
ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY PLANNING
PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

28TH June 2006

SCOTTISH RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME CONSULTATION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report explores the opportunities presented by the Scottish Rural Development Programme to develop an integrated approach to rural development funding in Argyll and Bute, using the Community Planning Partnership

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** That the CPP respond to the consultation emphasising the importance of Community Planning taking a leading role in the management of rural development funding 2007-13.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Members of the Committee will recall that a paper presented to the partnership in December 2005 identified opportunities for Community Planning to work with the LEADER partnership and Agricultural Forum in Argyll and Bute to deliver rural development funding 2007-2013. This was presented in the context of the Scottish Executive Consultation on the Scottish Rural Development Strategy.
- 3.2** The Scottish Executive have now issued the consultation document, 'Rural Development Programme for Scotland 2007-13' and are inviting responses by 29th June 2006.
- 3.3** The Programme sets the context for disbursement of 'Pillar 2' funds from the European Common Agricultural Policy budget. This is the key 'pillar' of European policy which seeks to move European funding from direct subsidy to agriculture (Pillar 1) into the wider rural economy.
- 3.4** This presents an excellent opportunity for the Community Planning Partnership to take an active role in prioritising actions and facilitating programming in the new Programme.
- 3.5** The Executive identifies 3 main vehicles for delivery of these funds in Scotland:

- Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (LFASS)
- Land Management Contracts (LMCs)
- LEADER

3.6

LFASS will not be substantially altered until 2010.

LMCs are individually negotiated contracts between land managers and the Scottish Executive covering a range of activities organised into 'Tiers' in the document. This is the area of activity which receives most attention in the document and the greatest amount of detail. Indeed there is concern that the emphasis on LMCs will be potentially detrimental to a real integrated rural development funding programme, as community groups and other rural stakeholders who are not 'land managers' will be unable to apply for a significant amount of the funding available.

3.7

LEADER is the mechanism by which a bottom up approach to rural development can take place, with communities involved directly in the prioritisation and management of funds, facilitated by the public sector agencies. Currently the LEADER Programme in Argyll and Bute (and Lochaber, the Small Isles and Arran/Cumbræ) is managed by Argyll and Bute Council and has delivered over £5m European LEADER funding to community based projects since 2001.

3.8

The consultation document proposes the funds be prioritised regionally by Regional Project Assessment Committee. These would identify regional priorities for competitive actions in LMCs, but the Scottish Executive would make the final decision on approval. LEADER would identify local priorities and disburse funds accordingly.

3.9

3.10

The document does not identify Community Planning as overarching partnership organisation, but only as one of many.

3.11

This paper proposes that Community Planning in Argyll and Bute, as the major and statutory public sector partnership, fulfils the RPAC and LEADER prioritisation and disbursement role. This would ensure no additional bureaucracy, no further tier of partnership working and a good model in terms of the current Scottish Executive Agenda of shared services.

3.12

The existing Agricultural Forum and LEADER partnership have already identified priority actions for bringing the sectors together and have an excellent working relationship. The Community participation in the LEADER partnership is >50%, the minimum identified by the Scottish Executive. The LEADER project officers and secretariat also have extensive experience in delivering European

funds, and so could bring that expertise to the partnership.

- 3.13** In responding this way, Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership is in a position to propose an excellent response to the document in practical terms, and assist in delivering the key objectives of sustaining our communities.

Further detailed discussion would require to take place to identify exactly the roles and relationships of existing groups.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1** The community Planning Partnership is in an excellent position to make recommendations to the Scottish Executive on taking forward an innovative partnership approach to implementing parts of the Scottish Rural Development Programme.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Policy: Improved partnership working across agencies in line with the Scottish Executive Shared Services Agenda. Improved and integrated rural development funding prioritisation.

Financial: The available budget has not yet been identified

Personnel: Existing officer time

Equal Opportunity: Improved access by the wider rural community to rural development funding.

For further information contact: Jane Fowler

Telephone 01700 501371

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Click here and type List of Background Papers (if any)]