



Summary

Community empowerment is about supporting people to do things for themselves and enable them to take control over the decisions and factors that affect their lives and communities: a process where people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them.'

Communities may be geographically located, or they may share common interests, concerns or identities. North Ayrshire Council is at the forefront of supporting communities through a range of processes.

Empowering our Communities

In 2011, the Christie Commission on the future delivery of public services identified four principles for public services reform. One of the principles the aim to empower individuals and communities receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides legislation which places duties on public bodies and provides rights for community groups and organisations.

In June 2018, the Scottish Government launched its refreshed National Performance Framework jointly with COSLA with a new outcome: '*We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.*'

Community empowerment activities are wide ranging and include (not exclusively) the following:

- *Community led and based organisations* (for example, North Ayrshire has 26 Community Associations who operate our community centres);
- *Community activism* (for example, #SaveOurFerry – the Herald Society Awards 2017 Campaign of the Year)
- *Participation in local decision-making structures* (for example, North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership's approach to Locality Planning, where community representatives, including community councils, have parity of esteem with Elected Members).
- *Land or island buy-out* (for example, a local organisation's purchase of a former school site).
- *Asset transfer* (for example, Fullarton Community Association's asset transfer of land for their new community hub).
- *Participation requests* (for example, a local group's request to be included in future development of the Ardeer Peninsula through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.)
- *People deciding how local money is spent* (Participatory Budgeting) (for example, 152 small projects have been funded to date in North Ayrshire and more than £750,000 has been committed to mainstream PB).
- *Local communities working with public bodies to improve outcomes in their local area through community planning processes* (North Ayrshire's Locality Partnerships have identified and acted on local priorities, with a view to

reducing inequalities and these are included within the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan for North Ayrshire.

- *Engaging with local communities:* North Ayrshire has invested in training over 100 staff and partners through the Consultation Institute.

During 2018/19, the Scottish Government and COSLA began reviewing local governance to look at how local decisions are made and how local democracy is working (Democracy Matters). This will shape how communities are supported in future.

North Ayrshire Council has been working with the Audit Scotland advisory group to Develop and agree principles to strengthen and support community empowerment which will help support the role of communities in the future:

Principle 1: Community control: Support communities to successfully take more control over decisions and assets.

Principle 2: Public sector leadership: Strong and clear leadership on community empowerment sets the tone and culture of the organisation.

Principle 3: Effective relationships: Build effective working relationships between public bodies, local communities and local partners

Principle 4: Improving outcomes: Evaluate whether outcomes for local communities are improving and inequalities are being reduced.

Principle 5: Accountability: Be accountable and transparent.

Creating a Community Charter

A Community Charter recognises the very real contribution that residents can make to our community. It will allow our local communities and partners come together and set out the things that they jointly commit to do to help improve our localities. This could be anything from agreeing to recycle more at home or volunteer to help support community activity – and in turn, we would commit to keeping as much of our spend as we can within North Ayrshire and involving local people in determining how we spend our money.

But these are just some examples – we want to hear from our communities about what should feature in the charter and how it will work.

We recognise that everyone has a part to play in making North Ayrshire Fair for All.

To find out more about community empowerment and how you can get involved, visit <http://www.northayrshire.community>

