

# **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **Report by the Chief Executive**

**Community Participation Committee : 19 October 2011**

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**Subject: Community Forum Public Budget Consultation Events**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The report informs committee members about a new development in consulting on the Council's budget which builds on and strengthens the current arrangements.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Each year the Council consults with the public prior to setting its budget.
- 2.2** In recent years the Council has been working on improving its public budget consultation processes by extending the scope of the budget consultation meetings held in January of each year. These meetings now present a range of proposals for people to comment on prior to the Council's budget setting meeting. This new approach has been well received by community participants
- 2.3** A new development further strengthens the approach by introducing an additional community-led stage in consultation.
- 2.4** This complements the work also being done to improve staff consultation processes.

### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** For the first time, Community Forums will host public budget consultation events to take place in advance of the process for setting out of budget proposals. This responds to a request made at the Community Participation Committee (CPC), by a Community Forum member, for Forums to have a higher profile in budget consultation meetings.
- 3.2** Three Community Forum budget events will be held, one each in Clydebank on Monday 14 November, Vale of Leven on Tuesday 15 November and Dumbarton on Wednesday 16 November. Community Forums have a key role in hosting these meetings and inviting the public to attend, both raising awareness of the budget issues and of the role of Community Forums. Venues have still to be finalised.
- 3.3** Community Forums, supported by ODS Consulting, are currently involved in developing the events, including finalising a programme. The meetings will have input from the Leader of the Council, the Finance Convenor, the Chief

Executive and Executive Directors. There will be interactive sessions to gain feedback from Community Forum members and members of the wider public, and an open question session.

- 3.4 This new, additional stage gives the public an early opportunity to identify priorities and flag up areas of concern which will be taken into account in the process of setting the budget.
- 3.5 The January public consultation meetings will then provide the opportunity for community residents to comment on the actual budget proposals.

#### **4. People Implications**

- 4.1 There are no people implications.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1 There are no risks attached to this report.

#### **7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 7.1 The Budget Sessions will follow the National Standards of Community Engagement and will be inclusive and accessible. It is possible that issues raised within the sessions may highlight potential areas for subsequent EIA.

#### **8. Strategic Assessment**

- 8.1 This additional consultation process contributes to the Fit for Purpose Services Strategic Priority, by strengthening community engagement.

#### **9. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 9.1 Committee members are asked to note the contents of this report.

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David McMillan  
Chief Executive  
Date: 3 October 2011

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**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All wards