## **Good Practice Guidance for Community Councils and Local Authorities (*Key policy developments and useful resources* )**

In recent years, there have been a number of policy developments which have an impact on the work of Community Councils and other community organisations. The information below is a starting point for Community Councils to help better understand the latest community empowerment tools and resources.

### **Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides a legal framework that promotes and encourages community empowerment and participation, by creating new rights for community bodies and placing new duties on public authorities. There are 11 policy parts in the Act coming into force at different times. The legislation is available here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>

The following parts of the Act will be of particular interest to Community Councils.

**Community Planning**

Community Planning forms Part 2 of the Act and came into force 15 April 2016. It places community planning partnerships on a statutory footing and imposes duties on community planning partners around planning and delivery of local outcomes. Community planning is about how public bodies work together, and with local communities, to design and deliver better services that make a real difference to people's lives. Community Councils *are not* specifically mentioned in the Part 2 but will be one of the many key partners to influence and engage with the process. More information is available here: <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/community-planning/>[www.gov.scot](file:///C:\Users\swift.emma\Downloads\www.gov.scot))

**Participation Requests**

Participation Requests form Part 3 of the Act and came into force on 1 April 2017. Community Councils are listed as a Community Participation Body which is the term given to the group of people who can make a participation request to a Public Servie Authority. If required, Participation Requests can help to start a dialogue and contribute to decision-making processes to improve outcomes. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/participation-requests/>[www.gov.scot](file:///C:\Users\swift.emma\Downloads\www.gov.scot))

Guides, tools and templates to make the most out of Participation Requests can be found on the Scottish Community Development Centre website here: <https://www.scdc.org.uk/participation-requests>

**Community Right to Buy Land**

Community Right to Buy Land forms Part 4 of the Act and came into force on 15 April 2016. It extends the community right to buy to all of Scotland and introduces a new provision for community bodies to purchase neglected, abandoned or detrimental land where the owner is not willing to sell that land. Community Councils *are not* mentioned in the Act but will want to have an awareness and knowledge of this important piece of legislation. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/land-reform/community-right-to-buy/>)

**Community Asset Transfer**

Asset Transfer forms Part 5 of the Act and came into force on 23 January 2017. Eligible community bodies named Community Transfer Bodies, can request to buy, lease or have other rights in land, including buildings or other structures on land, which is owned or leased by Relevant Authorities. Due to the composition of Community Councils, they *are not* listed as an eligible body in the Act. However, Community Councils are uniquely placed at the centre of their communities and can play a key role by giving Community Transfer Bodies advice on the wider aspects of community priorities or local plans. More information is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/community-empowerment/asset-transfer/>

Expert advice and support is provided by the Community Ownership Support Service (COSS) and more information is available here:

<https://dtascommunityownership.org.uk/about-coss>

**Common Good**

Common Good forms Part 8 of the Act and came into force on 15 April 2016. It places a statutory duty on local authorities to establish and maintain a register of all property held by them for the common good and publish their proposals. The Act requires that local authority consult with the local community when it is planning to dispose of common good property, or change its use and Community Councils are listed in the Act at Section 105 (5). More information is available here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-common-good-property-guidance-local-authorities/>[www.gov.scot](file:///C:\Users\swift.emma\Downloads\www.gov.scot))

In addition to the above, there are a number of other ways outwith legislation that Community Councils can play a key role in either participating directly, or by providing support for local community initiatives. Examples are as follows:

**Participatory Budgeting**

Participatory budgeting (PB) is an internationally recognised democratic tool, which enables local people to have a direct say on how public money is spent. PB is delivered in partnership with local authorities, communities and third sector organisations. Community Councils across Scotland have led on successful PB initiatives in their local community. The Scottish Community Development Centre hosts the PB Scotland website and more information is available here: <https://pbscotland.scot/>

Community Shares Scotland was launched in 2014 and is a way for people to invest in what matters to them in their local community. Community members can buy shares in enterprises providing goods and services that meet their needs. In turn, the enterprise is controlled and governed by the community it serves. Community shares have helped to launch and grow a wide range of thriving community businesses. Community Councils may want to learn more about Community Shares and how they can support organisations embark on this journey. The Development Trusts Association Scotland host Community Shares and more information is available here: <https://communitysharesscotland.org.uk/>

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### **Scottish Community Finance Limited**

Scottish Community Finance Ltd (SCF) was established in October 2017 as a Community Benefit Society registered with the Financial Conduction Authority. It operates as a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) with the aim of securing investment to support economic and social actions that benefit communities across Scotland. SCF Ltd raises capital by offering to the general public opportunities to invest in the future of their communities through community bonds. The investment is then used to meet the needs of organisations seeking to address socio-economic challenges or take advantage of opportunities to strengthen their local areas. Further details can be obtained at <http://www.scotcomfinance.scot/>

### **Social Impact Pledge**

The Social Impact Pledge was launched in 2016 and asks public sector organisations across Scotland to commit to increasing their social impact, by offering practical support to benefit the community. A pledge can be as practical as offering a free meeting space for community organisations, offering increased work experience for students and young people, allocating paid free time for staff to support community fund raising or providing opportunities for young people to experience a Board meeting or shadow a Board member. The Scottish Community Development Centre hosts the Social Impact Pledge and more information is available here:

<http://www.communityscot.org.uk/social-impact-pledge/>

**The National Standards for Community Engagement**

The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement, and improve what happens as a result. The Standards were revised in 2016 and 2020 to guide thinking on how to engage effectively with communities, in particular following recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. More information is available here: <https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/>

VOiCE (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement) was refreshed in 2021 and it continues to be a very well-used online platform for planning and evaluating community engagement within the public, voluntary and community sectors and may be a useful tool for Community Councils. More information for VOiCE is available here: <https://www.scdc.org.uk/what/voice>

The National Standards: Engaging With our Communities to Support Recovery and Renewal resource looks at good practice in engaging digitally. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60b74b3ad7fb3972cfe271b0/t/61409e86f20b94259a7c7656/1631624839455/NSfCE+Report_Final2.pdf> . Although initially written to support Covid-19 recovery, the information is also relevant to digital engagement in a wider context.

### **Community Development**

Community development helps people come together to take action on what is important to them and helps communities to organise and identify the issues they want to address, or the opportunities they want to explore. Community Councils may want to engage with the key national organisations for community development in Scotland. Website links are as follows:

Scottish Community Development Centre: <https://www.scdc.org.uk/>

Community Development Alliance Scotland: <https://www.communitydevelopmentalliancescotland.org/>

Scottish Community Development Network: <https://www.scdn.scot/>

International Association for Community Development: <https://www.iacdglobal.org/>

Community Learning and Development Standards Council: <https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/>

**Communities Channel Scotland**

The Communities Channel Scotland website Is a trusted source of information and a one stop shop for communities seeking up to date and relevant information. stories and learning to inform their efforts to improve their community. Community Councils may find it helpful as it provides information on funding sources and provides inspiring local initiatives. More information is available here: <http://www.communityscot.org.uk/>