

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Community Participation Committee: Wednesday 11 December, 2013

Subject: Developing the Community Alliance

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide committee members with written feedback from the session on developing the Community Alliance held in September, and make recommendations on future actions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the committee notes the report and agrees to holding further sessions on developing the Community Alliance. The feedback from the last Community Participation Committee (CPC) session will be used to develop and inform these stakeholder sessions.

3. Background

- 3.1** As part of the new approach to community engagement, The CPP Strategic Board agreed in June that the current Community Participation Committee (CPC) could be grown and developed to become a wider community alliance – operating as an umbrella structure for relevant community structures. This alliance would act as the community voice for the CPP at a strategic level, scrutinising and enhancing plans from Community Planning partners and giving a direct feedback route to communities.
- 3.2** The development of the Community Alliance will take time and investment from a number of key stakeholder groups. As part of the early stages of the work a development session was held with the current Community Participation Committee in September. This facilitated session allowed members to discuss key issues such as membership, supporting and enhancing participation from the wider community and the key areas for discussion. The full report from this session is available at Appendix 1.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Membership

Key points emerged as follows:

- Community Membership should be much wider and more inclusive with more different types of people involved, particularly young people.
- Community Members should be more representative of their wider groups.
- There should be more community members in relation to the number of councillors.
- Evening meetings would enable people who are working to take part. This may discourage others from attending – a solution could be to look at transport provision for evening meetings.
- **A key challenge** is encouraging wider involvement from the community.

4.2 The Agenda

Key points emerged as follows:

- The business of the Alliance should be outcome focused, delivering on specific actions mutually agreed.
- There is a considerable list of suggested areas for the agenda and some disagreement on how wide the agenda should be – some saying very responsive and wide versus a more focused agenda.
- There is a wide feeling that the style of meetings is too formal and prevents the kind of discussion which would be helpful towards resolving issues and agreeing future actions.
- Information and communication have to improve. We have to work with officials on providing well-structured information in understandable language.
- Feedback from agenda items has to link into the way decisions are made about services.
- **The key challenges** are in achieving a meaningful agenda based on agreed outcomes that is sufficiently focused and responsive, linked to decision making and utilises a more interactive and informal style of meetings to encourage participation.

4.3 Support for the community

Key points emerged as follows:

- More support is needed for personal development to support community members to represent others and to speak out.
- More support is needed to help communities work together to help themselves.
- Agencies have to work together better on involving the community.

- **Key challenges** are resourcing support and getting a wider range of people involved.

Other points

4.4 Some general points we should also respond to are:

- We have to use effective communication methods and the way we communicate has to be clearer and more understandable.
- Officials should be more accountable in relation to issues which arise from the agenda.

4.5 A further paper will then be prepared for the March meeting of this committee making further recommendations on next steps required to widen the membership, strengthen the agenda and support the community to participate.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 There is a risk in not further developing and widening the membership of the CPC to reflect the diverse nature of community involvement and activism across West Dunbartonshire.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 A screening has been carried out and an EIA is not required for this report as one already exists for the CPC as part of the regular evaluation. Widening membership and supporting equality and diversity are key aims in developing the Community Alliance further.

9. Consultation

9.1 The session which has taken place and further planned sessions are part of the consultative approach to developing the Community Alliance, as is this report to Committee.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This work contributes to 'Positive dialogue with local citizens and communities' referred to in the Strategic Plan.

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Feedback from 'Developing the Community Alliance'
KETSO Session on Wednesday 18 September

Background Papers: Item 4, New Approach to Community Planning, Community
Planning Strategic Board, June 2013

Wards Affected: All wards