

**Community Councils Policy Development Panel Scoping Meeting Note
Thursday 10th October 2013 2pm**

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
 Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
 Chloe Hunter (Funding Support Officer)
 Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
 Shona Barton (Committee Services Officer)
 Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met in the Leader's office at 2pm on Thursday 10th October to discuss community councils.

First discussed was a draft timetable of meetings of the panel, and the work to be done before finally submitting findings and recommendations to the Executive for approval.

The panel was then briefed on the current community council situation, touching on elections, funding and in detail on the content of the Scheme of Establishment and the need for its review.

The panel noted the current election situation, including the decision made by the Executive on 8th October. It was noted that the Executive had agreed that the four community councils which had received the exact number of nominations for places available (Airth, Banknock Hags & Longcroft, Bo'ness and Maddiston) would automatically be formed. Those community councils which had attracted enough nominations to fill at least two thirds of the elected places available were also formed (Avonbridge & Standburn, Brightons, Denny & District, Falkirk South, Grahamston Middlefield & Westfield, Larbert Stenhousemuir & Torwood, Reddingmuirhead & Wallacestone, and Shieldhill & California). Of those remaining, the Executive agreed to extend the nomination period until the 30th October 2013.

The panel noted the current funding situation. Information was provided on the allocation of grants during financial years 2010/2011, 2011/2012, 2012/2013. A breakdown of the levels of per capita funding was also provided.

The panel was presented with the model papers from the Scottish Government to consider and potentially use as a guide for the creation of a new Scheme of Establishment, as well as being presented with papers from the review of community councils in 2000 for background information.

The panel decided to invite several experienced past and present community councillors to the next meeting to hear their opinions on the community council setup in Falkirk and how it could be improved.

Also noted was that letters have now been sent to every community council, and their community councillors, that have been established and approved by the Executive on Tuesday 8th October.

The next meeting of the policy development panel will be on the 30th October at 3pm and will be attended by panel members Councillor Martin, Baillie Paterson, and support members Chloe Hunter, Shona Barton, Brian Pirie and Andrew Cassells. Also in attendance will be Frank McChord and Community Council Representatives Walter Inglis, Pauline Rodger, Danny Callaghan and Margaret Cheyne.

Community Council Policy Development Panel Meeting Note
Wednesday 30th October 2013 3pm

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
 Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
 Rose Mary Glackin (Chief Governance Officer)
 Danny Callaghan (Participant)
 Margaret Cheyne (Participant)
 Walter Inglis (Participant)
 Pauline Rodger (Participant)
 Chloe Hunter (Funding Support Officer)
 Frank McChord (Local Community Planning Officer)
 Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
 Shona Barton (Committee Services Officer)
 Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

Councillor Martin welcomed all in attendance to this first meeting of the policy development panel (PDP) and introduced himself as the Chair of the Panel. An outline was given on the work of the PDP, including that the last update of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils had been in 2000.

Brian Pirie provided further information on what the PDP would look at, this included – the support provided to community councils (both financial and in kind) and the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and the model documents provided by the Scottish Government.

Discussion took place on the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils (the Scheme).

Walter Inglis advised that he felt there had been a 'dearth of training' on the Scheme and its provisions. He had used the constitution and standing orders as a bible if there was any contention, but noted that the Scheme was seldom needed.

Margaret Cheyne advised that she felt that the quality of the members on the community council was important but that training was required on roles and remits.

Councillor Martin asked if all community councils were following the Scheme. Walter Inglis was confident that community councils were using the Scheme, but felt that people became involved because of an interest in local issues and weren't drawn because of the Scheme to become a community councillor.

Discussion took place on the information that is available to the public via the website and Facebook pages etc. It was felt by all that more needs to be done to raise the profile of community councils on the Falkirk Council website.

The focus group was asked if they felt that the Scheme was too restrictive and prevented people from becoming community councillors. There was general agreement that the restriction placed on the nominated members from local organisations only being able to serve for 4 years should be removed. Councillor Martin explained the reasoning behind this being included in the Scheme, but agreed that it was restrictive and could limit community participation.

Discussion took place on the process for appointing nominated representatives – Walter Inglis outlined the process that had been undertaken by Grangemouth Community Council.

The Panel then discussed how Community Councils advertise their meetings and encourage local people to attend meetings. Margaret Cheyne thought that a structured agenda helps so that people are aware of the business. Margaret advised that Larbert, Stenhousemuir & Torwood Community Council put up notices in the library, ASDA and the one stop shop. Danny Callaghan advised that Reddingmuirhead Community Council put up notices locally and invited speakers to each meeting to generate local interest. Walter Inglis advised that Grangemouth CC would have a standard agenda and would have regular attendance from the police with most issues being captured under Any Other Business on the agenda.

Walter Inglis asked about individual community council constitutions to which Brian Pirie replied that there was a generic constitution provided by the Council – this had been included in the pack circulated to members of the panel.

Discussion took place on the possibility of having a community council forum. It was noted that this had been tried previously, but had not been a success. This was maybe something to consider for the future.

Baillie Paterson advised that she felt the Scheme was not user friendly.

Discussion then took place on the representation on community councils. It was felt that this should reflect the views of the community. The group considered the question of residency – should people be allowed to become members who were not resident in the area but did have a local interest/business. After a long discussion on the merits of both arguments, the consensus was that community councillors should reside in the area.

The panel moved on to discuss the support and funding available to community councils. Discussion took place on the arrangements for securing accommodation to hold community council meetings. Councillor Martin suggested that it maybe better to have a one stop approach with free lets arranged for community councils. Pauline Rodger advised that the letting process was cumbersome.

Councillor Martin asked how the Council could better support community councils, perhaps having an Online Forum and more regular community council events and training.

Walter Inglis said that he thought the initial startup grant of £250 was not sufficient. There was a general feeling that the initial funding should be increased. Chloe Hunter advised that community councils could apply for special project grants to cover the costs of buying specific equipment.

It was suggested that perhaps the Council could provide a starter pack for community councils – with the possibility of providing a laptop and could look at providing generic email addresses.

Walter Inglis brought up the issue of legal advice, and how it could be accessed by community councils. It was noted that this was not something that the Council could provide. However community councils could go to Planning Aid Scotland for planning advice.

Discussion took place on the publicity of community councils and how this could be improved – perhaps using the Falkirk Council news or producing a community council newsletter. Chloe Hunter advised that a few community councils had applied for grants for newsletters. Danny Callaghan suggested that a flyer could be produced and inserted into the Falkirk Council news.

Walter Inglis suggested that the Council should publicise the benefits of having a community council. In terms of funding, Chloe Hunter advised that a shorter application form had been devised for the Community Council grants.

Community Council Policy Development Panel Meeting Note
Wednesday 20th November 4pm

Present; Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
 Danny Callaghan (Participant)
 Margaret Cheyne (Participant)
 Walter Inglis (Participant)
 Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
 Shona Barton (Committee Services Officer)
 Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met in the Council Chambers at 4pm on Wednesday 20th November to discuss the current Scheme of Establishment.

Brian opened by stating the purpose of the meeting, and asked the current and former community councillors on the panel what their thoughts were on the current Scheme of Establishment.

Members of the panel shared similar thoughts on the current Scheme. Danny said that it was a lot of information to take on board, and that this was mainly down to the style in which it was written. Walter said that he did not agree with the wording and tone of the current Scheme. He stated that 'government jargon', combined with terms such as 'shall' and 'must', made it sound quite commanding, as well as some parts not making sense. Margaret agreed with both previous statements, adding that if it was written in plain English, the document would almost halve in content. Danny also stressed that all community councillors are volunteers, many who also volunteer in other organisations, and receiving lots of paperwork from the local authority does not make their role appealing. There was general consensus that the current document was written in legal language, and that it was important a new Scheme is written in plain English.

Brian stated that Falkirk Council is bound by law to have a Scheme of Establishment which provides a structure for the operation of community councils. Baillie Paterson suggested that a new Scheme of Establishment contain information on the legislative requirements in a short pre-statement before the Scheme begins.

After some discussion, Walter suggested that the panel looked through the Scheme of Establishment paragraph by paragraph and scrutinised the content of each one.

The panel first raised the issue of numbers of community councillors as set out at 4(a) and 4(b) of the current scheme. It was agreed that the wording needed to be simplified. Discussion took place on the qualification for membership of community councils, particularly with reference to being resident in the area, but it was agreed to retain the status quo.

Also raised was an issue with the current Scheme over the election form for becoming a community councillor. The current Scheme states that a candidate must be nominated by a proposer, a seconder, and two assentors for their nomination to be valid. Danny said that he thought the two assentors added 'hassle' to the whole process as it confused some people, and he also thought that having only two signatures on the form would possibly encourage more people to stand for community councillors as it made the process easier. Baillie Paterson agreed with Danny's statements; however Walter thought that having four signatures on the form may show that you are perhaps more committed to the cause. It was agreed that only a proposer and seconder would be required.

Members of the panel felt that the section on local organisation representation needed to be changed in the new Scheme to include the provision for local to have representation on the community council. Members also felt that the reference about local representatives not being able to be re-appointed for consecutive four year terms should be removed, as nobody who is willing to participate should be discouraged from participating in their community. Danny felt that the process was too bureaucratic, as did others.

The panel discussed the references at section 10 in relation to the community council constitution. It was suggested that perhaps it should be a requirement for community council members to sign a copy of the constitution. It was noted that changes to the constitution should be discussed with officers prior to submission and that the wording related to approval in this section should be tightened up.

Danny suggested that newly formed community councils should have to have their first meeting within 32 days, rather than the 21 set out in the current Scheme. After some discussion the other members came round to this idea as it gives community councils longer to set up than they have had in the past. Also raised here was the point that if community councils choose to appoint an independent minute secretary, the money for this post would come from Falkirk Council through the administrative grant given each year, and that the options for audits of accounts would be explored.

The group also considered that there was merit in increasing the time between election and the first meeting from 21 to 32 days.

Members of the panel also suggested that the section in the current Scheme on financial assistance should be reviewed before adopting a new Scheme.

Overall, the panel came to the conclusion that the document is common sense, but would benefit from being written in plain English.

Community Council Policy Development Panel Meeting Note
Wednesday 4th December 2013 4pm

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
Councillor Adrian Mahoney (Elected Member)
Rose Mary Glackin (Chief Governance Officer)
Danny Callaghan (Participant)
Margaret Cheyne (Participant)
Walter Inglis (Participant)
Pauline Rodger (Participant)
Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
Shona Barton (Committee Services Officer)
Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met in the Committee Suite at 4pm on Wednesday 4th December to discuss the Model Scheme of Establishment.

Brian opened by welcoming everyone and briefly summarising the last meeting on the current Scheme of Establishment. The findings of the last meeting included that the group felt the current scheme is overly bureaucratic and a new scheme should be written in plain English. The group also agreed that qualification for new election should be on the grounds of being resident in the area, but there should be provision for people with interests in the area to perhaps join the community council as a local organisation member. It was also decided that local representatives should be allowed to stand for consecutive terms on a community council. Brian highlighted that the Model Scheme is only a guideline and that sections can be changed to suit Falkirk Council's purpose.

For this meeting, the group decided to follow a similar framework to the last, and scrutinise the content of the Model Scheme of Establishment paragraph by paragraph.

The group felt that Section 1 & 2 should remain the same as they contain parts of the legislation relevant to community councils, and that a useful introduction should be provided.

The group discussed the consultative mechanisms mentioned in Section 3, and noted at present there are no methods in place for community councils to validate the views they put to the local authority.

Councillor Mahoney said that it may be useful to have best practice guidance attached as an appendix which would hopefully answer all future questions anyone may have – one example being consultative mechanisms. Brian also said that there are plans to have communications and best practice training for community councillors over the course of the next few months.

Councillor Martin agreed with the idea to have a training module on best practice, as some community councils have been operating outside their remit, and the Council wants to tighten up on how they work. The group agreed that standardisation of procedures across all community councils would be a good idea.

Walter brought the group's attention back to a point made earlier in the Scheme about securing involvement by all sectors of the community, saying that this would be quite difficult as many people are not interested in their local community councils. The panel agreed that greater involvement of the community is something that could be aspired to, and ways in which this could be achieved were discussed.

Discussion took place on community councils being statutory consultees on planning and licensing applications. Danny raised the issue of community councils not being allowed to speak at Council meetings. It was noted that there was opportunity for this to happen through the deputation process.

The group briefly discussed the benefit of having a code of conduct for community councillors and it was agreed that this was essential and it should be included in a new Scheme of Establishment. The reason for its inclusion was that this would inform community councillors of their parameters/limitations.

The group agreed to change the section on ex-officio membership so that local elected members do not automatically become members of their local community council, this will help to ensure that all meetings remain non-political. It was agreed that there should be provisions for elected members to be invited to meetings. The group also discussed the possibility of changing the term 'ex-officio members' to 'associate members', and changing how it was written. Councillor Mahoney added that there should be best practice developed on how to send community council information out to local elected members.

The issue of accounts being audited by local companies was raised and it was noted that this would be addressed at the following policy development panel meetings to deal with community council resources.

The meeting closed with the group agreeing that there would be a reflection meeting to pull together the work already completed, with further meetings early in 2014 to specifically talk about community council resources.

Community Council Policy Development Panel Review Meeting
Wednesday 2nd April 4:30pm

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
Baillie Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
Rose Mary Glackin (Chief Governance Officer)
Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met in the Leader's Office at 4:30pm on Wednesday 2nd April to discuss the review of the Scheme of Establishment and the review of support to community councils. Brian opened the meeting by updating the panel on the progress since the last meeting. A summary of the main issues raised at the previous meetings was provided. The panel asked that an interim progress report was prepared for the administration to keep the group up to date.

The panel considered a draft Scheme for comment. This was based upon the Scottish Government's model Scheme but had been modified to reflect comments made at previous meetings by the panel and the focus group. The panel agreed that two versions should be prepared – a 'clean version' and one showing changes should be circulated to the focus group for comment and then on to all community councillors as part of a consultation process.

The panel then turned to the review of support. A questionnaire had been prepared which would be issued to all community councils for comment. The panel considered that a copy should be sent to each community council secretary who would prepare a response having consulted with fellow community councillors. A timetable for the review process had been proposed which allowed for a consultative meeting with representatives of the community councils on 25 April. It was agreed that the questionnaire required further amendment and to give community councillors time to prepare a response the meeting would be held on 30 April at 4.00pm. Responses would be requested by 25 April but late returns would be accepted.

The panel agreed to meet with the focus group in advance of this meeting, at 3.00pm to discuss the questionnaire and the draft Scheme.

The panel then moved on to discuss the promotion of community councils, and the Council's role in this. While some community councils had websites and used media such as Facebook, the panel considered whether there was scope for the Council to provide support in this area. The findings of a recent Citizens Panel survey were highlighted by Brian which showed that there was limited awareness of community councils and their role across the area. Brian agreed to provide panel members provide a breakdown of the demographic of those who contributed to the survey. The panel agreed to probe the issue of the Council's role in raising awareness at the meeting on 30 April. It was also suggested that training should be provided on the benefits and use of social media.

In terms of the review it was intended that a report would be submitted to the Executive on 27 May.

The panel also discussed whether any new Scheme would be introduced during the current councils' lifetime or would be introduced for the 2017 elections. It was agreed if this was practical; any new scheme would be implemented immediately.

Community Council Policy Development Panel
Wednesday 30th April 2014 3pm

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
 Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
 Danny Callaghan (Participant)
 Walter Inglis (Participant)
 Chloe Hunter (Funding Support Officer)
 Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
 Shona Barton (Committee Services Officer)
 Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met in the Committee Suite at 3pm on Wednesday 30th April. The purpose of the meeting was to look at support provided to community councils, and to consider the revised model scheme which had been issued for comment. The panel had been provided with background information for the meeting; this contained summarised responses to the support questionnaire, a summary of community council administrative grant allocation and uptake in 2013/2014, and the current, model and draft schemes for the establishment of community councils.

First discussed was the administrative grant provided by Falkirk Council. Currently the Council provides the second lowest level of administrative funding to community councils in Scotland; however the panel wanted to determine if the funding provided was sufficient. Participants were asked about their views on and experiences of the level of administrative funding available. Danny stated that when his community council apply for the grant, it isn't fully spent as councillors make only the occasional claim for ink and paper used on business. He added that this may change soon due to hall rent being introduced. The largest expenditure was public liability insurance – which the community council source privately for a better price than the Council offers. Walter agreed with Danny's points, saying that insurance had become a big spending point since the ASCC, which offered insurance at a lower price, had ceased to exist.

Danny said that his community council didn't apply every year for the administrative grant because of the bureaucracy. Walter felt that what the administrative grant could be used for should be clearly defined, and that funds allocated should reflect the size of community council area and workload. Participants agreed that the reason many community councillors didn't claim from the administrative grant was that the form was too complicated, and that claiming for costs such as telephone use and broadband was difficult to calculate. Walter said that community councils should be able to access funding at short notice (for example legal advice) from a contingency fund. Participants also felt that if people knew they were going to be out of pocket in their role as a community councillor, it would discourage people from participating. Chloe advised that the form for community council grant funding had been amended and was now less complicated and lengthy and it was available on the website. She could provide advice to community councils on how to complete the form.

Participants were asked how community councillors could be encouraged to claim expenses from the administrative grant. Walter suggested that community councillors could be given an annual stipend to work from each year, however he felt this could cause friction and higher expectations in the community if citizens felt that community councillors were being 'paid' for their voluntary role, as well as this having to be correctly audited. Walter reminded the panel that many people volunteer for the role to represent their community or to get involved in local issues, not to get their money back. However it was recognised that the principle should be that no community councillor is out of pocket for undertaking their role.

Previously the panel had considered whether Falkirk Council should provide laptops/PCs and printers to community councils. Walter said that Grangemouth Community Council had previously bought a laptop, and he felt that this had improved the management of the community council as it was useful for retaining information. The benefit of each community council having access to a shared network hosted by the Council was discussed, along with generic email addresses. However due to security restrictions on the Council networks it was not practical to pursue either suggestion.

Discussion took place on how Falkirk Council could promote community councils. Walter felt that community councils essentially need re-branded, as many people think that they are an extension of Falkirk Council in the community, and were unaware of their true purpose. Ways in which community councils had tried to sustain interest in their business were also discussed, with guest speakers and leaflet drops found to be the most effective.

The panel then moved on to discuss the suggested changes made to the draft model scheme of establishment. The minimum age for becoming a community councillor was discussed – whether it should be 16 or 18. Participants did not have a clear view on this, but all agreed that younger people should be encouraged to participate in community councils, to ensure a broader representation across the community. Shona stated that she had contacted the Assessor prior to the meeting, who had confirmed that it would be difficult, but not impossible, to compile an electoral roll for that age group.

The panel also discussed the benefits of allowing local organisations to have representatives sit on a community council for consecutive terms – the current scheme does not allow this. Participants felt that this type of participation should be encouraged, and that it was right to make provisions for this in a new scheme of establishment.

Discussion took place on the changes proposed to the scheme to allow community councils to form with half or more of the membership elected. Danny expressed concern that it would be difficult to ensure that a quorum of three was met at every meeting, if for example there were only three elected members out of a possible six when the community council was formed.

Community Council Policy Development Panel
Wednesday 30th April 2014 4pm

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
 Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
 Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
 Shona Barton (Committee Services Officer)
 Chloe Hunter (Funding Support Officer)
 Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met with community councillors in the Committee Suite at 3pm on Wednesday 30 April 2014. The panel had been provided with background information for the meeting; this contained a blank questionnaire on community council support, the current scheme of establishment, and the draft model scheme of establishment with highlighted changes. Councillor Martin opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, explaining the purpose of the policy development panel, and stating that the purpose of the meeting was to seek views on support given to community councils and on the revised model scheme.

A questionnaire had been issued to each community council in advance of the meeting. It set out questions on support and it was intended that the responses together with feedback from this meeting would help inform the panel's review of support. A draft revised model scheme had been issued for consultation and feedback.

Brian began by explaining the reasoning behind the questionnaire which had been sent out to each community council. He went through the responses which had been received for each of the six sections in the form. First discussed was the administrative grant made available by Falkirk Council each year. Community councillors present were informed that 8 out of 17 community councils claim administrative funding from Falkirk Council. Several found this surprising given that public liability insurance takes up a significant portion of their grant, however many were unaware that this insurance was necessary, or that it was available from organisations other than Falkirk Council. Community councillors were also notified that extra funding is available each year, in addition to the core grant, to appoint an independent minute secretary.

The panel then asked community councillors to identify the costs they claim in their role as community councillors. From the responses, it was clear that most community councillors do claim for expenses against their administrative grant. On occasion some claim for short distance travel or ink and paper. These answers corresponded with the majority of responses from the questionnaire. Again there was some misunderstanding from community councillors about what is claimable from the administrative grant, which further highlighted the need for an information pack to be issued. There was some discussion on the possibility of community councils being able to share the contracts that Falkirk Council have with suppliers for consumables like ink and paper so that they could benefit from the cheaper rates.

Councillor Martin stated that due to security reasons, a shared network and generic email address could only be accessed through a Falkirk Council encrypted laptop. Email best practice was discussed, along with ways of how community councils promote themselves. Many community councils confirmed they have a shared email address which they all have access to – e.g. airthparishcommunitycouncil@hotmail.com, and many said that they do not have a problem using their own laptops/computers for personal and community council business; however there was significant wear and tear damage caused to their printers as a result of excessive printing, and this was maybe something that could be supplied by Falkirk Council. The benefits of each community council having a laptop were also discussed.

The panel then moved on to talk about accommodation for meetings. Some community councillors had found difficulty in obtaining council premises for meetings, as they found they had to book too far in advance, or there was a clash with another event. Councillor Martin advised that council premises were free for community council meetings, and that that Falkirk Council could possibly block book certain dates throughout the year for the community council. However the feeling was that community councils would prefer to book their own meeting places.

Aside from issuing each community council with a printer, other ways in which community councils could access printing were discussed through Printworks or One Stop Shops for example. Participants asked if it would be possible to be issued with a community council ID badge to help them access these services, and the panel confirmed that they would be available.

The panel then sought the views of the support provided by the Community Council Liaison Officer. Participants said that the support provided by the CCLO was always timely and helpful, and could always be relied on. Participants also felt that training sessions had been helpful, and that future sessions should be held later in the evening, as many community councillors cannot regularly attend due to work commitments. There should be flexibility in the timetable.

Participants agreed that Falkirk Council had a role to play in the promotion of community councils. They thought that by having senior officers attend community council meetings regularly, they would help promote the Council in the community, and a community council information pack may increase interest in elections.

Shona informed the participants of the changes that were contained within the draft Scheme of Establishment. In particular that the model Scheme sets the minimum age for election at 16, and the current provision is 18, and informed about the difficulty of the Assessor compiling an electoral register for this age group. There was no clear preference expressed on changing the minimum age for election to 16, but it was agreed that younger people should be encouraged to participate in their local community council.

Participants were informed of the changes to nominations, about the changes of membership to allow community councils to form on 1/2 membership, and of the changes to ex-officio membership – and the meeting was supportive of the proposed changes.

Participants were also informed of the changes making the petition process for establishing a community council clearer, and of the changes to local organisation membership, allowing local organisations to stand on a community council for consecutive terms; again the meeting was supportive.

Shona also informed participants that the inaugural meeting should take place within 32 days of election, instead of the current 21, and that the current quota of meetings would remain the same in the draft scheme – 9 ordinary and 1 annual general meeting per year. This was supported.

Shona said that there would possibly be a change in the quorum for a meeting to take place. Participants felt that a minimum quorum of three is too small considering minimum membership of smaller community councils is also three.

Councillor Martin closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and for their service to the community over the years.

Community Council Policy Development Panel
Wednesday 14th May 2014 4:45pm

Present; Councillor Craig Martin (Panel Member)
Councillor Joan Paterson (Panel Member)
Rose Mary Glackin (Chief Governance Officer)
Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager)
Andrew Cassells (Trainee Committee Services Officer)

The policy development panel met in the Leader's Office at 4:45pm on Wednesday 14th May to finalise its conclusions and agree its recommendations to the Executive.

A draft report had been prepared and circulated to the panel for consideration. The report set out the background to the review, summarised the work of the panel to date and set out conclusions and recommendations.

The panel was satisfied that its review of support was now complete and would make recommendations to the Executive in May. In regard to the Scheme, the panel was of the view that further work was required on the model Scheme's associated documents – the constitution and standing orders. Similarly the panel was aware of ongoing work nationally to look at mechanisms to 'enforce' the code of conduct for community councillors which was also part of the associated documents, and agreed that there was merit in exploring these further. In the course of its review, the panel had been aware of, but not explored, the recommendations of the short-life working group on community councils and agreed to consider its recommendations in regard to support at a further meeting.

The panel agreed therefore to make recommendations to the Executive in regard to the model Scheme, and also to look in detail at the model constitution, standing orders and options for enforcing the code of conduct, with the intention of reporting to the Executive in August. The report in August would also provide a suggested consultation timetable should the Executive decide to undertake a formal review based on the revised model Scheme and associated documents. The panel considered that, when approved, any new Scheme would be implemented immediately.

The panel asked that the draft report was amended to reflect its views.