

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Communities Manager, Housing & Employability****Community Alliance Meeting: 24 February 2022**

Subject: Community Alliance Up-date and Proposed Way Forward**1 Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to update Community Alliance members on the proposed approach to transition from the current organisational structure towards a more community led format and to seek approval for this approach.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that CA members:

- Agree that the Community Alliance should cease to operate in its current form.
- Agree to the proposed approach to transition from the current structure by engaging with local people through the attached Approach to Developing a Communications Plan (see Appendix One: Approach to Developing a Communications Plan).

3 Background

- 3.1** The Community Alliance was established in 2013/4 following a review of community planning. The former Community Participation Committee became the Community Alliance as the community representation or voice within the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Management structure. Its remit as stated in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017 - 27 was to include bringing together, *'representatives from a range of organisations at neighbourhood, interest and user group level across West Dunbartonshire with the intention of identifying issues of common concerns and to highlight local priorities'*.
- 3.2** Despite having a committed and enthusiastic Chair and membership for the duration of the time, the transition to the Community Alliance has proved challenging. There have been several attempts to support, review and develop the Alliance since then, however membership has remained stubbornly low. The Covid-19 pandemic was a further blow to the Community Alliance, and like so many other organisations, the membership numbers have dropped further with very few new members coming on board.
- 3.3** Feedback from community conversations that have been underway to support the Community Empowerment work have indicated that:

- The role of the Community Alliance is unclear;
- There is more interest in smaller, geographically based groups;
- That one group covering the whole authority area cannot represent local issues effectively.

3.4 Having an effective community voice and representation within CPWD is critical and any replacement for the Alliance should be developed with input from local citizens. This is the only way a truly community based alternative can be developed. This approach is in line with the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy and will ensure that it functions effectively to reflect the views of the community.

4. Main Issues

4.1 As part of the Community Empowerment Strategy Delivery Plan, a Communications Plan is being developed as a Year One priority project. This Communications Plan is designed to look at how the Council, Partners and the community communicate, in both directions, to help deliver the aims of the Community Empowerment Strategy (see Appendix One: Approach to Developing a Communications Plan).

4.2 One of the key aims of the Communications Plan will be to develop a transition from the Community Alliance to a more sustainable community led solution. It is essential that a robust process is carried out to involve community members in the development any new group/s formed and a plan will be put in place to support this.

4.3 There have been some early community conversations which have given clear feedback on what an alternative to the Community Alliance should consider, as noted above. These on-going community based conversations will be crucial to help inform the process to develop a sustainable, alternative model.

4.4 It is essential that any group/s established are fully supported by the Communities Team to fulfil their role on an ongoing basis, with training and development support as required. Work would also be undertaken alongside Rona Gold, Communities and Partnership Manager to ensure the new group/s have a clear role in CPWD.

5 People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications.

6 Financial & Procurement Implications

6.1 There are no financial resources, existing budgets will be utilised.

7 Risk Analysis

7.1 Without this approach to transition from the Community Alliance

to a more sustainable model, there is a risk that the community voice is not heard or represented at CPWD. There is also a risk of not delivering on the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy and the requirement of the Community Empowerment Act (2015).

8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An EIA was carried out as part of the development of the Community Empowerment Strategy, Delivery Plan and further EIAs will be carried out as required.

9 Consultation

- 9.1** Consultation and community conversations have been taking place and will continue, as part of the development and roll out of the Delivery plan. The work will be further informed by the outcome of these discussions.

10 Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The re-focusing and redevelopment of the community voice within CPWD will support the delivery of the CPWD strategic objectives, in particular in relation to an empowered West Dunbartonshire.

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Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Proposed Approach to developing a Communication Plan

Background Papers: