

The Highland Council

14th May 2015

Agenda Item	15
Report No	

Supplementary Information on the Up-date on the Review of Area Committees and Local Community Planning Arrangements

Progress with local discussions with Members for Badenoch and Strathspey

1. Ideas for localism emerging

1.1 Badenoch and Strathspey Members met on 12th May 2015 to discuss the review.

1.2 Members felt that for Badenoch and Strathspey to be a shining example of local democracy, they needed to make sure that:

- All the public bodies in the Badenoch and Strathspey area come together to focus on solutions and share resources for Badenoch and Strathspey communities. This includes national and regional public bodies. The decisions they make locally are adhered to.
- We have full engagement of the third sector and communities building on the community work done through Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey (VABS) and we engage fully with commercial organisations.
- Many more people want to stand for election, e.g. for Community Councils and local government.
- People have a voice and can influence decisions affecting them.
- Resources target inequalities – including rural inequalities and improving transport.

1.3 To achieve this vision, Members propose:

1. Taking forward participatory budgeting in 2015/16 initially with £30,000 of Ward Discretionary Budget, and with the scope to bring in the Carbon Clever Community Grants (capital) to be explored. To ensure a fair geographic spread across the Ward, Members want to experiment with £10,000 being agreed by communities in each of three areas. Community events would take place in 2015/16 in Newtonmore, Nethy Bridge and Carrbridge and if the approach is successful the locations in future years would move around. Members are keen to explore how communities can be involved in the planning of the local events. They are also interested in how this model of community participation could be used in future for allocating some mainstream funding, especially in community services.
2. To no longer have the Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee, District Partnership and Locality Planning meetings. Instead Members proposed a local community planning partnership model. In addition to the partners involved in the Highland CPP, members have

noted the need to involve land based partners too e.g. Forestry Commission, SEPA, the Cairngorm National Park Authority and local commercial enterprises. The issues of local importance to communities are well documented through the VABS Action Plans and these would help shape partnership agendas. Council business would be included in the partnership meetings but with clarity on the specific role of elected members to deal with those items.

3. In keeping with feedback from other areas, Badenoch and Strathspey Members are interested in a review of the scheme of delegation, especially in community services.

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