

ROYAL BURGH OF WIGTOWN & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL
CONSULTATIONS WORKING PARTY – February 2017

CURRENT CONSULTATIONS

- a) Consultation on the future of the Scottish Planning System – Scottish Government**
Closing date: 4 April 2017

This consultation builds on the work of an Independent Panel commissioned to undertake a review of the planning system. The review included opportunities to get involved through both written and oral evidence and an online discussion forum and many community councils gave input to this review. Since then Scottish Government has been working with a wide range of stakeholders, including community representatives, public and private sectors, to explore potential changes to the planning system.

Community councils have a statutory right to be consulted on applications for planning permission and are mentioned in [Places, people and planning: A consultation on the future of the Scottish planning system](#), which gives an overview of the consultation and proposed changes to the Scottish planning system. The Government has produced a short guide for Community Councils.

Following completion of the consultation period analysis of the responses will be undertaken and published within 12 weeks of the consultation closing. The analysis will help inform the drafting and production of a draft Planning Bill which is to be introduced to Parliament in Year 2 of the Parliamentary Programme.

- b) Local Development Plan 2 - Dumfries & Galloway Council.** Closing date: 24 April 2017.

Dumfries and Galloway Council has produced a Main Issues Report (MIR) which sets out the Council's general proposals for development over the next 20 year period. This consultation offers one of the main opportunities to have a say in the preparation of the second Local Development Plan for Dumfries and Galloway.

Paper copies of the MIR can be viewed at all Council Libraries and Planning Offices during the 12-week consultation period. (You can also buy your own £30 copy from Planning Offices). An electronic version can also be viewed and downloaded along with all supporting documents and site assessments at www.dumgal.gov.uk/LDP.

Drop-in sessions are being held across the region with events from 3pm – 6:30pm in Whithorn Community Centre on Thursday, 2 March and in the McMillan Hall, Newton Stewart on Wednesday, 8 March. The informal sessions will be staffed by planning officers.

- c) The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) - review of the 2014 -17 Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Dumfries & Galloway.** Closing date: 31 March 2017

The review of the Local Plan seeks to assess what differences have been made and to determine what the Service needs to focus on in the years to come for continued local improvement of community safety and wellbeing.

The review will include engaging with stakeholders to achieve as broad a view as possible on what they think about SFRS current performance and what priorities they should set for the future.

Those who wish to take part can complete a short questionnaire

<https://firescotland.citizenspace.com/planning-and-performance/local-plan-review>

d) Councillor Code of Conduct Amendment - Scottish Government. Closing date: 20 March 2017

Currently the Code of Conduct prevents a Local Authority councillor from sitting on the board of an organisation in his capacity as a councillor whilst still allowing him to take part in council meetings where there might be a conflict of interest between his responsibility as a councillor and his responsibility to that organisation. There is a need for councillors to represent the council on external boards whilst still being able to properly represent their electorate. The Scottish Government is seeking to reconcile the wording of the code to exempt any possible conflict of interests in the specified circumstances.

It was agreed at the January meeting of the Community Council that Jak Kane would draft a response to the consultation for ratification at the February meeting; explaining that the current situation was detrimental to local organisations whereby Councillors could be prevented from speaking in support of an organisation based in and providing services to members of their electorate (see Appendix A for draft response).

FORTHCOMING CONSULTATIONS

No Forthcoming Consultation

APPENDIX A – Councillor Code of Conduct Amendment)

We would also ask if respondents have any other comments or suggestions about the provisions of the Code on declarations of interest as regards councillors who are also members of other bodies.

Comments:

We consider that in some cases it is beneficial for Third Sector bodies to have councillor representation on their Board of Directors and for the Council to have said representation as well. It is therefore incongruous that these organisations are disadvantaged by their elected representatives being precluded from taking part in discussion of decision-taking on matters in which that body has an interest.

Dumfries & Galloway Council have obviously identified this as a problem as they are currently reviewing the policy of appointing Councillors on to Boards of external organisations and withdrawing them to avoid the perceived conflict of interest.

Having Councillors as non-voting or as observers could circumvent the current position but could also diminish the future level of commitment and involvement.