

ARGYLL AND BUTE

COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Scottish Executive commissioned the Scottish Community Development Centre to produce a set of national standards defining good practice in community engagement.
- 1.2 These standards were developed over a period through a widespread consultative process involving six pilots across Scotland. There was considerable input from Argyll and Bute as one of the pilots was in Bute and Cowal and another was in Helensburgh.
- 1.3 The intention is that these standards should provide guidance in promoting community engagement in areas such as community planning and community learning.
- 1.4 To further this process the Executive commissioned the Scottish Community Development Centre to provide support to Community Planning Partnerships and Community Learning Partnerships to promote the use of the standards. This support takes the form of an allocation of days which can be used flexibly to provide training, advice, information or consultancy. The allocation for Argyll and Bute is 6 days.
- 1.5 Lead officers from community planning and community learning were asked to produce a co-ordinated response to the use of this support. Brian Barker and Jim McCrossan met on 2 November 2005 to discuss the issue and have come up with the proposal outlined below.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal has three separate but inter linked elements, these are described below with suggested dates which have been provisionally agreed with the Scottish Community Development Centre:
 - **6 February 2006** -an initial one day training/discussion session for key strategic community planning partners;
 - **2, 3 and 9 March 2006** -3 days of localised training for staff of partner agencies and community representatives;
 - **16-17 March 2006** -2 days of consultancy for agencies, officers, groups of officers to assist with consultation and application of the standards.

- 2.2 **Initial training/discussion** – This would be targeted at key strategic partners and would provide an opportunity to raise awareness about the standards and discuss issues arising around adoption of the standards. There would be an input from the Scottish Community Development Centre about the standards and also from staff from Argyll and Bute on the experience of piloting the standards.
- 2.3 **Localised training** – This would provide a more accessible opportunity for staff from partner agencies and community representatives to participate in awareness raising, training and discussion about the standards and would follow a similar format to the training for key partners.
- 2.4 **Consultancy** – This would provide an opportunity for a range of people with an interest/responsibility for consultation and engagement to obtain advice on a surgery basis. It could range from officers with a responsibility for designing and managing consultation processes to agencies seeking advice on how to adopt the standards effectively.
- 2.5 **Adoption of Standards** – The purpose of this process is to raise awareness about the standards, but also, crucially, to encourage Community Planning Partnerships and partners to adopt the standards in their dealings with communities, as the Council is proposing to do as part of the Best Value review of consultation procedures. It is hoped that partners will take the opportunity offered by the training and the consultancy to actively pursue this aim.
- 2.6 The offer of 6 days consultancy has to be taken up by the end of the financial year. It will be necessary to finalise dates with the Scottish Community Development Centre; this should be done as soon as possible.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Management Committee agree to the proposals and dates for use of the time available from the Scottish Community Development Centre.
- 3.2 The Community Planning Partnership and partners should be asked to consider adopting the standards and to use the time available through the training and consultancy to raise awareness of the standards and to resolve any obstacles to their adoption.