

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council - 25 April 2007

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership – Key Developments

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides an update on key developments within West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, (CPP). Progress and key issues are reported to West Dunbartonshire Council on a quarterly basis – following CPP board meetings. The most recent Board meeting took place on 19 February 2007.

2. Background

- 2.1** West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership was established in its current form at the beginning of 2005. The CPP is funded primarily by the Scottish Executive's Community Regeneration Fund (CRF), which is £13.3 million, on a tapering basis, over the 3 years from 2005/06 to 2007/08. The greatest proportion (80%), of the CRF is allocated to projects which deliver services in the most disadvantaged areas of West Dunbartonshire, (approximately the worst 17% as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – SIMD). The detail of this is set out in the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA). There is currently no information about funding beyond 2007/08, but there could be a significant reduction in the funding available to West Dunbartonshire from April 2008 onwards.
- 2.2** The CPP is now working on a range of issues which are of relevance to Council, and which are outlined in paragraph 3.

3. Main Issues

Structures and Staffing – Board, Partnership Development Group & Thematic Groups (including comments in Best Value Audit Report)

- 3.1** The agreed structure is in place, although some elements are continuing to evolve. The CPP Manager has been seconded to the Scottish Executive until March 2008. An interim Manager, Phil White, has been in post from the beginning of 2007. The Board membership is almost complete. A space exists for a young person, although it has been noted that it may be more appropriate to continue to develop alternative mechanisms to gauge the views of young people. This is ongoing. Four Elected Members have voting positions on the Board, and the Chief Executive has a non voting place. Other officers act in an advisory capacity as required.

- 3.2 Nevertheless, it has been recognised that the governance structures of the CPP require further development. Following consideration of a report by the CPP manager, the Board meeting in February agreed that the CPP should adopt the Council's Standing Orders in the interim, to ensure a robust approach to financial and human resource procedures. A short life working group, (with Council, community and agency representation), was also established to develop procedures more suitable for the CPP in the longer term. This group will produce proposals for the Board meeting in June 2007.

Partnership Development Group (PDG)

- 3.3 The 2nd tier of the structure is the Partnership Development Group. This has a co-ordinating role, and the group is currently overseeing the production of the new Community Plan, monitoring budgets, driving the 'worklessness' agenda and developing recommendations on the future sustainability of the CPP. One Elected Member and 3 WDC officer representatives sit on the PDG, with additional officers providing financial advice as required.

Key Themes and Thematic Groups

- 3.4 The Thematic Groups deliver on the agreed objectives of the Regeneration Outcome Agreement. The groups involve all stakeholders in their work. All Thematic Groups include officer representation from WDC, and some include Elected Member representation.

- Getting People Back Into Work: This Thematic Group was formed in June 2006 to take forward this key theme. The 'Business Growth and Employability Strategy Group', (BG&ESG), links to the Dunbartonshire-wide Local Economic Forum and sectoral alliance structures, as well as the Youth Strategy's sub-group for employability. The group's current focus is on the delivery of the West Dunbartonshire Workforce Plus three-year action plan, which was submitted to the Scottish Executive on 31 January 2007, (and was well received by the Scottish Executive). The Workforce Plus Plan covers the period 2007 to 2010, in line with the Closing the Opportunity Gap, (CtOG), Target A time span. Challenges for the future include delivery of the Workforce Plus actions in years two and three, further developing proposals for alignment of partners' mainstream resources, developing work to ensure delivery of the Community Plan, and maintaining the connections between the delivery of the Workforce Plus Action Plan and the NEET Strategy.
- Communities Group: The aim of this group is to ensure full community and voluntary sector participation in the Partnership and to support community development and capacity building as an integral part of sustainable regeneration. This group is focusing on the continued development of the successful Civic Forum model, the development of an induction pack for community representatives, the participatory budgeting pilot, the Standards for Community Engagement and the arrangements for Community Week, (which starts on 31 March 2007 – information has been issued to members separately on this).

- Safe, Attractive Communities: Currently, the Community Safety Partnership addresses this theme in a Community Planning context. Arrangements to address the issue of Housing and its fit within this theme are currently being developed. The Community Safety Partnership has established separate Task Groups to oversee work on Anti Social Behaviour, (currently focussing on action in hotspots), Violence Reduction, (which developed the NightZone West initiative over the festive period), and Accidents, (which is developing the Message in a Bottle initiative, and Safe & Sound events). The Pulse is also delivering a varied range of diversionary activities throughout West Dunbartonshire.
- Health Improvement: The Health Improvement Strategy Group, (HISG), is driving the Joint Health Improvement Planning agenda, with an overarching focus on reducing health inequalities. The HISG recently produced a special pullout on Health Improvement in the February edition of the West Dunbartonshire Council News. The group also focuses on Early Years issues, Youth Health Improvement, Sexual Health Improvement, Mental Health Improvement and Addictions.
- Youth Strategy: This group is focusing on service delivery issues, co-ordination of services and developing an Outcome Agreement for Young People. A sub-group has been formed to focus specifically on the Youth Strategy Employment theme and is also working to the Business Growth & Employability Strategy Group to help take forward the Partnership's worklessness theme in relation to young people. The development of youth consultation mechanisms is a key focus, (see paragraph 3.2), and work is being developed through Area based Youth Forums, 10 local Youth Action Groups, the Pupil Council Congress and the creation of the West Dunbartonshire Young Scot Youth Information Portal.

Financial Position – Community Regeneration Fund

- 3.5** The November meeting of the CPP Board noted that there was a danger that the planned CPP programme would not achieve the £5.130m minimum spend required of the CRF in 2006/2007. Contingency arrangements were established, based on opportunities for extended service delivery by some existing projects. Communities Scotland noted their endorsement of these arrangements. The most recent information shows that the potential shortfall in expenditure has been addressed, and an actual spend of £5.443m, (or £0.314m greater than the minimum spend requirement), was forecast at the Board meeting in February. This position will be kept under review and further action will be taken, if required, by the Partnership Manager and the Head of Finance, as delegated by the Board and the PDG. As a consequence of this forecast, £4.873m remains to be awarded in respect of 2007/2008. As agreed by the Board, allocations totalling £4.862m have been offered for 2007/2008.

Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA)

- 3.6** The mid-term stock take meeting with Communities Scotland, took place on 19 January. The feedback was positive. The annual report for 2006/2007 is due to be submitted to Communities Scotland on 29 June 2007. The ROA is available on the WDC website.

Development of the New Community Plan 2007 - 2017

- 3.7** Community Planning has a wider remit than delivering on the Regeneration Objectives in the ROA, this is reflected in the Community Plan for West Dunbartonshire. The development of a new Community Plan for 2007-17, is now well underway, and a draft is currently the subject of consultation through a variety of mechanisms, including public meetings, a special youth event, circulation to a comprehensive set of networks and organisations and through the Council's inter and intranet. Although work is well advanced, the previously proposed timescale, (to have a new Plan available for the start of 2007/2008), has had to be extended to meet the new legal requirement for all such Plans to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment, (SEA). The statutory timescales involved in this process mean that the CPP Board will be able to consider an almost complete draft at the next meeting in June 2007, but the printed document will not be available for launch (and delivery in summary form to all households), until after the summer break. Nevertheless, the key vision, objectives and themes of the new Community Plan will be available to inform the development of the Council's new Corporate Plan, following the elections in May. Members are encouraged to view the draft Community Plan on the Council's website. Hard copy versions of the material are also available on request.

Longer Term Sustainability of the CPP

- 3.8** New structural options for the CPP are under investigation – most particularly a Regeneration Trust model – which could allow the Partnership to access funding not available to any of the statutory partners. This work is being progressed through the PDG and a proposal will be developed for submission to the CPP Board meeting in June 2007. Members will be kept informed of the implications of any plans to change the constitutional structure of the CPP.

Mainstreaming equalities & diversity

- 3.9** A multi-agency Equality & Diversity working group was agreed as a vehicle to develop equalities work within West Dunbartonshire through Community Planning. The Council will take the lead on this work and the group will be chaired by the Policy Officer (Disability & Access).

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no immediate personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The financial implications relate to the CRF and the position noted in paragraph 3.5.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** The risks are associated with:-

- any failure to ensure the minimum spend from the Community Regeneration Fund
- any failure to complete a revised version of the Community Plan for 2007-17
- non compliance with Scottish Executive requirements for reporting on the ROA
- any failure to ensure the longer term sustainability of the CPP

- 6.2** The report outlines the arrangements which are in place to address these risks.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The CPP is continuing to develop on a number of fronts, details of the main issues are summarised in paragraph 3. Further detail, (Board and PDG papers, minutes etc), are available on the Council's intranet site. The key issues include:-

- Ensuring effective spend from the CRF and other funding streams (including ensuring minimum spend required)
- The development of the new Community Plan
- The development of the approach to worklessness, including the Employability Framework and the NEET Strategy
- The longer term sustainability of the CPP

7. Recommendations

- 7.1** Members are requested to consider the information in this report, and to request further detail if required.

- 7.2 Members are requested to consider the draft Community Plan for 2007 – 17, and to submit any comments which they would wish to make.

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Date: 4 April 2007

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Background Papers: Draft Community Plan 2007/17
<http://www.wdcweb.info/chiefexec/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=8678>
Regeneration Outcome Agreement
Minutes of CPP Board and PRG meetings
(All background papers are available from the CPP, the Policy Unit, or on the Community Planning pages of the Council's Intranet)

Wards Affected: All Council Wards.