

## PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE AREA COMMITTEE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

### 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed format of the inaugural Stewartry Area Committee Community Meeting and detail how future meetings will be developed and managed.

### 2. Recommendations

Members are asked to agree:

2.1 to undertake an engagement session with key stakeholders and the public at this meeting to identify key themes, topics and the structure for future Area Committee Community Meetings and for these to be considered at a future Area Committee Business Meeting; and

2.2 to integrate the topics detailed at Section 4.2.6 into the future Area Committee Community Meeting cycle.

### 3. Considerations

#### 3.1 Background

3.1.1 A report regarding the process for engaging with communities through Area Committee Community Meetings was submitted to Stewartry Area Committee on 21 September 2011 at which Members agreed the proposed formats available.

3.1.2 Further, at the above meeting Members also agreed that an Area Committee Community Meeting be held in October 2011 to capture the views of the Community and Elected Members on future themes and topics.

### 4. Proposed format of the inaugural themed Area Committee Community Meeting and Future Meetings thereafter

#### 4.1 General Structure of Meetings

4.1.1 Area Committee Community Meetings will offer an opportunity for reports and presentations to be brought forward about priority themes and topics. Each of the community meetings will either focus on one overall topic or a range of topics which would be given an allotted time allocation within the overall meeting structure. They can also be used to undertake community consultation on key projects or issues as required. The meetings will be chaired and managed as required for Area Committee Business Meetings with support from the Area Based Teams.

4.1.2 This would strengthen the process of developing the Area Committee's role in Community Engagement in order to provide a mechanism for key stakeholders and the public to engage, participate and inform local decision making.

#### 4.2 Format for the inaugural Area Committee Community Meeting

4.2.1 With the initial meeting being aimed at gathering views and opinions on the main themes/topics for future meetings, facilitated discussion with the key stakeholders will form a critical part of the evening in order to ensure all views and suggestions are captured.

4.2.2 It is therefore proposed that following a main introduction, break out discussion groups will be facilitated with Elected Members and key stakeholders attending to help achieve the end outcome.

4.2.3 Following discussion and debate, facilitators will then provide initial feedback with the full detail, including evaluation results reported to Members at a future Area Committee Business Meeting.

4.2.4 Where facilitated discussion is required as part of an Area Committee Community Meeting, a number of different techniques will be utilised to engage with the public including break out groups, flip chart exercises, mini planning sessions, etc. Feedback on the most successful methods of engagement will also be sought and fed through the review process.

4.2.5 The suggested format/structure for this meeting is aimed at providing local people and local organisations the opportunity to have their say in how Area Committee Community Meetings will be taken forward.

- Introduction by Chair and overview of Area Committee Community Meetings format
- Presentation of Committee Report
- Facilitated breakout session(s) (dependent on numbers)
- Feedback Session
- Member Debate
- Completion of Evaluation Materials
- Public Forum

4.2.6 Members are asked to consider that dedicated Area Committee Community Meetings are arranged for the following three topics;

- “Frosts, Floods and Feeding Folk” (21 November 2011)
- SWESTRANS – Local Bus Service Tender Outcome (28 November 2011).
- Local Development Plan – consultation on the recommended and alternative housing and business and industry sites for inclusion in the plan. (January/February 2011).

#### 4.3 Promotion

4.3.1 For this initial Community Meeting and to help maximise attendance, the following groups and organisations have been invited by email to attend and participate and pass on the invitation around their networks. We have also attached to the email a questionnaire for those who cannot attend to complete and return in order to put forward their views:

- Community Councils
- Local Rural Partnership
- Sports Council
- Licensing Forum
- Third Sector Forum
- Members of the public

4.3.2 Wider attendance at these meetings has been and will continue to be encouraged through the most cost effective means possible including

- Media advertising through local newspapers & radio
- Online adverts on [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk)
- Effective marketing through existing contacts including the Stewartry LRP and other multi agency groups
- Posters delivered around the local area
- E-mails to Community Councils and community groups
- Development of direct mailing lists

#### 4.4 Feedback, Monitoring & Evaluation

4.4.1 In order to comply with both the Feedback and Monitoring and Evaluation Standards from the National Standards for Community Engagement, robust methods of recording feedback from each of the sessions detailed above will be collated, monitored and fed back as appropriate both through the Area Based Teams. Our Council will aim to ensure that as much feedback as possible is given to all stakeholders, especially in relation to subjects which are on-going over a period of months and even years. This will include collating contact details (including email) of attendees at meetings, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, to ensure those who wish to be kept up to date can be easily contacted.

4.4.2 Feedback forms will also be available for anyone who may not have had the opportunity to raise a question during the meeting or may not feel comfortable in doing so. These can be returned directly to officers as soon as possible after the Area Committee Community Meetings.

4.4.3 Opportunities are also being explored to create a dedicated web-page accessible from the home page of [www.dumgal.gov.uk](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk) which will provide the following information on Area Committee Community Meetings:

- Overview of the remit and role of the Area Committee Community Meetings
- Dates, venues and times of forthcoming meetings within each area
- Feedback Form for completion
- Option to be added onto the e-mail contact list for inclusion in future meeting invites
- Feedback from previous meetings, outcomes, etc

4.4.4 It is proposed that there would be a dedicated e-mail address for each of the areas which would be closely monitored and would be used to capture emerging issues and relevant comments from key stakeholders and the wider public as they arise so they can be fed into the meeting planning process.

#### 4.5 Format for future meetings

4.5.1 Once the main theme/topics have been collated and approved through the Area Committee Business Meetings, contact will be made with the relevant Council Service team to progress reports, future presentations and engagement sessions as appropriate.

4.5.2 The future structure of operating the Public Forum element at the conclusion of Area Committee Community Meetings needs to be considered to ensure this provides

sufficient opportunity for correct and relevant information to be provided to any questions raised. The operation of the Public Forum section will be included within facilitated sessions at the inaugural meeting to ascertain the thoughts of Elected Members and wider stakeholders. This structure may require, where feasible, any questions being submitted in advance of the respective meeting so that relevant Officers can be available on the evening or to prepare an appropriate response in advance and ensure any issues raised can receive an answer. It is important to highlight that this mechanism should not replace the existing arrangements in place for reporting issues to officers as per normal business and therefore addressing issues before they reach Area Committee Community Meetings.

## 5. Governance and Management

5.1 All Area Committee Community Meetings will be chaired, governed and managed as for Area Committee Business Meetings but with additional time allowed for engagement with the public using a range of methods.

5.2 The Area Committee will carry out an annual review of the Area Committee Community Meetings and will incorporate any learning points into the planning, organisation and management of future meetings which will include public views using their evaluations following Area Committee Community Meetings.

## 6. Governance Assurance

The proposals outlined in this report have been informed by feedback received during the consultation and the consideration of previous Area Framework Committee Reports.

## 7. Impact Assessment

As this report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy, it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

### Author(s)

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### Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
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Appendices - None

Background Papers

1. Dumfries and Galloway Council 24 March 2011 Review of Scheme of Administration and Delegation of Area Committees
2. Remit and Delegations of Area Committees June/July 2011
3. Stewartry Area Committee, 21 September 2011 – Area Committee: Community Meetings
4. Dumfries and Galloway Council report 14 October 2010