

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 24 February 2010

Subject: Review of Strategic Leadership & Decision Making Processes

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report offers members the opportunity to comment on the revised structures for Strategic Leadership and Decision Making and 8 Strategic Priority Areas, which were introduced in 2009. Members are asked to comment on the approach to reviewing these. The report also contains recommendations on these matters from the Improvement & Efficiency Executive, (I&EE), meeting 9th February 2010.

2. Background

- 2.1** Following the 1st Best Value Follow Up report in January 2008, members considered a number of proposals for improving the Council's approach to strategic leadership and decision making. These revised approaches were developed with support from the Improvement Service, and approved through reports to Council in November 2008, February 2009 and June 2009.

- 2.2** The agreed activity included:

- The revision of reporting formats to include option appraisal and impact assessment, where relevant
- The development of approaches to scrutiny
- The use of briefing notes rather than council/committee reports where no decision was required
- The implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), for elected members and training for managers
- The identification of 8 strategic priority areas for 2009/10, which would be subject to a revised process of decision making which encouraged early involvement by members. This revised process included:
 - opening with a seminar involving all relevant members,
 - following through with opportunities for more detailed discussion
 - use of pre agenda meetings as a 'testing & validation' opportunity
 - maximising the opportunities for any final questions or clarification well in advance of Council or Committee meetings
 - presentation to Council or Committee

- 2.3** The main work programme and actions associated with these developments have been monitored through the reports from the Organisational Development workstream, (prior to September 2009), and from the Strategic Leadership workstream in the period since then. These have then been reported to the I&EE and to Council.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Many of the revised ways of working have now been in place for around a year, and it is appropriate that we review these to assess if they are meeting the needs of the Council and its stakeholders.
- 3.2** The 8 strategic priorities (plus 2 discussion areas), were agreed at a later stage in June 2009. The approach to these was initially developed through the Strategic Leadership workstream and the ongoing implementation is now being monitored by the Corporate Management Team, (CMT) and I&EE. However these areas also require some review, as it is now necessary to confirm priority areas for 2010/11. Although work will continue in all of these areas, there is a need to assess whether they remain the top priorities for the coming year. The current priority areas are:
- Financial / Budget Planning, including wider issues such as impact of recession and changing service needs. Consideration of pressures, risks & solutions
 - Provide school resources fit for purpose in the 21st century
 - Models of integration with NHS & Community Health Partnership, (CHP)
 - Meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 / Stock Transfer
 - Waste Management Targets
 - Managing resources / assets
 - Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership – Shared Service Developments and Diagnostic Pathway – Shared Service Developments
 - Adult care provision
- In addition, two issues, were identified which may require decisions in 2010/11 and beyond, and which it was felt could benefit from discussion forums to begin the exploration of member's views:
- Marketing West Dunbartonshire as a business location, place to stay, and place with tourist potential
 - Addressing population decline
- 3.3** Members of the I&EE considered both current mechanisms for decision making, and the relative importance of some of the 8 strategic priorities at the meeting on 9th February 2010. As a result of these discussions, the I&EE makes the following recommendations to Council.
- 3.4** It is proposed that the strategic decision making processes could be improved by designating in advance, a number of 'business days' throughout the year. These should be Committee days, (although not Council days), and would allow members to schedule their diaries more effectively. These days (outwith Committee times), should be used to arrange discussion forums, seminars and other similar events. The I&EE recommends that a series of six dates should be set for 2010/11 to allow this approach to be piloted.
- 3.5** With regard to the proposal to review the 8 strategic priorities, it is proposed that this should be the focus of a session on the first 'business day' in April. The I&EE was particularly interested in developing the discussion on marketing West Dunbartonshire as a place to live, work and visit – and noted

that success in this area would also help address the second issue of tackling population decline.

- 3.6** It was also proposed that all members should take the opportunity of commenting on the current mechanisms for strategic decision making and noted that this should contribute to the review of existing processes.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a risk that if we do not review the operation of current approaches, we will not be in a position to assess where benefits have been gained, and where further work is needed.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this measure.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1** It will be important to allow all Elected Members the opportunity to comment both on the success of revised ways of working, and on strategic priority areas for 2010/11. The proposal for a series of 'business days' will allow this – and discussion on other strategic issues - to take place.

- 8.2** It is recommended that the following dates are designated as 'Business Days' for 2010/11.

- 14th April 2010
- 16th June 2010
- 15th September 2010
- 17th November 2010
- TBC February 2011

These dates are linked to Community Participation Committee which meets at 2.00 p.m. therefore Business Day events would be scheduled for the mornings. The focus of the first day on 14th April would be the review of the current 8 strategic priorities and 2 discussion areas.

- 8.3** Members of Council are also asked to make their own comments on the operation of current mechanisms.

.....
David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 11 February 2010

Person to Contact: Liz Cochrane, Head of Service, Policy & Performance –
Chief Executive’s Department. Garshake HQ, 01389
737271
liz.cochrane@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: None

Background Papers: Reports to Council November 2008, February 2009, June
2009

Wards Affected: All