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The Moray Forum Minutes of Meeting held on 24 August 2009 in New Elgin Primary School Annexe

Present:

Alan Beresford (Chair)	Buckie Area Forum
Rebecca Kail	Elgin South Area Forum
Aileen Marshall	Elgin South Area Forum
Barry Taylor	Buckie Area Forum
Carin Schwartz	Forres Area Forum
John Bremner	Forres Area Forum
Anita Milne	Milne's Area Forum
Keiron Green	Elgin North Area Forum

Also present:

John Ferguson	The Moray Council
Ian Todd	The Moray Council

1. Welcome and Apologies

Alan Beresford welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Minutes of the last meeting

John was asked to amend to show that the Carers contract is a 3 year contract and with that it was proposed that this was a true record of the meeting by John Bremner and seconded by Anita Milne.

3. Better Community Engagement

Ian Todd reported on the process underway. Planned meetings were held with officers from across a range of agencies and sectors with an evening meeting for community activists. All community groups were invited along. Papers from the day have been widely distributed. Ian understands that all forums members have been sent copies from the Community Support Unit staff either directly or via the chair people. The consultant provided by the Government will be back in September when a further meeting will be held. A steering group for the project will be established.

4. Young Carers Update

Anita is still working to determine why such drastic cuts to services took place. Councillor Ross is also investigating and has made a written request for information at the Community Services committee. Alan Beresford suggested waiting till the report comes out before the Moray Forum acts. Anita reported that someone from Milnes Area Forum is to sit on the Quarriers Steering Group. There was a suggestion that this should be raised with the Health and Social Care partnership.

5. Community Engagement Steering Group

Alan Beresford expressed concerns about the Community Engagement Group meeting. The main issues being;

An agenda and associated papers were sent to Alan but not to the Forum's two representatives on the group. John apologised and explained an administrative error had occurred.

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The report on Community Agreements presented to the Community Engagement Group on the 13th August was discussed. Forum members were concerned that a report was submitted without the Forums full support. Ian explained that the report was simply asking for an endorsement to explore the community agreements concept further i.e. to get support for a seminar. Ian's understanding from the meeting in June was that he was to ascertain whether 50% costs of the proposed seminar could be sought from the community planning partnership. In order to ensure this happened he had to submit a report to the community engagement group who were the identified partners. The "discussion paper" was included for information purposes only to enable the group a better understanding of community agreements. It was not his intention to mislead anyone and apologised if he had upset anyone. There followed a discussion on the report presented to the meeting. The Chair concluded the discussion stressing that in future any papers going to any external Body in the name of the Moray Forum will be approved by the Moray Forum. No papers will be put before any external organisation without the Forums authority.

Alan Beresford made clear that he had nothing to do with the report, either in its formation or submission to the group.

A number of critical comments, actions and issues were raised concerning the communication between the councils support staff (John & Ian) and the forum. The Chair asked that the circumstances that led to this should not happen again. Barry Taylor requested that it be noted that he welcomes the support given by John and Ian.

On a practical note the Chair asked that any papers sent to him should be copied to the Vice Chair.

Concern was raised that the Community Agreement paper could have done damage to the relationship the forum had with Community Councils.

There was also a discussion on where the Community Engagement Group is going particularly the action plan. It was agreed that this would be circulated across the forum.

It was pointed out that another report had gone up in the name of the Forum and that had been a successful example of how the process should work. Rebecca's suggestions on document confidentiality were enthusiastically received by the community engagement group.

There was a general discussion on the need for the Moray Forum to begin to move on to more positive agendas at future meetings.

6. Community Consultation

John was asked to provide an update on the consultation process. He reported that he had explained the new process to the Community Engagement group who were satisfied that the process of engaging directly with communities to identify need and to ensure that we do not duplicate was the right way forward. The new approach to the consultation was developed

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jointly with the Moray Forum, MVSO and the Joint Community Councils. Questions about the timescale for this process were asked. John recognised that both the forums and the JCC want to know what the position is regarding support before they can comment on the financial allocation. John had hoped to have this done before October but that may be difficult given the scale of the consultation. There were some concerns that the support levels to Forums had been reduced already, John pointed out that we were in a transition period and that the new members of staff had not been recruited yet. John outlined his vision for the service which saw Forums as the hub for community engagement, with issues being brought from all elements of the community. Modelling the forums on the structures in Elgin, Buckie and Forres where Community Councils, Tenants associations etc come together at the forum and that support would be guided by this. Staff are employed by the Council and have to work to Council priorities but there has to be a process to ensure that communities receive support. John is keen to introduce a work management system to ensure staff do not take on too much. Ian talked about the criteria used to decide with staff how work is allocated and agreed to distribute this to the forums and other partners once a decision had been taken on the format.

7. Community Issues

(a) Community Group Information Day signs

There had been concerns over the way community groups had signs for events removed, this was seen to be an over zealous reaction to dealing with commercial signs and was applied in an inconsistent way as some signs seemed to be left alone, no advice was given as to how best to place signs. The Chair will write to the Chief Executive expressing the forums concerns and asking for readable guidance on signage.

(b) Moray Towns Partnership

Moray towns involved received no money in this round of the allocation of funds. An amended application would be sent in. Carin felt that they were not allowed to get involved in this amended application. There was concern over the limited timescales given by Government. Alan felt that it was important to have ideas and projects ready to take off the shelf when opportunities for funding like this arise.

(c) Consultative Material.

This item related to the issues around document confidentiality. Forums are receiving huge amounts of consultations, many are not easily responded to and are not written in a way that community groups can easily respond to. A letter will be drafted for all forums that will point out to the agency sending out the consultation that no response will be forthcoming if it is not in a format that is suitable and does not meet the standards.

(d) LEADER

Anita Milne reported back that in the Business Plan it was agreed that forums would be asked about applications from their area, and this is not happening. John will raise with David the LEADER Coordinator.

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(e) Criminal Justice and Licensing Bill

Anita also raised the concerns of SCVO on the new Criminal Justice and Licensing Bill as there are implications for community groups as they will now have to pay for a Licence for fundraising events in the way commercial organisations do currently. This could be around £200 per event. SCVO are encouraging all groups to write to their MSP. It was agreed that Moray Forum will write to our MSP. John would speak to Sean Hoath in Legal to get more information on this and get back to Anita.

(f) Funding Stream

It was also reported that there was a new funding stream named “Go Play” aimed at play facility for 5-13 year olds.

8. Date of next Meeting

5TH October 2009 at 7pm in New Elgin Primary School Annex.