

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 15 AUGUST 2023

MANDATORY TRAINING ON PLANNING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS CONSULTATION

**REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks the appointment of 5 elected members to a short life Member Officer Group (MOG) to work alongside officers from the Planning and Legal and Democratic Services to prepare a response to the Scottish Government Consultation on Mandatory Training on Planning for Elected Members.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Agree the appointment of 5 elected members to a short life Member Officer Group to input to an Angus Council response to the Scottish Government consultation on mandatory training on planning for elected members.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

Commitment to delivery of this project contributes to the following priorities in the Angus Council Plan 2023-2028.

Caring for the Economy

- Continue to support and deliver elements of the Tay Cities Deal
- Support businesses to grow and invest in Angus through our employment land and commercial property

Caring for our Place

- Take action to mitigate against climate change by delivering our Transition to Net Zero Action Plan: 2022 to 2030 and leading on the delivery of a Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plan (SECAP) for Angus to reduce area wide emissions
- Produce a Local Development Plan for Angus
- Ensure the provision of new houses in Angus
- Ensure delivery of affordable housing via our Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)
- Engage with communities to support their ambitions to deliver on local aspirations (e.g. community asset transfer requests, community gardens, food hubs)
- Support the development of more active travel routes around Angus
- Enhance and restore Angus Biodiversity, corporately and with a range of stakeholders

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Elected members have a crucial role in the planning system, through preparation of the development plan which sets the policy basis for the future development of their area and in the determination of certain planning applications. It is therefore vital that elected members have the knowledge and understanding to help them make decisions that are robust and sound in planning reason. At present elected members undertake training on a voluntary basis and current practice across Scotland varies.

3.2 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 included a legislative provision to impose training requirements for planning authorities. Section 45, once in force, will prohibit elected members from carrying out certain specified planning functions if they have not completed training specified by Scottish Ministers.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 In advance of this section of the Act coming in to force the Scottish Government have published a consultation seeking views on the proposed format, content and delivery of the training and seeks feedback on thirteen specific questions. The consultation was published on Tuesday 13th July and closes on 26th October 2023. A copy of the consultation paper is included at Appendix 1.

5. PROPOSALS

5.1 It is proposed that a short life Member Officer Group be formed to inform the consultation response to Scottish Government. The resource commitment to this from elected members will be no more than 2 MOG meetings.

5.2 In terms of Standing Order 32(4) in appointing members to committees the Council, "shall, so far as possible" give effect to the principles of regarding "political balance". Whilst this Standing Order does not apply to Member/Officer groups, the Council has, by custom and practice, normally sought to comply with the same principles.

5.3 Nominations for the Member Officer group should therefore comprise from the following membership:

- Admin Group 3
- Opposition Group 2

Members of the Development Standards committee are likely to have more familiarity of Planning issues and therefore in order to ensure a cross section of experience from member representatives at least 1 member from the admin group and 1 from the opposition group should not currently be a member of Development Standards committee.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications there are indirect financial implications through officer time to facilitate the meetings and draft the formal response.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A screening opinion has been undertaken and no equality impact assessment is required.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

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Appendix 1: Scottish Government Consultation on Mandatory Training on Planning for Elected Members



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

Step 1

Name of Proposal (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions):

Committee report for setup of Member Officer Group to provide input to the Scottish Government consultation on mandatory training on planning for elected members.

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment

Yes/No

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people

Yes/No

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics

Yes/No

(iii) It is for information only

Yes/No

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year

Yes/No

(v) It is technical

Yes/No

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Jill Paterson, Service Leader – Planning and Sustainable Growth
18/7/23

Reviewed by: Antony McGuinness Manager - Dev Plan, Environment & Climate Change
31 July 2023

Approved by: Alison Smith, Director VC&SG 1 August 2023