

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING - UPDATE
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 JUNE 2014
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on:

- (i) Our legislative duties to support and assist local communities to produce Local Community Action Plans.
- (ii) How we currently support local community planning across the Falkirk area.
- (iii) Our plans to undertake a review of local community planning.

The report also presents Members with a summary of the key findings and our aim to produce an individual Action Plan to take forward these findings in respect of the two recently produced Local Community Action Plans in respect of:

- Whitecross
- Maddiston and Rumford.

2. SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH COMMUNITY PLANNING

2.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 places a duty on Local Authorities to initiate, maintain and facilitate the community planning process. This includes a duty to consult with and encourage the participation of community bodies in the process. This, in turn, may involve supporting local communities to engage with local people to assess their views and opinions in order to develop local community plans.

Community Planning is defined as

'a process in which the public services provided in a local authority area must be planned and provided after consultation with community bodies and other public bodies responsible for providing those services and with the ongoing co-operation among those bodies.'

2.2 The forthcoming Community Empowerment Bill will further enhance and underpin the views of citizens and local communities by supporting their engagement and participation in shaping the future availability and delivery of local public services and facilities.

2.3 Locally, the Community Planning Partnership has established a commitment to empower citizens and communities to take a more active role in improving the neighbourhoods they live in. One of the key drivers for expressing citizens' views is via Local Community Action Plans. These plans aim to summarise the views of what local communities think could be done to improve local services, amenities and quality of life. The Plans allow local communities to express their longer term aspirations for their neighbourhoods. In addition to this it also offers local communities the chance to propose more practical, immediate suggestions and solutions to local issues which can be progressed either by the local communities themselves or they can be passed to the Council or other public bodies for consideration.

3. LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING WITHIN FALKIRK AREA 2006-2011

3.1 Between 2006 and 2011 Local Community Plans were developed for the following areas:

- Grangemouth
- Bo'ness
- Upper Braes and Lower Braes
- Larbert
- Stenhousemuir
- Central Falkirk
- Denny and District areas

During this period these plans were developed in alignment with the Area Forum areas which were in existence then.

3.2 Some of the main achievements the Local Community Planning team helped realise during this period, in partnership with local communities, included:

- bringing additional resources into an area
- making environmental improvements
- supporting community organisations to create capacity to help develop services within their communities.

4. LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING WITHIN FALKIRK AREA FROM 2011

4.1 As the previous Area Forum operational arrangements have ceased Local Community Planning Officers (LCPOs) have developed a range of methods to support working with local communities and local bodies to directly engage in the creation of Local Community Action Plans.

4.2 Since 2011 LCPOs have supported Local Community Action Plans being produced for the following areas:

- Bo'ness/Blackness
- Larbert/Stenhousemuir/Airth and Carronshore
- Langlees/Bainsford
- Camelon East and West/Tamfourhill
- Denny/Bonnybridge

4.3 In the last year our LCPOs have worked closely with local communities, local bodies and Community Councils (where established) in order to assist them produce Local Community Action Plans for the following areas:

- Whitecross
- Maddiston and Rumford

5. OUR CURRENT APPROACH TO SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

(i) Strategic Overview

- 5.1 Falkirk's approach to local community planning has ensured extensive community engagement which has played a key role in supporting local communities to prepare and develop their local action plans. Services also play a key role in assessing the viability, affordability of the recommendations made in the local action plans.

An important step in the community planning process is its interaction and alignment with the Strategic Community Plan. We are currently working with Corporate colleagues to ensure that this step is embedded firmly in the overall process.

- 5.2 The Community Planning Leadership Board have overall responsibility for providing Strategic direction in taking forward this work. This group comprises of Elected Members, Board Members and Senior Officers from the following organisations/bodies:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Falkirk Council• Falkirk Community Trust• NHS Forth Valley• Police Scotland• Scottish Fire and Rescue Service• Forth Valley College	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scottish Enterprise• Skills Development Scotland• SEStran• Scottish Government• CVS Falkirk and District
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- 5.3 A key challenge for everyone involved has been trying to get an appropriate balance between a universal and targeted approach and how we decide on what local communities should be selected for local community planning purposes..

(ii) Work of Local Community Planning Officers

- 5.4 Our Local Community Planning Officers (LCPOs) act as facilitators for other services/ agencies to ensure that they engage with other community planning partners, local networks, community groups and the wider community in the local community planning process. LCPOs also provide information about strategic priorities, local services, and service development priorities to establish a context for the local community planning process.
- 5.5 If Community Councils are established in the area then the LCPOs will always try to ensure that they act as the main or lead groups in driving the local planning consultation process forward.
- 5.6 LCPOs also assess the potential to improve local assets by identifying the advantages and disadvantages associated with each. Through a range of well evidenced methods they support local communities to help them agree the local priorities and improvement action points that are then shared and discussed with all public bodies and agencies.

6. PLANS TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF LOCAL COMMUNITY PLANNING

- 6.1 In order to ensure that we can meet and deliver the key strategic aims we are undertaking a review of local community planning. This review will cover several key areas:

- (i) Selection - this will consider what rationale and factors we use in determining what local areas/communities are selected.

- (ii) Process - this will review existing processes and consider what best methods and practices should be used.
- (iii) Engagement With Local Communities - this will consider best approaches to do this.
- (iv) Engagement With Services/Public Bodies - this will consider how these Groups are engaged in the overall process and how their input is co-ordinated.
- (v) Consultation on Draft Action Plans - this will consider who and how we engage in consultation.
- (vi) Review of Outputs - this will look at how best we can consider and review any outcomes/recommendations that are made.
- (vii) Support Provided - this will assess what resources should be deployed to assist in and support this process.
- (viii) Link to Strategic Community Planning - this will look at how local community plans links with this.

The Community Planning Leadership Board has recently established a work-stream reporting to the Community Planning Improvement Group with the aim to review our current approaches to local community planning, with the aim of improving, and supporting Community Participation and Empowerment.

This work-stream is co-chaired by Education Services and CVS Falkirk and District and work is already underway on this review.

7. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM WHITECROSS LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

7.1 A total of 31 recommendations/suggestions were made across 7 individual themed areas:

(i) Community Facilities and Activities (5)

- Renovate and reopen the Power Station.
- Develop community activities.
- Bring back the Gala Day and other events.
- Community noticeboards, newsletter and information.
- Develop new facilities as part of the Morston's development.

(ii) Recreation and Sports Facilities (4)

- Develop play areas for all ages.
- Develop sports pitch.
- Include facilities in Morston's development.
- Improve access to other recreational facilities in nearby towns.

(iii) Transport and Access to Services (4)

- Improve public transport and/or develop community transport.
- Greater community involvement in housing improvements and allocation.
- Improve access to health services.
- Work with Police and fire station to improve community service.

(iv) **Environment, Paths and Roads (4)**

- Develop and improve paths.
- Roads and traffic calming.
- Improve village appearance and open spaces.

(v) **Local Economy and Jobs (3)**

- Training and employment opportunities linked to the development of the new community.
- Support access to work.
- Support existing businesses and encourage more businesses.

(vi) **Safer Communities (6)**

- Road traffic safety - congestion, speeding.
- Discharge of sewage/inadequacy of sewage system.
- Safer routes to school - stagnant water ditch near school.
- Avondale tip - pollution/smell.
- Home safety - promote support offered to disadvantaged residents.
- Community Safety - meet with Community Safety Officers (Police, Community Wardens, Fire and Rescue).

(vii) **Healthier People (6)**

- To address local concerns over accessing health services it is suggested that the establishment and development of a 'healthy living zone' within the Community Centre would help.
- Healthy Eating - develop Cafe and promote healthy eating at community events. Encourage food production initiatives.
- Taking exercise - promote walking, develop physical activity initiatives, develop outdoor gyms.
- Keeping active - promote activities encourage intergenerational projects.
- Seeking help - digital support (mood juice). Resource Bank. Develop surgeries.

8. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM MADDISTON/RUMFORD LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

8.1 A total of 15 recommendations/suggestions were made across 4 individual themed areas:

(i) **Sustainable Maddiston/Rumford (4)**

- The quality of our infrastructure will help promote the growth of our local economy - we need to ensure that we have the right housing mix and the appropriate standard of amenities and utilities.
- We will be greener - encourage responsible use of outdoor space, promote recycling, build on the children's disapproval of graffiti, vandalism.
- We will improve the built environment - therefore a key priority would be to develop the community centre and ensure the school could cope with the growing influx of people.

- Our open spaces will be attractive, accessible and safe - the people of Maddiston and Rumford have shown great concern about the amount of green space that has already been lost to housing developments. They would like it to be a priority to save the remaining spaces and utilise them for the village. Suggestions such as creating a community garden, better play areas, proper paths to allow people to get to Muiravonside Country Park and the Union Canal safely without the use of a car.

(ii) Fairer Maddiston/Rumford (4)

- Disadvantaged communities will benefit from better services - look at improving the range of services available in the area. We would look at a range of potential external funders to support such activity.
- Address financial inclusion - extend and integrate Credit Union activity.
- Tackle discrimination - introduce diversity sessions. Make contact with new residents, migrant workers, etc. Follow up anti-discrimination work recently carried out.
- Welfare Reform - Provide information and access to online facilities for claimants.

(iii) Growing Business and Prosperous People (4)

- Growing business and employment - look at the potential of developing business incubator unit. Investigate the potential for job clubs, social enterprises. Investigate potential growth areas and promote opportunities, personal carers.
- Enhancing Business Connections - make contact with existing businesses (Business Forum). IT classes. Promote business development support agencies.
- Regeneration initiatives - path making - drystone dyking and other skills development, gardening, tidy-up schemes.
- Engaging young people - ILM activity, activity agreements, Credit Union Activity, volunteering opportunities in community activity, (food banks).

(iv) Young People Who Are Confident and Successful (3)

- Young people are happy and healthy and make positive decisions - promote a range of activity that young people can participate. Include them in any development proposals for amenities, play development.
- Achieving their potential through learning and activity - intergenerational activity (social media), young roots project to develop heritage. Promote youth achievement awards, volunteering opportunities, activity agreements.
- Identifying children at risk - continue the good work being conducted in the community at the Community Centre, the school and the Multi-Agency Group and the Family Centre. Look at extending Children and Families projects.

9. NEXT STEPS/WAY FORWARD

(i) Local Community Action Plans

9.1 Our LCPOs will liaise with Services and other Agencies/Organisations to agree an appropriate Officer or Team that will consider the relevant proposals and can provide a response to the points contained in both the Whitecross and Maddiston/Rumford Community Action Plans.

9.2 The LCPOs will be responsible for providing Action Plan updates to the Community Councils or lead network organisation, Community Planning Leadership Board and Local Members.

(ii) Agreeing What Communities to Support in the Preparation of the Next Local Community Plans

9.3 Our LCPOs will be responsible for considering, assessing and making recommendations to the SCPLB concerning the local areas where future Community Action Plan should be produced in accordance with our agreed processes.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Members are invited to note:

- (i) the progress the Local Community Planning team has made;**
- (ii) the development of the Community Action Plans referenced at section 4 and welcomes their progression by local communities;**
- (iii) the published Local Community Action Plans in respect of the Whitecross and Maddiston/Rumford areas (contained in Appendices 1 and 2); and**
- (iv) that the LCPOs will take forward the Local Community Action Plans as outlined in Section 9.**

10.2 Members are asked to agree:

- (i) that a report on the findings of the group reviewing local community planning (as outlined in Section 6) is brought back to a future meeting.**

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 4 June 2014

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL