

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council Meeting: 16 December 2009

Subject: Support for Vale of Leven Community Forum and related issues

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This paper provides an update the position with support to the Vale of Leven, (VOL), Community Forum and related matters.

2. Background

- 2.1** This report follows the decision of Council at its meeting on 30 September 2009. The decision was to agree the amendment to the Motion submitted by Cllr Bollan on the Vale Resource Base in Alexandria. The amendment was as follows:

‘This Council notes that groups from Clydebank and Dumbarton accepted the offer of assistance from the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) to enable them to fully engage with the Community Planning process. Council notes that the Vale of Leven groups refused this offer.

Council asks Officers for a report on how this is working.

Council also notes that at a public meeting in the Vale of Leven Community Education Centre, Community Groups asked if Council would consider a fully costed plan for the community to supply groups with a service at nil cost to Council. All Councillors present, namely Councillor Jim Bollan, Councillor Ronnie McColl and Councillor Martin Rooney, agreed. Council fully supports the community in this regard and asks Officers to ascertain whether groups have made any progress with this plan.’

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The Vale of Leven community forum continues to operate without the interim support of CVS. Recent changes in the office bearers of the Community Forum have led to some delays in taking issues forward. However the Vice Chair, who is currently representing the VOL Community Forum at the Community Planning Partnership, (CPP), Strategic Board, has expressed the view that the forum can continue to operate at present without the support of CVS. Assistance from CVS will be sought if it is required.

3.2 The VOL Community Forum has yet to respond to a letter from the Council's Chief Executive(7/9/09) offering a meeting with Council officials to discuss the needs of the Forum for support, including a meeting venue and accommodation for some administrative work. It was also proposed that this meeting could consider the wider needs of community groups in the Vale of Leven area.

3.3 A reminder letter was sent to the Vice Chair in November. The key information being sought is:

- Whether the VOL Community Forum wishes to take up the offer of a meeting with Council officers to discuss accommodation requirements and the alternatives available.
- Whether there any other arrangements which could assist the Vale of Leven Forum at this time. (In addition to the interim support for the administrative and development needs of Community Forums which is currently available from CVS - whilst the full Community Engagement tender takes its course through the European Journal tender process.)
- Contact details for other community organisations which may require support. (The Community Forum had identified that there may be wider community needs not being addressed through current provision. The letter requested the Forum's assistance in identifying these organisations, and providing contact details, to allow the Chief Executive to consider how these needs might be met in collaboration with Council officers.)

This is also the information which would be required as part of any business plan for services to a range of groups in the local area.

3.4 In addition, to ensure that there are appropriate structures for community involvement in CPP processes, all three community forums have been asked to provide the CPP manager with details of their meetings including minutes, agendas, attendance and their arrangements for circulation of information from the CPP to forum members.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no immediate Personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The financial resources required for the support of Community Forums are available within CPP budgets, for both 2009/10, and 2010/11.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There is a risk that if Community Forums do not operate effectively, the quality of community input to Community Planning processes could be impacted.

7. Conclusions & Officers' Recommendations

- 7.1** The VOL Community Forum has been offered support with identifying a meeting venue and accommodation for administrative functions. In addition, the interim support on offer through CVS for administrative and development needs remains available.
- 7.2** Feedback is awaited from the VOL Forum on these issues, and also on the progress with the development of the business plan.
- 7.3** It is recommended that officers make further contact with the VOL Community Forum to request an update on progress with these issues.



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Chief Executive
Date: 27 November 2009

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: Wards 1 & 2