



## Role of the Community Council

Community councils were introduced through the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. They are voluntary organisations. The Act defined the purpose of a community council as:

*"to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the Local Authorities for its area and to public authorities the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible."*

The main areas of responsibility lie in –

- **Running the Community Council effectively**, ensuring its work is fair and transparent, and within legal guidelines.
- **Engaging and discovering community views** – finding out what is important to everyone in the area and their opinions on issues and activities which affect them.
- Expressing those views by **representing the community** at meetings and events, commenting on planning and licensing applications and communicating with the Local Authority and other public bodies.

A Community Council may also decide to take forward activities themselves or in partnership with other groups, to benefit their community and meet community needs.

This means Community Councils can be involved in a wide variety of issues and activities from road improvements, youth projects, environmental projects, upgrading of amenities and community initiatives, both on their own and in partnership with other agencies.

They can act as a campaigning body in raising awareness of specific local issues and support local groups and initiatives through securing funding and passing on knowledge.

### Legal Requirements

A Community Council is expected to act within the law such as in terms of equality and diversity, licensing, health and safety, data protection and other requirements related to their activities and projects.

## **Fairness and Transparency**

Since Community Councils must represent all people in the area without prejudice they should:

- Be non-party political and non-sectarian.
- Represent a full cross-section of the community and encourage the involvement of people regardless of gender, race, age, disability, nationality or sexual orientation.

## **Conduct**

A Code of Conduct for Community Councils is in place setting principles to make sure all Community Councillors act in a manner expected of someone who is representing their community. This Code should be followed by all Community Councillors and where it is felt that a Community Council or Councillor(s) breaches the Code, a complaints process is in place for it to be considered.

## **Consultation - Planning**

Planning is the process of how land is used and since 1996 Community Councils have had to be consulted by the Local Authority on local planning applications.

Stirling Local Development Plan covers the whole of the area and sets out a planning framework for how land can be used now and in the future taking into consideration the wider economic, environmental and social challenges that the area will face.

Based on the Local Development Plan, the Planning system in the Council then decides whether developments can go ahead and are in the public interest by refusing or granting planning permission. Applications for planning permission are published weekly in the Planning Schedule and that is sent to the relevant Community Council.

Community Councils then consider the application and make comments or representation by letter, petition or email in the timescale if necessary. Their role is not to make a decision on approval but to represent the community views on the application. Many Community Councils have a Planning Officer and separate planning sub-groups to deal with these applications.

## **Consultation - Licensing**

Community Councils are also consulted by the Licensing Board in the area on any new or major changes in existing license application for premises. They can object or make representation/comment on the application to the Licensing board.