

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Community Participation Committee held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 19 January 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Gail Casey, Jim Bollan, Margaret Bootland, Jackie Maceira, Margaret McGregor and Andy White. Murdoch Cameron, West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum; Francis McNeill, West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum, Jeanette Jennings, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum; Hope Robertson, Association of Clydebank Residents Groups; Ian Kenny, Association of Clydebank Residents Groups; Frances McGonagle, Gingerbread Scotland; Margaret Gilroy, West Dunbartonshire Access Panel; Abdul Ghani, West Dunbartonshire Minority Ethnic Association; Bernard Bell, Feis Dhun Breatainn An Iar; Tony McGurn, Alternatives; Ian Campbell, Dumbarton Community Forum; Jim Foulis, Safe Bonhill and Jim Biddulph, Vale of Leven Community Forum.

Attending: Sandra Davidson, Head of Section – Community Learning and Development; Lynn Bradley, Head of Finance; Liz Cochrane, Policy Manager; Anne Clegg, Policy Officer - Community and Consultation; Nigel Ettles, Principal Solicitor and Fiona Anderson, Administrative Assistant, Legal and Administrative Services.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Brian Rocks, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum; Mr John Diamond, Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum; Mary Theresa Doherty, Clydebank Community Forum; Marjorie Muir, Dumbarton Community Forum; Mary Dennett, Safe Bonhill and Dumbarton District Housing Federation.

Councillor Gail Casey in the Chair

Councillor Casey welcomed everyone to the Meeting and wished them a Happy New Year.

Councillor Casey informed the Substitutes for the Community Representatives that, while they were welcome to attend every meeting of the Community Participation Committee, unless they were present on behalf of the named Community Representative for their group they could not be involved in any debate nor were they entitled to a vote.

Councillor Casey also advised the Committee Members that the Open Forum Section of the Meeting was designed to allow members of the public to raise

items for discussion and therefore Committee Members should request items be placed on the Agenda if they want to raise a specific issue.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the issue of the Open Forum be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Committee.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 17 November 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record subject to the undernoted amendment:-

In relation to the item entitled "Responses to Open Forum Questions – (a) Public Toilets" (Page 1234, paragraph 4186 refers) insert the words "and up for sale" after the sentence "It was noted that the public toilets at Gartocharn and Alexandria toilets were also closed".

EXCERPT MINUTE FROM MEETING OF WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL HELD ON 22 DECEMBER 2004

An excerpt from the Minutes of the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 22 December 2004, was submitted for information detailing decisions made by Council in respect of the following issues:-

(a) Public Toilets

The Council approved the following motion by Councillor Duncan McDonald, seconded by Councillor Rooney:-

The CPC has requested a site visit to an Automated Public Convenience (APC) facility and, although it has not been possible to arrange a site visit prior to Christmas, arrangements are being made for a visit early in the New Year.

The Council could not agree to re-open all facilities until such times as the replacement toilets are fully operational.

Members will be aware that the Council faced difficult budget decisions earlier this year which resulted in a Council Tax rise of 1.8%, the lowest in Scotland. The savings package amounted to £2.4m and had an impact on every department.

The review identified that some properties were surplus to requirements and that others were in need of significant investment to bring them to modern day standards.

The provision of the new APCs at Quay Street, Dumbarton; Bank Street, Alexandria and Balloch have been delayed due to legal issues with regard to tender returns. It is anticipated that the new facilities will be in place by April 2005.

On a positive note, there is a new facility within Balloch Country Park, which has been paid for by Heritage Lottery Funds as part of the upgrade work.

I would ask Council to re-affirm its decision in February 2004.

(b) Privatisation of the Schools' Estate

The Council approved the following motion by Councillor McCallum, seconded by Councillor Calvert:-

This Council has always recognised the value of the contributions made by parents to the Schools Regeneration Programme, as evidenced by the Parents' Charter and the informal consultation programme already undertaken.

The attention of the Community Participation Committee is also drawn to the decision of the Council at its meeting on 29 September 2004.

At that meeting the Council agreed that two parent members be elected to the Project Board for the Schools Regeneration Programme and taking account of the role and size of the Project Board as well as the representative numbers from each other relevant body this number is considered adequate.

The Council points out to the Community Participation Committee that the heading shown for their discussion of the Schools' Estate Regeneration is incorrect. The Council has no intention – and had never had any intention – of “privatising the Schools' Estate”.

(c) Privatisation of the Schools' Estate

The Council approved the following motion by Councillor McCallum, seconded by Councillor Calvert:-

Public consultation has been central to the Regeneration of the Schools' Estate under this Labour Administration. This is evidenced by the Parents' Charter and the extended period of informal consultation offered to the public and parents and further evidenced by the number of meetings of School Boards,

public meetings held in Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven.

The Council notes that the proposer of the motion from the Community Participation Committee ignores the content of the Parents' Charter and is reminded that formal consultation with all schools involved in the Regeneration Plan will begin early in 2005.

The Council has already decided to accept £100 million towards the regeneration of the Schools' Estate and has no intention of returning that. Under the PPP funding accepted, West Dunbartonshire Council will pay around £250,000 per annum at 2004 prices for four new secondary schools and three new primary schools. The Administration has already invited the SSP and SNP and Independent councillors to propose better options, but none have been forthcoming. In these circumstances, the Council re-affirms its acceptance of £100 million under the Public Private Partnership and welcomes this investment in our schools.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to note the Council's decisions as detailed above.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services outlining the activities and services provided by the Sports Development Service. Mr Alan Crawford, Sports Development Co-ordinator, gave a detailed presentation in support of the report.

Having heard the Sports Development Co-ordinator in further explanation and in response to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

On behalf of the Committee, Councillor Casey thanked the Sports Development Co-ordinator for his enlightening and interesting presentation.

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services providing details of the new Community Learning and Development Section structures and providing the opportunity for questions about aspects of service delivery.

Having heard the Section Head, Community Learning and Development in further explanation and in response to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

After discussion, the Committee requested that representatives of the Community Learning and Development Teams attend future meetings of the Community Participation Committee to discuss their roles.

Councillor Casey, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Section Head, Community Learning and Development, for her interesting and informative presentation and intimated that the Committee would look forward to more detailed presentations by the Community Learning and Development Teams at future meetings.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT NETWORK PROPOSALS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Committee held on 17 November, 2004 (Page 1238, paragraph 4213 refers) a report was submitted by the Chief Executive detailing progress regarding the Senior Management Network Proposals.

Having heard the Policy Officer - Community and Consultation in further explanation the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and the re-scheduled date for the event.

BUDGET PROPOSALS 2005/06

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services seeking the views of the Committee on the Council's budget for 2005/06.

Ms Lynn Bradley, Head of Finance, gave a short presentation to accompany the report.

Having heard the Head of Finance in response to Members' questions and in further explanation, the Committee requested that, in future, there be earlier consultation with community groups on budget savings.

OPEN FORUM

After discussion, it was agreed that officers should contact the Land Services Section of the Housing and Technical Services Department to invite a representative to speak at a future meeting about the condition of the road surfaces within West Dunbartonshire.

The meeting closed at 11.55 a.m.