

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Cultural Sub-Committee: 4 August 2008

Subject: Strategic Development of Culture in West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the sub-committee for the establishment of a member/officer short life working group to make recommendations for the strategic development of cultural activities within West Dunbartonshire.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Cultural Sub-Committee was established by a decision of Council on 30 January 2008 with a remit to develop a cultural strategy for the West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 2.2** At the first meeting of the sub-committee, a diverse range of cultural activities and events were discussed.
- 2.3** At that meeting, the view was expressed that the sub-committee would become a driving force for the development of a coherent cultural strategy for the Council, bringing together the various strands and workstreams which could be seen to sit under the broad heading of “culture”.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The Scottish Government has stated that its main goal is to achieve sustainable economic growth for Scotland. It is this overarching aim which informs all the Government’s major policies and initiatives. In particular, the target of sustainable economic growth lies at the heart of the Concordat between local and national government and which underpins the Single Outcome Agreements which all Local Authorities are currently finalising for submission to Edinburgh at the end of June.
- 3.2** In West Dunbartonshire, for historical reasons, responsibility for what might be considered in its broadest sense to be “culture” sits with various officers across different departments within the Council.
- 3.3** One of the reasons for the establishment of the cultural sub-committee was a desire to bring together these various strands and to establish a coherent cultural strategy for the Council as a whole.

- 3.4 This agenda sits comfortably with the Scottish Government's target of achieving sustainable economic growth for Scotland, given the fact that many of the cultural activities which currently take place within West Dunbartonshire attract inward investment and encourage residents from outwith West Dunbartonshire to visit the area.
- 3.5 The challenge for the Council is to maximise the potential for economic growth, inward investment and tourism arising from cultural activities over the coming years.
- 3.6 While the establishment of the Cultural Sub-committee is a significant step along this road, the Council's committee structure is essentially designed to allow Elected Members to fulfil their important monitoring, scrutiny and governance roles. Committees and sub-committees are not the most effective means of progressing initiatives or of driving developments forward.
- 3.7 It is therefore proposed that a Member/Officer Working Group be established with a remit to develop a strategic approach to Culture across the Council. This Working Group would report to the Cultural Sub-Committee.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although recommendations made by the Working Group, should it be established, may have financial implications.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 Failure to develop a strategic approach to culture in West Dunbartonshire would mean that the Council had failed to take advantage of the economic benefits and regeneration possibilities which can be generated from "culture" in its broadest sense.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group will be an important step towards the development of a strategic approach to culture across the Council with the aim of maximising the opportunities for inward investment, tourism and economic growth.
- 7.2 The Cultural Sub-committee should determine the specific composition of the Working Group. However, it is vital that all sections of the Council which currently have responsibility for culture, tourism, twinning, events and economic development and regeneration should have officer representation on the Working Group.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that:

- a) the Sub-committee agrees to the establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group to develop a strategic approach to culture across the Council with the aim of maximising the opportunities for inward investment, tourism and economic growth;**
- b) the Sub-committee should determine the chairmanship and the specific composition of this Working Group, ensuring that all sections of the Council which currently have responsibility for culture, tourism, twinning, events and economic development and regeneration should have officer representation on it;**
- c) the Working Group be asked to report on its progress to future meetings of the Sub-committee as appropriate.**

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All