Moray Council	£500 plus 0.075p per capita	
North Ayrshire Council	£45 per 1000 population (minimum £101). No other grants available.	
North Lanarkshire Council	£450 + £9 per hundred of electorate (rounded up to the nearest 100).	Community Councils may apply to the local authorities community grant scheme but grants are capped at £2,500.
Orkney Islands Council	Orkney Islands Council provides each Community Council with an annual grant, in the region of £3,500 per annum, to be spent at their sole discretion.	In addition, financial assistance is provided through the Community Council Grant Scheme, Seedcorn funding and Community Development Funding (CDF). This allows them to be an active co-ordinator and benefactor to their local community. The majority of Community Councils arrange the caretaking of burial grounds in each area with the costs being met by Orkney Islands Council
Perth and Kinross	Administrative grant of £515.94 to each community council with a supplementary grant of £142.17 to those community councils who have an electorate in excess of 2,000. An increase based on the rate of inflation is applied each year.	We also pay for insurance cover and data protection licences for all community councils. Community councils also have the opportunity to apply for grants for special projects etc.

Renfrewshire Council	£500 plus 3p per head of population. Limited to list of approved areas of spend	Funding also available for community projects
Stirling Council	Between £344.90 and £524.42	
South Ayrshire Council	Up to 2000 population £550. Between 2001 and 3500 £600. Greater than 3501 £750.	Community Councils may apply to the local authority community grant scheme.
South Lanarkshire Council	£424 + £22 per member of community council.	Community Councils may apply to the local authority's community grant scheme but grants are capped at £1,000.
West Lothian Council	An annual administration grant is paid to community councils. The grant level is currently £7.50 per 100 of the population, or £250, whichever is the greater.	CCs may access a special project grant budget of £3000 per year which community councils can apply for funding to do things like newsletters, environmental improvements, etc. Community councils can apply for a maximum of £750 from this fund per year and applications are dealt with on a strict first come first served basis given the limited sums available.

ITEM 5

Local Government and
Communities Directorate
Community Empowerment Unit

T: 0131-244 2794
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Community Council
Liaison Officers

Our ref: Community Councils
3 December 2012

Dear Colleague

Community Council working group report and recommendations

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to contribute to a wider discussion on the Community Council short-life working group's final report and recommendations.

The Scottish Government and COSLA welcomed the Group's work and its report. The Group recognised that its membership represented a very small cross section of those with involvement with Community Councils and recommended that its report and recommendations provide an informed basis for wider engagement and discussion. The purpose of the attached discussion paper, structured around the report and its recommendations, is to explore broader views on:

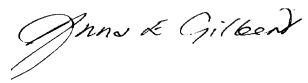
- The generally agreed principles
- The 15 specific recommendations; and
- Areas where no consensus was reached

So that we may capture a range of stakeholder views we are offering the opportunity to submit written responses up until Friday 18 January 2013.

This wider engagement, together with consideration of responses on the role of Community Councils included in the recent consultation on ideas for the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, will inform which recommendations the Scottish Government and COSLA will jointly progress as part of the future policy development of Community Councils.

I look forward to hearing from you and should you wish to discuss, please feel free to contact me.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anna Gilbert".

Anna Gilbert
Senior Policy Officer

Discussion Paper on the Community Council short-life working group's report and recommendations

The Community Council short-life working group's report and recommendations provide an informed basis for wider discussion with those involved with the Community Council sector.

The purpose and aim of this discussion paper and wider engagement is to explore broader views on:

- The generally agreed principals of the Group
- The 15 specific recommendations
- The 4 specific areas where no consensus was reached

This, together with the responses on the role of Community Councils, discussed in the recent consultation on ideas for the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, will inform the future police development of Community Councils.

The Scottish Government and COSLA will work together to fully consider and ultimately decide which recommendations will be progressed.

Generally agreed principles

A summary of the Group's generally agreed principles are detailed below (excluding those included in the specific recommendations).

- Do you **agree** with all or any of these principles? – *Please indicate which*
- Which, if any, do you feel is/are most important? – *Please list all that apply*
- Do you **disagree** with all or any of these principles? – *Please indicate which*
- If so, why?

1. That the programme of work already undertaken including the Model Scheme; Code of Conduct; and Good Practice Guidance provide a robust foundation on which to build and develop.

2. That the diversity of Scotland's Community Councils, currently undertaking a variety of roles within communities and with different needs; priorities; and expectations must be recognised when developing policy.

3. That the unique role of a Community Council is that of a statutory community representative group and that this important key role should remain paramount and be utilised as matter of course by the wider public sector.

4. That fundamental to the relevance of Community Councils is that their place as the only statutory community representative is respected and validation given to the work that they undertake.

5. That under current legislation Community Councils are able to undertake wider roles within the community and it does not preclude many innovative, forward thinking Community Councils from expanding their horizons to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities.

6. That support structures to enable this to happen as a matter of course, however, appear to be inconsistent over Scotland.

7. That to impose legislative duties on Community Councils, which comprise of volunteers, may be counterproductive in that it may discourage wider involvement or force those already involved to leave as the role may become burdensome.

8. That any proposals which may require legislative change should be to remove barriers and challenges which may stifle involvement in or with Community Councils.

15 Specific Recommendations

- Which, if any, of the recommendations do you consider important in the development of policy to support Community Councils? - *Please list all that apply.*
- From the recommendations you have selected, what practicalities, challenges, or resource implications do you feel may be faced by:
 - Community Councils;
 - local authorities;
 - planning authorities;
 - Community Planning Partnerships?
- Following consideration of the above, are there any specific recommendations where you feel the resultant community benefits would outweigh these implications. Why do you think this is?

Recommendations

- 1. That local authorities validate the work of Community Councils by working in partnership with them to seek the views of communities; giving them greater influence on decisions on public services which are demonstrated to be representative of the community view; and giving more weight to their representations in spatial planning.***
- 2. That as a matter of course, through a suitable forum, Community Councils have a principal role in Community Planning Partnerships by identifying the most appropriate group to represent specific community views for the purpose of community planning.***
- 3. That local authorities provide Community Councils with constructive feedback on how their representations are used, and if they are not used, the reason for this – for example in their representation of views in their statutory consultee role in planning and licensing.***
- 4. That local authorities work with their Community Councils to explore areas of local authority work that they mutually agree Community Councils could manage; deliver; and influence, and work together to agree parameters to allow this to happen.***
- 5. That local authorities work with their Community Councils to discuss, develop and mutually agree the expectations of Community Councils, including their role when developing the community plan, and that these are publicly recorded.***
- 6. That the need for an enforceable Model Code of Conduct for Community Councillors, with an independent and simple enforcement and appeals mechanism is further explored.***

- 7. That the expected role of a local authority in supporting its Community Councils, including the remit of the CCLO, is publicly available and that a local authority official with suitable seniority is identified to ensure that both the Community Council work and working relationship is appropriately progressed at local authority level.**
- 8. That local authorities work in partnership with Equality champions/leads in health boards, police etc to promote and raise awareness of links to minority/equality/disability networks and research as well as relevant legal obligations so that Community Councils are supported and clear of their requirements and have the information to allow them to engage appropriately with all groups within their community.**
- 9. That as far as possible, each local authority provide their Community Councils with a demographic profile of the community they represent to help them reach into their communities to deepen and broaden the information on community priorities which informs their work.**
- 10. That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage with relevant organisations/groups in their local area to raise awareness of what they do and in an attempt to seek a more diverse range of views on issues.**
- 11. That a national level induction pack is available to all Community Councillors, including model training modules relevant to Community Council activity and required training standards for delivery at local level, including a way to instil amongst Community Councils a sense of responsibility to undertake training.**
- 12. That a national interactive portal providing a central information site offering and signposting support and guidance on issues pertinent to Community Councils be developed.**
- 13. That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage, communicate and network in a wide range of different ways, including digitally and via various social networking mediums to enable them to embrace a wider community audience.**
- 14. That good practice developed across the country is shared to support and strengthen Community Councillors' role as contributors to the design and delivery of public services/asset managers and to further minimise the risk of personal liability faced by Community Councillors.**
- 15. That there is continued drive aimed at the community and Community Councils for contested Community Council elections.**

Areas where no consensus was reached

When developing its report and recommendations, the Group recognised that no consensus was reached on potentially important issues, and proposed that these issues be explored further when engaging more widely.

We welcome your views and comments, if any, on the following issues:

- **National representation of Community Councils following the Association of Scottish Community Councils (ASCC) decision to close earlier this year.**
- **Whether there is national desire for Community Councils to have full control of specified local budgets (i.e. physical control rather than deciding how specified local budgets are spent).**
- **Whether there is national desire for Community Councils to have tax raising powers similar to those of English Parish Councils.**
- **Whether the current legal definition on the general purpose of a Community Council remains fit for purpose – i.e. “In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable.”**

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL
SHORT-LIFE WORKING GROUP**

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

September 2012

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction and purpose of the Report

1. The Community Council short-life working group is pleased to present its report and recommendations to Scottish Government Ministers and COSLA on what best can be done to strengthen and support Scotland's Community Councils so that they may build their resilience and capacity in order to strengthen their role and relevance as voices for their communities.

2. The purpose of this report and its recommendations is to provide an informed basis to act as a platform for wider discussion and engagement with Community Councillors and those with an interest in the Community Council sector on the future policy development of Community Councils in Scotland. The Group's recommendations sit alongside proposals on the role of Community Councils being explored in the consultation on ideas for the Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, and following wider dialogue and engagement, any proposals requiring legislative change will be considered as part of the Bill process.

3. It is recognised that the members of this short-life working group represented a very small cross section of those with involvement in the sector, but their expertise and experience enabled informed recommendations to be developed on which to broaden discussion and seek wider views.

4. The Group recognised that there are potentially important issues where no consensus was reached, including national representation of Community Councils; full control of specified budgets; tax raising powers similar to those of English Parish Councils; and the current legal definition on the general purpose of a ¹Community Council. The Group agreed that when presenting this report to Scottish Ministers and COSLA, it would propose that these issues be explored further when engaging more widely.

Background

5. In its 2010 Manifesto Commitment, the Scottish Government reaffirmed its continued commitment to Scotland's Community Councils undertaking *"to give Scotland's Community Councils greater relevance and more opportunities to make a difference for the areas that they represent"*

6. In December 2011, the Scottish Government Minister for Local Government and Planning, established this Community Council short-life working group, comprising a range of people with hands on knowledge of the Community Council sector, who were asked to consider and recommend how best to build the resilience, capacity and capability of Community Councils in the future.

¹ *"In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable."*

7. Given the size of the sector - there are around 1,200 Community Councils and an estimated 12,000 Community Councillors - it was not possible to invite people from all areas of Scotland, but those invited to participate offered views from a cross section of both Community Councillors and local authority practitioners from a geographic mix of both urban and rural settings offering different experiences and perspectives.

8. Also, in recognition of the fact that the sector is so diverse and that a working group could not cover all areas of interest, Community Councils, Community Councillors and anyone with an interest in the sector were given the opportunity to feed their views to the group. A total of 18 submissions were received which echoed the key themes and issues discussed by the Group.

The Group's remit was to:

'Inform future policy development by making recommendations on ways to build the resilience and capacity of Community Councils, in order to strengthen their role and relevance as voices for their communities.'

9. To enable meaningful discussions, to which expert witnesses were invited to participate and contribute views, each of the Group's five formal meetings was themed to support its remit, as follows:

- Supporting Community Councils to play an active role in their communities (including exploration of current legislative status) and to work together to share experience and good practice;
- Strengthening the role of Community Council Liaison Officers (CCLO) in supporting Community Councils, including in the provision of training and development;
- Increasing diversity of representation on Community Councils (including exploration of wider public perception and awareness of Community Councils);
- Strengthening the link between Community Councils and Community Planning; and
- Role of Community Councils in project/asset management and service provision.

10. This structure provided a discussion framework which helped highlight examples of good practice but also allowed the group to identify a number of recurring issues and challenges which face Community Councils. This allowed the Group to develop a set of strategic recommendations which recognise the different needs, priorities and expectations of all of Scotland's vast array of Community Councils.

11. More detailed information on the Group's meetings, including agenda's, papers, and minutes of each of its discussions can be found on the Scottish Government website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/local-government/CommunityCouncils/CCShortLifeWorkingGroup>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Generally agreed principles

12. From the outset it was acknowledged that the programme of work already undertaken to develop the capacity, capability and accountability of Community Councils, including the Model Scheme of Establishment of Community Councils; Model Code of Conduct for Community Councillors; and Good Practice Guidance for Local Authorities and Community Councils provided a robust foundation on which to build and develop.

13. Throughout the Group's discussions it was clear that fundamental to the relevance of Community Councils is that their place as a statutory community representative is respected and validation is given to the work that they undertake in a range of local authority processes, such as planning (spatial); Community Planning; and in the decisions on the design and delivery of public services. The Group recognised that Community Councils are but one of many community organisations and whilst able to undertake wider roles within the community, their unique role is that of a statutory community representative group. It was agreed that this important key role should remain paramount and be utilised as matter of course by the wider public sector and that genuine partnership working, transparency and accountability be encouraged and supported so that trusting relationships, working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, are established and continue to grow.

14. Whilst the group did not reach consensus on whether Community Councils should have full control over specified budgets (i.e. physical control of the budget), it was agreed that where appropriate, and as currently happens in some areas in Orkney, Community Councils may be ideally placed to decide how specific local budgets are spent in their community and that this concept should be explored further.

15. During the Group's deliberations a range of roles and projects undertaken by Community Councils for and on behalf of their communities were discussed and considered. This demonstrated that current legislative provisions do not preclude many innovative, forward thinking Community Councils from expanding their horizons to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities. It was acknowledged, however, that the support structures and availability of information to enable this to happen as a matter of course is patchy and varies throughout Scotland and that capacity building through training and robust support structures need to be developed as these are seen to be key.

16. The Group were mindful of the fact that their recommendations must recognise the diversity of Scotland's Community Councils, currently undertaking a variety of roles within communities and with different needs; priorities; and expectations. It was considered that although statutory bodies, Community Councils are comprised of volunteers with busy and varied family lives and that to impose legislative duties on them may be counterproductive, as this may discourage wider involvement or force those already involved to leave as the role may become burdensome.

17. The Group has carefully considered the impact of all of its recommendations, and those which may require legislative change have been made in order to remove barriers and challenges which may stifle involvement in or with Community Councils. The final recommendations are intended to provide the impetus to further development of the sector so that Community Councils can, as a matter of course, play a pivotal role in representing community views on decisions that affect communities, whilst at the same time recognising their ability to undertake wider roles should they wish to do so, making Community Councils an attractive group to work with, and be part of.

Specific Recommendations

18. The discussions in each of the 5 themed meetings unveiled recurring issues and challenges faced by Community Councils. Following consideration of our discussions in the round we propose the following 15 recommendations.

Value and esteem of Community Councils

In order to raise the profile and validate the vital work Community Councils undertake on behalf of their communities, and to promote awareness of the importance of their representative role in the decisions that affect communities we recommend:

- ***That local authorities validate the work of Community Councils by working in partnership with them to seek the views of communities; giving them greater influence on decisions on public services which are demonstrated to be representative of the community view; and giving more weight to their representations in spatial planning.***
- ***That as a matter of course, through a suitable forum, Community Councils have a principal role in Community Planning Partnerships by identifying the most appropriate group to represent specific community views for the purpose of community planning.***
- ***That local authorities provide Community Councils with constructive feedback on how their representations are used, and if they are not used, the reason for this – for example in their representation of views in their statutory consultee role in planning and licensing.***

Devolution of responsibility

As locally based statutory bodies, elected to represent communities, Community Councils may be best placed to take decisions on certain local services on behalf of their communities, and we recommend:

- ***That local authorities work with their Community Councils to explore areas of local authority work that they mutually agree Community Councils could manage; deliver; and influence, and work together to agree parameters to allow this to happen.***

Working in partnership

In order to support the aforementioned, we recommend:

- ***That local authorities work with their Community Councils to discuss, develop and mutually agree the expectations of Community Councils, including their role when developing the community plan, and that these are publicly recorded.***

Accountability

We recommend that:

For Community Councils/Community Councillors

- ***That the need for an enforceable Model Code of Conduct for Community Councillors, with an independent and simple enforcement and appeals mechanism is further explored.***

For Local Authorities/Community Planning Partnerships

- ***That the expected role of a local authority in supporting its Community Councils, including the remit of the CCLO, is publicly available and that a local authority official with suitable seniority is identified to ensure that both the Community Council work and working relationship is appropriately progressed at local authority level.***

Representativeness

As Community Councils are statutory community representatives covered by Equality duties, and local authorities are required to evidence their engagement with harder to reach groups, we recommend that to mutually support these duties:

- ***That local authorities work in partnership with Equality champions/leads in health boards, police etc to promote and raise awareness of links to minority/equality/disability networks and research as well as relevant legal obligations so that Community Councils are supported and clear of their requirements and have the information to allow them to engage appropriately with all groups within their community.***

- ***That as far as possible, each local authority provide their Community Councils with a demographic profile of the community they represent to help them reach into their communities to deepen and broaden the information on community priorities which informs their work.***
- ***That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage with relevant organisations/groups in their local area to raise awareness of what they do and in an attempt to seek a more diverse range of views on issues.***

Training

The importance of training and development of Community Councillors was identified as key to raising the capacity and capability of Community Councils and that this was inconsistent across Scotland, we therefore recommend that:

- ***That a national level induction pack is available to all Community Councillors, including model training modules relevant to Community Council activity and required training standards for delivery at local level, including a way to instil amongst Community Councils a sense of responsibility to undertake training.***

Support and Communication

Modern methods of communication to, amongst other things, encourage and enable the sharing of good practice, support and experiences, particularly with other Community Councillors, were also viewed as key in the ever evolving community landscape, we therefore recommend:

- ***That a national interactive portal providing a central information site offering and signposting support and guidance on issues pertinent to Community Councils be developed.***
- ***That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage, communicate and network in a wide range of different ways, including digitally and via various social networking mediums to enable them to embrace a wider community audience.***

Individual Liability

As unincorporated bodies individual members of Community Councils, in certain circumstances, may potentially face personal liability, we therefore recommend:

- ***That good practice developed across the country is shared to support and strengthen Community Councillors' role as contributors to the design and delivery of public services/asset managers and to further minimise the risk of personal liability faced by Community Councillors.***

Contested elections

Our recommendations are aimed at building the resilience and capacity of Community Councils to strengthen their role and relevance as voices for their communities. We believe that the above recommendations should attract wider involvement and engagement, and help lead to our final recommendation:

- ***That there is continued drive aimed at the community and Community Councils for contested Community Council elections.***

Falkirk Council – Officer Response on Community Council Consultation

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We note the cross-over of the issues raised within this consultation with the outcomes from the Review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements and the recently published guidance on SOA's. We also note the synergy between this consultation and the consultation on the Community Engagement and Renewal Bill which included specific reference to the work of Community Councils (CC's). We need to ensure there is not duplication of efforts across these different strands of work.
- 1.2 Within the Falkirk Council area we recognise the important role which Community Councils have to play within our overall approach on Community Participation. The Council is committed to its Community Participation Strategy, a copy of which is available at:
https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/about_council/consultations/PDFs/final_com_participation.pdf
- 1.3 In recognising the local role which Community Councils have we also need to be mindful that they can have their limitations including:
- They work on a geographic basis; and
 - Some areas do not have active Community Councils. Representation can therefore be patchy. Within those that are active some engage with their local communities better than others. This is our experience in the Falkirk Council area with only eighteen local areas out of twenty three being represented by an active Community Council. Of the eighteen only three had sufficient numbers to furbish contested elections.
- 1.4 We recognise in particular in Falkirk the important role that community councillors play in statutory consultations, local democracy, and appreciate the ever increasing workload which they face, particularly with the increased emphasis being given to ensuring that local communities have their say and are listened to in taking public services forward.
- 1.5 While much of the content within the consultation seems pragmatic we must ensure that we have a clear vision about the future role of local Community Councils within wider approaches on Community Participation. We also need to be both realistic and pragmatic on the shortcomings of Community Councils as already noted at 1.4. We must ensure that these proposals represent added value as Local Authorities already have the ability to put many of them into place. If the role of Community Councils is to both change and widen then we must ensure that they are capable of fulfilling this. One particular issue which needs to be addressed is how we improve their representativeness of Community Councils and the effectiveness of the local community engagement they undertake. There

also needs to be consideration on the support Community Councils need to fulfil their role. This is an aspect which Elected Members here have asked Council officers to progress following this matter being considered recently by them.

- 1.6 We have included the response we received from Grangemouth Community Council at Appendix 1.

Detailed Response

Section 1 - Generally Agreed Principles

1. ***That the programme of work already undertaken including the Model Scheme; Code of Conduct; and Good Practice Guidance provide a robust foundation on which to build and develop.***

Comment: We agree that this is a pragmatic proposal.

2. ***That the diversity of Scotland's Community Councils, currently undertaking a variety of roles within communities and with different needs; priorities; and expectations must be recognised when developing policy.***

Comment: We agree that the diversity of the roles of Community Councils should be recognised. We do however suggest that Community Councils should work within a common vision for their envisaged role which would facilitate the development of local practice. Whilst it is neither practical nor desirable for Community Councils to all fulfil identical roles, it is nevertheless important that they all engage meaningfully with their local community in regard to the work they do.

3. ***That the unique role of a Community Council is that of a statutory community representative group and that this important key role should remain paramount and be utilised as matter of course by the wider public sector.***

Comment: Greater clarity is needed on this statement, particularly more detail on the plans the Scottish Government may have to put Councils onto a statutory footing and whether or not the forthcoming Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill will be used for this purpose. This also needs to be balanced with the role of Elected Members who are also statutory community representatives and take decisions on behalf of their constituents.

4. ***That fundamental to the relevance of Community Councils is that their place as the only statutory community representative is respected and validation given to the work that they undertake.***

Comment: We would re-iterate the points made at 3. Falkirk Council recognises the role of Community Councils in local democracy. Nevertheless, the work of other community representative groups must also be seen as valid, especially in light of the forthcoming Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill.

Community Councils are, and should be, only one of a range of community groups with which Falkirk Council engages and consults. Other community groups include communities of interest, which work across the whole of Falkirk area, or within several of the communities. It is important to also recognise the contribution made by these other groups.

- 5. *That under current legislation Community Councils are able to undertake wider roles within the community and it does not preclude many innovative, forward thinking Community Councils from expanding their horizons to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities***

Comment: We agree with this current principle but would re-emphasise the points mentioned at 2, on the need for Community Councils to be clear on the role(s) they can fulfil.

- 6. *That support structures to enable this to happen as a matter of course, however, appear to be inconsistent over Scotland.***

Comment: We are not in a position to comment on the position across Scotland but have recognised that this is an issue we need to address locally.

- 7. *That to impose legislative duties on Community Councils, which comprise of volunteers, may be counterproductive in that it may discourage wider involvement or force those already involved to leave as the role may become burdensome.***

Comment: There would need to be a clear case on the added value legislation would secure. We would agree that legislation may the risk the issues as mentioned above. Much of this is dependant on the role that the Scottish Government envisages that Community Councils should have.

- 8. *That any proposals which may require legislative change should be to remove barriers and challenges which may stifle involvement in or with Community Councils.***

We would re-iterate the comments made at 7.

Section 2 – Specific Recommendations

- 1. *That local authorities validate the work of Community Councils by working in partnership with them to seek the views of communities; giving them greater influence on decisions on public services which are demonstrated to be representative of the community view; and giving more weight to their representations in spatial planning.***

Comment: Falkirk Council seeks the views of a variety of community groups, including but not limited to Community Councils as appropriate to the issue. This is consistent with working within the framework of our Community Participation Strategy. We will continue to work closely with Community Councils and would involve them in engagement processes if there is benefit in

doing so. We must also act to support Community Councils to fulfil their role more effectively.

- 2. *That as a matter of course, through a suitable forum, Community Councils have a principal role in Community Planning Partnerships by identifying the most appropriate group to represent specific community views for the purpose of community planning.***

Comment: Greater clarity is needed on this issue. In our view Community Councils currently do and should continue to have a meaningful role within Local Community Planning. This matches their geography and their immediate area of interest. This would be more challenging to achieve at a more strategic level where partnerships also have a focus at local authority area level. We also have to bear in mind the issue about the representativeness of Community Councils. Community Planning Partnerships have wider membership and are probably best placed to consider this.

- 3. *That local authorities provide Community Councils with constructive feedback on how their representations are used, and if they are not used, the reason for this – for example in their representation of views in their statutory consultee role in planning and licensing.***

Comment: A planning or licensing decision will be based on a many sources of information and views, including those of the Community Councils. This balance needs to be maintained. The minutes of the relevant committee may reveal why a particular decision was taken. Many community groups comment on different applications and it is not clear why Community Councils should have a particular right to feedback, despite their statutory right to be consulted on certain decisions. We agree that it is good practice to provide general feedback about the reasons for a decision.

- 4. *That local authorities work with their Community Councils to explore areas of local authority work that they mutually agree Community Councils could manage; deliver; and influence, and work together to agree parameters to allow this to happen.***

Comment: It is unclear that Community Councils have either the capacity or desire to deliver council services, or that they would be the most appropriate community organisation to do so. The forthcoming Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill may give a variety of community groups some powers to manage or maintain certain assets and Community Councils maybe one option for this.

Falkirk Council Elected Members have recently agreed to carry out a full review of its Scheme of Establishment, which will include a review of the financial support (a full appraisal of current levels of funding to Community Councils, with a view to assessing that levels of financial and secondary support are adequate to allow Community Councils to fully comply with their statutory remit).

A number of other local authorities with area committees already operate in a similar way so we are unsure as to whether these proposals add value.

5. ***That local authorities work with their Community Councils to discuss, develop and mutually agree the expectations of Community Councils, including their role when developing the community plan, and that these are publicly recorded.***

Comment: Local authorities should discuss how Community Councils can be practically involved in Community Planning, particularly at a local level.

6. ***That the need for an enforceable Model Code of Conduct for Community Councillors, with an independent and simple enforcement and appeals mechanism is further explored.***

Comment: This proposal entirely depends on the role(s) the Scottish Government envisages Community Councils having future. If this is to be put onto a statutory footing then it is logical to support this with a code of conduct. There is also a further issue as to who will monitor the application of the code of conduct.

7. ***That the expected role of a local authority in supporting its Community Councils, including the remit of the CCLO, is publicly available and that a local authority official with suitable seniority is identified to ensure that both the Community Council work and working relationship is appropriately progressed at local authority level.***

Comment: This is already in place in the Falkirk Council area. There may be scope for improving clarity in this area.

8. ***That local authorities work in partnership with Equality champions/leads in health boards, police etc to promote and raise awareness of links to minority/equality/disability networks and research as well as relevant legal obligations so that Community Councils are supported and clear of their requirements and have the information to allow them to engage appropriately with all groups within their community.***

Comment: Community Councils should take responsibility for informing themselves about equalities issues (this may be through requesting training from the Council). Falkirk Council offers support and has already provided training in this area for local Community Councils and would intend to include this in our programme of training following the next elections in 2013.

9. ***That as far as possible, each local authority provide their Community Councils with a demographic profile of the community they represent to help them reach into their communities to deepen and broaden the information on community priorities which informs their work.***

Comment: Falkirk Council already publishes demographic information by settlement on our website. We do not foresee any difficulty in providing this by Community Council boundaries if requested.

- 10. *That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage with relevant organisations/groups in their local area to raise awareness of what they do and in an attempt to seek a more diverse range of views on issues.***

Comment: Community Councils should take responsibility for engaging with their local communities. They need to be clear on which organisations and individuals within their community they need to engage with. Falkirk Council provides a range of training and support for this, but should not be made responsible for it.

- 11. *That a national level induction pack is available to all Community Councillors, including model training modules relevant to Community Council activity and required training standards for delivery at local level, including a way to instil amongst Community Councils a sense of responsibility to undertake training.***

Comment: A national training pack and training modules may be useful for both new and longer standing community councillors. However there would need to be some degree of localisation. It is of some concern that Community Councils do not already feel a sense of responsibility for undertaking the training they require to carry out their role. There maybe a further option to look at supporting some of this agenda through Third Sector interfaces.

We are concerned (as with the national portal in question 12) that:

- the bulk of the work load would fall on local authorities, and
- and that the pack and portal would duplicate information already available directly from local authorities.

- 12. *That a national interactive portal providing a central information site offering and signposting support and guidance on issues pertinent to Community Councils be developed.***

Comment: This could provide a useful source of information for Community Councils. However we would re-iterate our response at 11 above.

- 13. *That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage, communicate and network in a wide range of different ways, including digitally and via various social networking mediums to enable them to embrace a wider community audience.***

Comment: We agree that this proposal would help Community Councils to access their local communities more effectively. Falkirk Council provided training on social media for community councils last year.

- 14. *That good practice developed across the country is shared to support and strengthen Community Councillors' role as contributors to the design and delivery of public services/asset managers and to further minimise the risk of personal liability faced by Community Councillors.***

Comment: There are a number of different issues raised in this point. It is important to be clear about the levels of influence Community Councils realistically have. a) It is Community Council's not, Community Councillors, who have this role. b) Community Councils do not currently have a role as asset managers. We also wonder how practical this proposals bearing in mind the specialist knowledge which Asset Managers require, c) The question of personal liability may be best addressed from a different perspective. This proposal may contribute to a reluctance on individuals putting themselves forward as prospective Community Councillors.

15. *That there is continued drive aimed at the community and Community Councils for contested Community Council elections.*

Comment: It will be difficult to raise awareness / interest in the role of Community Councils unless they make themselves more relevant to the local community. Where Community Councils are active and involved in the issues that concern the community there appears to be a wider degree of interest in them.

Section 3 – Areas where no consensus was reached.

The consultation asks for our views on the following 4 points:

National representation of Community Councils following the Association of Scottish Community Councils (ASCC) decision to close earlier this year.

Comment: The ASCC did provide a useful service to Community Councils, as well as being a source of good practice and advice and providing insurance. It would be useful for Community Councils to have an umbrella organisation, although unsure what form this should take. There has been a move towards this with the National Network for Community Councils, but this appears limited at the moment. There may also be a role for such a national body in monitoring the application of any future code of conduct by individual Community Councils.

Whether there is national desire for Community Councils to have full control of specified local budgets (i.e. physical control rather than deciding how specified local budgets are spent).

Comment: Our local experience suggests there is no appetite for this proposal.

Whether there is national desire for Community Councils to have tax raising powers similar to those of English Parish Councils.

Comment: Our local experience suggests there is no appetite for this proposal. This could also impose an additional layer and tax burden when local economies continue to find securable sustainable growth challenging.

Whether the current legal definition on the general purpose of a Community Council remains fit for purpose – i.e. “In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area,

and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable.”

Comment: We remain concerned that some Community Councils do not adequately ascertain and co-ordinate community views. There are some Community Councils that do so very well, but they appear to be in the minority. In the absence of an ability to effectively engage with the local community it will remain difficult for Community Councils to take other appropriate actions.

Discussion Paper on the Community Council short-life working group's report and recommendations

The Community Council short-life working group's report and recommendations provide an informed basis for wider discussion with those involved with the Community Council sector.

The purpose and aim of this discussion paper and wider engagement is to explore broader views on:

- The generally agreed principals of the Group
- The 15 specific recommendations
- The 4 specific areas where no consensus was reached

This, together with the responses on the role of Community Councils, discussed in the recent consultation on ideas for the proposed Community Empowerment and Renewal Bill, will inform the future police development of Community Councils.

The Scottish Government and COSLA will work together to fully consider and ultimately decide which recommendations will be progressed.

Generally agreed principles

A summary of the Group's generally agreed principles are detailed below (excluding those included in the specific recommendations).

- Do you **agree** with all or any of these principles? – *Please indicate which*
- Which, if any, do you feel is/are most important? – *Please list all that apply*
- Do you **disagree** with all or any of these principles? – *Please indicate which*
- If so, why?

1. That the programme of work already undertaken including the Model Scheme; Code of Conduct; and Good Practice Guidance provide a robust foundation on which to build and develop.

Comment [MSOffice1]: Agree

2. That the diversity of Scotland's Community Councils, currently undertaking a variety of roles within communities and with different needs; priorities; and expectations must be recognised when developing policy.

Comment [MSOffice2]: Agree

3. That the unique role of a Community Council is that of a statutory community representative group and that this important key role should remain paramount and be utilised as matter of course by the wider public sector.

Comment [MSOffice3]: Agree

4. That fundamental to the relevance of Community Councils is that their place as the only statutory community representative is respected and validation given to the work that they undertake.

Comment [MSOffice4]: Agree

5. That under current legislation Community Councils are able to undertake wider roles within the community and it does not preclude many innovative, forward thinking Community Councils from expanding their horizons to meet the needs and aspirations of their communities.

Comment [MSOffice5]: Agree

6. That support structures to enable this to happen as a matter of course, however, appear to be inconsistent over Scotland.

Comment [MSOffice6]: Agree

7. That to impose legislative duties on Community Councils, which comprise of volunteers, may be counterproductive in that it may discourage wider involvement or force those already involved to leave as the role may become burdensome.

Comment [MSOffice7]: Agree

8. That any proposals which may require legislative change should be to remove barriers and challenges which may stifle involvement in or with Community Councils.

Comment [MSOffice8]: Agree

15 Specific Recommendations

- Which, if any, of the recommendations do you consider important in the development of policy to support Community Councils? - *Please list all that apply.*
- From the recommendations you have selected, what practicalities, challenges, or resource implications do you feel may be faced by:
 - Community Councils;
 - local authorities;
 - planning authorities;
 - Community Planning Partnerships?
- Following consideration of the above, are there any specific recommendations where you feel the resultant community benefits would outweigh these implications. Why do you think this is?

Recommendations

1. ***That local authorities validate the work of Community Councils by working in partnership with them to seek the views of communities; giving them greater influence on decisions on public services which are demonstrated to be representative of the community view; and giving more weight to their representations in spatial planning.***
2. ***That as a matter of course, through a suitable forum, Community Councils have a principal role in Community Planning Partnerships by identifying the most appropriate group to represent specific community views for the purpose of community planning.***
3. ***That local authorities provide Community Councils with constructive feedback on how their representations are used, and if they are not used, the reason for this – for example in their representation of views in their statutory consultee role in planning and licensing.***
4. ***That local authorities work with their Community Councils to explore areas of local authority work that they mutually agree Community Councils could manage; deliver; and influence, and work together to agree parameters to allow this to happen.***
5. ***That local authorities work with their Community Councils to discuss, develop and mutually agree the expectations of Community Councils, including their role when developing the community plan, and that these are publicly recorded.***
6. ***That the need for an enforceable Model Code of Conduct for Community Councillors, with an independent and simple enforcement and appeals mechanism is further explored.***

Comment [MSOffice9]: This is a fundamental point. Validation through engagement builds trust. The problem may lie in demonstrating what the community view on any specific issue might be. How do you mitigate against undue influence on the one hand and apathy on the other

Comment [MSOffice10]: Not sure where this recommendation is going. One would have thought that the community council elected by the community would be the most appropriate body. If there is a specific view to be embraced that could be done by co-option to the CC

Comment [MSOffice11]: One issue that might need to be overcome is that of withholding information under the banner of commercial interest. Perhaps this could be addressed as part of a beefed up code of conduct and obviously the potential for personal liability.

Comment [MSOffice12]: Would depend on availability of CC resource in terms of personnel, required skill sets and physical ability. Have doubts over the management and delivery aspects but the influence and parameters would seem like a logical first step.

Comment [MSOffice13]: Agree, Grangemouth CC has participated in this process in conjunction with Community Services as was. A local community plan was successfully developed. However the follow up aspect has been less successful. Delivery has been constrained by external issues and reporting is non-existent.

Comment [MSOffice14]: Agree, this is an urgent requirement

7. That the expected role of a local authority in supporting its Community Councils, including the remit of the CCLO, is publicly available and that a local authority official with suitable seniority is identified to ensure that both the Community Council work and working relationship is appropriately progressed at local authority level.

Comment [MSOffice15]: Agree; a generic model is required to be implemented across all local authorities

8. That local authorities work in partnership with Equality champions/leads in health boards, police etc to promote and raise awareness of links to minority/equality/disability networks and research as well as relevant legal obligations so that Community Councils are supported and clear of their requirements and have the information to allow them to engage appropriately with all groups within their community.

Comment [MSOffice16]: Agree

9. That as far as possible, each local authority provide their Community Councils with a demographic profile of the community they represent to help them reach into their communities to deepen and broaden the information on community priorities which informs their work.

Comment [MSOffice17]: Agree

10. That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage with relevant organisations/groups in their local area to raise awareness of what they do and in an attempt to seek a more diverse range of views on issues.

Comment [MSOffice18]: Agree in principal but it has to be recognised that engagement is a two way street. GCC has done presentations to various groups within our community including Rotary and Probus clubs as well as church groups with limited return in terms of feedback.

11. That a national level induction pack is available to all Community Councillors, including model training modules relevant to Community Council activity and required training standards for delivery at local level, including a way to instil amongst Community Councils a sense of responsibility to undertake training.

Comment [MSOffice19]: Essential; from training comes confidence

12. That a national interactive portal providing a central information site offering and signposting support and guidance on issues pertinent to Community Councils be developed.

Comment [MSOffice20]: Agree; sharing experience can save a lot of repetition and heartache.

13. That Community Councils are encouraged and supported to engage, communicate and network in a wide range of different ways, including digitally and via various social networking mediums to enable them to embrace a wider community audience.

Comment [MSOffice21]: Agree; but again effectiveness is dependant on feedback. GCC has created a web site and manages a Facebook page neither of which generates much in the way of comment or interest. Perhaps we need further guidance on how to maximise those portals.

14. That good practice developed across the country is shared to support and strengthen Community Councillors' role as contributors to the design and delivery of public services/asset managers and to further minimise the risk of personal liability faced by Community Councillors.

Comment [MSOffice22]: The potential for personal liability is a significant constraint for many.

15. That there is continued drive aimed at the community and Community Councils for contested Community Council elections.

Comment [MSOffice23]: Agree; uncontested elections undermine credibility. However in the absence of candidates what do you do?

Areas where no consensus was reached

When developing its report and recommendations, the Group recognised that no consensus was reached on potentially important issues, and proposed that these issues be explored further when engaging more widely.

We welcome your views and comments, if any, on the following issues:

- **National representation of Community Councils following the Association of Scottish Community Councils (ASCC) decision to close earlier this year.**
- **Whether there is national desire for Community Councils to have full control of specified local budgets (i.e. physical control rather than deciding how specified local budgets are spent).**
- **Whether there is national desire for Community Councils to have tax raising powers similar to those of English Parish Councils.**
- **Whether the current legal definition on the general purpose of a Community Council remains fit for purpose – i.e. “In addition to any other purpose which a Community Council may pursue, the general purpose of a Community Council shall be to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable.”**

Comment [MSOffice24]: Would prefer to see the development of local CC forums where all attending are operating with the same local authority. Perhaps consideration could be given to holding a national conference annually, hosted by the Scottish Government; attended by delegates from the local CC forums. Must avoid empire building.

Comment [MSOffice25]: Cannot believe that there is a burning desire to embrace this aspect from volunteer community representatives. This would require a specific set of skills and substantial time and effort that I suspect would deter potential future and indeed current community councillors. There would obviously need to be a rigorous audit process to safeguard funds.

Comment [MSOffice26]: Just ask constituents if they want to pay more tax and you will have your answer

Comment [MSOffice27]: ADD; and foster community spirit

Comment [MSOffice28]: One area that perhaps needs to be explored is the management and distribution of community funds established as part of Renewable Energy developments.

Some might describe these funds as a form of planning gain others might describe them as a bribe. In the main these currently arise in relation to onshore wind developments however we are aware that similar funds may be set up for communities deemed to be disadvantaged by offshore wind developments. In the main due to the location of these developments the communities gaining benefit from them tend to be on the smaller scale. The net result can be that these communities are running financial surpluses as after a short period they run out of meaningful things to spend the money on. Evidence to this effect was given to the EET committee of the Scottish Parliament in May of 2012.

The resource from which these communities benefit is a national asset which begs the question why is the benefit not distributed nationally? Or across the local authority area in which the development is located. Coincidentally all energy consumers are subsidising this industry and by default the community funds that are set up.

Distribution could be on a pro rata basis dependant on the level of deemed disadvantage.

CCs could be given control of these funds to spend on projects that have been demonstrated to be the community view.