

## **WD Community Empowerment Strategy – Priority Project One Communications and Engagement Plan**

**Outcome:** Individuals, communities, council and partnership staff understand what community empowerment means and how it can help individuals and communities.

**Action:** Communications Plan to manage how the Council, Community Planning partners and communities should communicate to turn the Strategy into reality.

This work will also address the following action:

**Action:** Revitalise the Community Alliance to lead communication with local communities and represent views to the Council and CPPs on empowerment issues.

**Considerations:** This work will look at communication in both directions, from the Council / Partners to the community and crucially how the community can have their voice heard by the Council/Partners. It will be carried out with the understanding that the majority of local residents may be quite happy not to engage with the Council on the Empowerment Strategy. Also, that according to the regular WDC telephone surveys there is a 75% satisfaction rate with how the Council communicates.

In 2013/14 the Community Alliance (CA) was established, this replaced three local area partnerships. As detailed in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) the CA was, *'a strategic partnership group established to support CPWD in ensuring communities and local organisations within West Dunbartonshire are able to influence and scrutinise the work of CPWD'*. While the CA has operated for a number of years it has faced a number of challenges that included a lack of membership, poor community awareness and buy-in.

This project will consider literacy rates across Scotland and identify if there are any improvements that could be made to support those who struggle with literacy (24% of people struggle with reading and writing across Scotland).

The work to develop a Communications Plan will focus on listening to and understanding how local people want to be communicated with and how they want to communicate and participate with the Council and Partners. It will:

- Establish if there are improvements we can make in communicating with communities;
- Investigate if there is a preference for a single, authority wide group to represent the community or whether smaller, geographically based groups would work better, if needed at all.
- Investigate if people want to be involved and participate in shaping individual projects / work streams, for example Community Budgeting,
- Investigate how people want to hear about and support the Community Empowerment work and from other services;
- Consider how we can better communicate the benefits of community empowerment;
- Understand how people want to have their voice heard; and
- Develop a transition from the Community Alliance to a more sustainable community led solution.

## Proposed Approach

Task	Timescale	Lead	Update on progress
<b>Preparations</b>			
Review and consider feedback from initial Community Conversations undertaken by Alan Karas, Communities Team	Nov/Dec 21	SM/AK/CY	Conversations completed. Key findings noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of the Community Alliance is unclear;</li> <li>There is more interest in smaller, geographically based groups;</li> <li>That one group covering the whole authority area cannot represent local issues effectively.</li> </ul>
Community Alliance meeting – seek approval to proceed.	Feb 22	SB/SM/ET	
Focus Group - seek community members to join a discussion to consider the approach to engagement, question-set and audience. Utilise existing engagement underway? Utilise survey monkey? Face-to-face? Social Media?	Feb 22	CS/CY	
Develop a plan for carrying out research / ensure we target all ages / minority groups / etc.	Feb/Mar 22	CY / focus group	
Conversation with Corp Communications around showcasing community empowerment / case studies, etc.	Feb/Mar 22	LC/CY	
<b>Stage 1 Early Engagement / User interviews</b>			
Engage and listen to the community about if / how they want to communicate with the Council and CPP. How can we best represent the views of the community?	Mar 22	CY/community partners?	
Publicise the need for community members to partner with us to develop a community voice/or whatever it will be called. How can this feed into the CPWD? Does it need to? Do people want to be part of a formal structure?	Mar/Apr 22 – on-going	CY/community partners / CPP	
Identify any community members interested in representing the views of their community.	On-going	Communities / HSCP/ other services.	This should be part of the CE conversations, the work in Faifley, the PB pilot conversations and the SoE work! Stronger Voices Group?
Understand findings of User Interviews in advance of planned session.	To be confirmed.		

Dedicated sessions for individuals to discuss the potential of a community voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What it needs to achieve;</li> <li>• What form it should take;</li> <li>• Frequency/form of meetings; etc. etc.</li> <li>• Support needed</li> <li>• others</li> </ul>	To be confirmed (depending on feedback)	Community / Communities team/HSCP/ Comms	
<b>Stage 2 Acting on Feedback / Developing a Plan (all to be confirmed)</b>			
Understand and implement any improvements to method of communication. This could be recommendations for all service areas to consider.	tbc	Communities team/HSCP/ Comms	
Providing feedback to individuals and wider community of the outcome of the work and any improvements made.	tbc	Community / Comms / Communities Team	
Planning sessions with community reps and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rona Gold, CPP Manager to develop how the groups might work;</li> <li>• Colin Smith, Communities Team Leader to understand training and support available to each group</li> <li>• Project Workers to develop remit, roles, etc.</li> <li>• As required.... On-going programme of support.</li> </ul>	tbc	Community / CPP Manager / Communities Team	
Dedicated Communities Team officers to each community area group to support with meetings, reports, action points, training and development, etc.	tbc	tbc	
Preparation of Progress/Outcome Report.		Communities Team	
<b>Stage 3: Embedding the Community Voice / Communications Plan</b>			
To be discussed with the community representatives.			