

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BETWEEN COMMUNITY COUNCILS AND DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY COUNCIL

Dumfries & Galloway Council (DGC): Checklist of Good Practice

DGC shall:

1. Consult directly with Community Councils (CCs) on all issues where consultation with the public is a statutory requirement.
2. Advise a Community Council (CC) directly, and in advance of Press advertisement, of planning applications within a Community Council's area.
3. Consult with CCs on changes in licensing policies.
4. Advise a CC of major works proposed by DGC, or of major utility works of which DGC is aware and of any changes to timing or duration of those works, within a Community Council's area.
5. Agree to receive representations from CCs on matters of concern to their community.
6. Allow CCs to have access to information (other than information of a confidential or exempt nature as defined by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973) on matters of concern to enable informed decisions, sensible comment and meaningful consultation.
7. Encourage CCs to look up E-genda to find relevant Committee agendas/minutes.
8. Nominate an officer to act as Community Council Liaison Officer between DGC and CCs; and nominate an officer in each Area Framework office as the first point of contact between DGC and CCs.
9. Provide DGC's Libraries, Information & Archives Services with copies of all minutes of CC meetings within 7 calendar days of receipt.
10. Encourage effective, full and careful consultation with CCs over matters of common interest by providing sufficient information in adequate time to allow a considered response.
11. Ensure that CCs are provided, where requested, with reasons for decisions taken (this would be consistent with the Code of Guidance on Openness which CoSLA has developed), and that in all cases they are informed about reasons for decisions on cases where they have expressed a view.
12. Involve CCs in any consultations arranged through public meetings.
13. Acknowledge written communications (including e-mails) from CCs within 5 working days, and reply within 20 working days. The Community Council Enquiry System has been introduced across the region to help acknowledge and respond to Community Council enquiries.
14. Consult reasonably with CCs regarding the administration of local charities and Common Good funds.
15. Give CCs the opportunity to participate in the processes that lead to decision-making on issues relating to their areas.
16. Ensure that CCs continue to be involved effectively in decentralisation schemes and that decentralised structures are complementary to the role of CCs.

Community Councils: Checklist of Good Practice

Community Councils shall:

1. Advise Dumfries & Galloway Council (DGC) on local opinion concerning matters of interest to that authority.
2. Bring to DGC's attention matters requiring its attention or action.
3. Actively seek the views, opinions and aspirations of the full cross-section of the community and be able to demonstrate that steps have been taken to consult the local community when appropriate, and in all cases be sure as far as possible that the views they express are representative of those of the community they serve.
4. Express the views of their community on proposed plans or projects for that community. This should include positive support for acceptable schemes as well as criticism for those which are opposed by the local community. Where appropriate, suggestions for changes should also be put forward.
5. Advise DGC of changes of names or contact details of the office bearers or voting members as soon as possible.
6. Inform DGC in advance of any consultations being arranged through public meetings.
7. Invite representatives of statutory bodies and other organisations, when appropriate, to attend meetings of the Community Council (CC).
8. Encourage the public to use their CC as a vehicle of communication with DGC.
9. Contact DGC (using the Community Council Enquiry Service where appropriate) as soon as practicable regarding matters where the information/action required cannot be provided by the CC alone.
10. Respond to written communications (including e-mails) from DGC within a reasonable time and encourage the use of an initial acknowledgement system of reply; and use the Community Council Enquiry System to submit enquiries to DGC.
11. Identify a contact point within the CC membership for the co-ordination of consultation on planning, licensing etc.
12. Nominate representatives to attend their local Area Committee when appropriate.