

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability****West Dunbartonshire Council: 27 November 2019**

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy & Action Plan**1 Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to present members of West Dunbartonshire Council with the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy for approval. The Strategy is also being presented to Community Planning West Dunbartonshire on 21st November.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that members:
- Consider and agree the draft Community Empowerment Strategy and action plan.
 - Approve the development of a detailed delivery plan and launch of Strategy in January 2020.

3 Background

- 3.1** Following extensive engagement with local citizens over the last 12 months a West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy has been developed. This forms the partnership's response to the Community Empowerment Act (2015) and the Christie Commission 2011. However, the Strategy will transcend the legislative and policy context, with a commitment to building more resilient and empowered communities across West Dunbartonshire. This is based on a partnership approach including CPP partners and local communities.
- 3.2** The strategy has been informed by local and national policies and shaped by the voices of local citizens with various opportunities to influence it as it developed, this included 8 small events, 6 larger events, sessions with equalities groups, youth agencies, employees, elected members and a review group with members identified during the consultation.
- 3.3** The strategy includes a bold vision of an empowered West Dunbartonshire, some clear objectives to be achieved and over arching principles to inform the implementation of the strategy. Key to the strategy is the action plan which has identified a series of actions focused on 6 key themes identified during the consultation process. This will lead to the development of a more detailed delivery plan to show how these actions will be delivered over the coming 5 years.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** This Strategy and Action Plan is an exciting opportunity for West Dunbartonshire's communities and citizens, the Council and Community Planning partners to work together in a new way to transform West Dunbartonshire's neighbourhoods – by empowering communities. It brings a range of opportunities including to help all our citizens to feel the benefits of being more active in community life, to increase individual citizens' own opportunities and horizons, build community resilience, and make sure public services reflect community needs.
- 4.2** There will inevitably be some challenges in turning the vision into reality. Success will require truly collaborative partnerships between CPP partners, third sector agencies and local citizens and communities. Creating genuine empowerment will not happen in a short time frame or in isolation. Therefore it is a long term strategy with an associated action and delivery plan to turn the vision and principles of the strategy into reality.
- 4.3** There will be a crucial role for the Empowered Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG) in ensuring that steady progress is maintained on the implementation of the strategy by the Council and CPP Partners. The Strategy provides the opportunity for the Empowered DIG to review its membership and approach to maximise its effectiveness in delivering the Empowerment Strategy. The Community Alliance will also have a key role in terms of co-ordinating community responses and actions. This combined approach will ensure that the ambitions of the strategy and the actions contained in the delivery plan are achieved leading to significant changes in local communities.
- 4.4** This will require a fundamental shift in focus within partner organisations and within local communities. Local citizens and groups may need to be supported to develop new skills and build resilience to play their part in the delivery of this agenda and to truly increase empowerment. By developing new ways of working there is the opportunity to truly transform local communities and the lives of local citizens.
- 4.5** This will require a strong commitment from the Council and all partners. Also shifts in how current resources and budgets are deployed and additional resources where appropriate.
- 4.6** A two page summary document will be produced and regular updates on progress will be provided using varied methods of communication. A full launch of the strategy will be planned for early 2020.

5 People Implications

- 5.1** There are no immediate people implications resulting from this report. More detailed proposals will follow once the delivery plan is developed.

6 Financial & Procurement Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

7 Risk Analysis

7.1 There is a risk that failure to deliver on the Strategy will impact on the Council's ambition to develop empowered communities. The development and implementation of this strategy will assist to ensure compliance with the Community Empowerment Act 2015.

8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The full EIA is included at Appendix 2. The Recommendations is as follows:

The Strategy, supports our Equality Outcome for 2017-2021 on increasing participation of under represented groups, and supports the aspirations of our British Sign Language plan for 2018-2024. Accessibility was a key feature of the consultation process. The intention is carry this through into the way that engagement is realised in future. This has wide spread potential positive impacts in helping previously excluded groups engage and influence. This must be properly resourced in a sustainable fashion to realise the gains. The Council intends to have the key points of the Community Engagement Strategy translated into BSL video, posted on our website and sent to BSL contacts.

8.2 Equality impact assessment is an iterative process and further work will be required to ensure benefits are gained and sustained in terms of equality, cohesion and empowerment as actions are undertaken.

9 Consultation

9.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out during the development of the strategy. A summary of the consultation is included within the report.

10 Strategic Assessment

10.1 The Strategy and action plan support the delivery of the Council's Strategic plan objectives, in particular in relation to meaningful engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.

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Appendices: **Appendix 1 – West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy and Action plan
Equality Impact Assessment Screening**

Background Papers: **None**

