



Report by the Shared Service Community Planning Manager, Empowered DIG Lead Selina Ross and contributions to the examples of wider empowerment in partnership working from other DIG leads.

Management Group: 13th May 2021

Subject: Empowerment

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight what the Empowered DIG is currently focused on within its action plan. It also includes a range of projects which relate to an overall theme of Empowerment.

2. Recommendations

2.1 CPWD is asked to:

- Note the report

3. Background

3.1 One of Community Planning's main thematic priorities is: Empowered.

3.2 Outcomes within the thematic priority of Empowerment include:

- We live in engaged and cohesive communities
- Citizens are confident, resilient and responsible

3.3 The DIG action plan is currently focused on:

- Digital Connectivity
- LinkUp West Dunbartonshire (details below)
- Dementia Friendly (details below)
- Volunteering (including development of Volunteering Strategy expected out for consultation in June 2021 tying in with Volunteer Week)
- A number of actions are being reviewed under the Community Empowerment Action Plan (e.g. supporting implementation of the Act in matters such as asset transfer, participation)

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Within partnership working in West Dunbartonshire there are a range of projects which exemplify empowerment. These range from empowerment being the direct involvement of citizens in shaping places, making funding decisions, participating in the sharing of information, and being enabled to access support in financial and health impacted challenging times.
- 4.2** **LinkUp West Dunbartonshire:** feedback from local volunteers and community groups highlighted the need for an online engagement space allowing general public, volunteers and organisations to share information on organisations, opportunities, projects and resources. Co-produced with a project steering group, the LinkUp West Dunbartonshire site (linkupwestdunbartonshire.org) was soft launched in February 2020 with work to populate the site ongoing.
- 4.3** **Dementia Friendly West Dunbartonshire:** this initiative brings together partners from a range of services across the statutory, voluntary and independent sector to increase day-to-day community support for people with dementia and their carers. Born from community feedback received as part of a Change Fund research survey, DFWD takes a community development approach to promoting awareness and active citizenship and offers free awareness training to individuals, community groups, businesses and agencies in return for a pledge of commitment to help now or in the future. To date over 6000 individuals have participated with almost 75% making good on their pledge within 3 months of attending a session. Ongoing work will feature on integrated the Purple Alert and Herbert Protocol initiatives into local practice, further strengthening community engagement in this important field of activity.
- 4.4** **Your Community Walkabouts:** Walkabouts are planned regularly as part of the Your Community Initiative to allow the Council, partners and communities to work together to deliver improvements in West- Dunbartonshire. Local people are encouraged to get involved and help make a positive difference to their neighbourhoods, and are able to identify any issues so that we can work with them and partners to find solutions, as well as prioritise areas to focus improvements. The event in Castlehill was attended by representatives from the Council and Police Scotland, as well as pupils from nearby schools and residents.
- 4.5** **India Street improvements:** This project was identified following engagement with local community, and together ideas were generated to improve a neglected area of greenspace. The communities' team supported the local community to bring their ideas to life, as well as take back ownership of the area and build on any improvements that were made. The project was a result of partnership working from Central Alexandria Tenants and Residents Association, WDC Greenspace, Community Payback, a Community Artists, WDC Libraries and more and long-lasting improvements including benches, picnic table and the new mural mean that local residents and those using the national cycle network along the riverside can enjoy the area.

- 4.6 Westbridgend Community Hall** – a group of tenants and residents have been supported to take ownership of a brand new community hall in Westbridgend. The Westbridgend Community Hall Development Association lodged a planning application which details a community hub offering a café, afterschool and evening clubs and activities for all ages. The former Westbridgend Community Centre was demolished in 2017, with a view that a Community Asset Transfer application with a detailed business plan would be submitted by a community group for future use. In 2019, the group were successful with their asset transfer application to take on the running of a new centre.
- 4.7 Clydebank Can on the Canal** – The Council is working with a range of local groups to create a new activity centre on the banks of the canal in Clydebank, including Scottish Canals, Community Links Scotland, Ysortit, Awestruck Academy, Clydebank Housing Association and Centre 81. The project, which will introduce a range of activities for local residents and visitors, with the potential to offer bike hire and repair; kayaking and canoeing hire and tuition; a meeting place for clubs and classes, as well as a small kitchen for healthy snacks. It will also give residents direct access to the canal and improve links to the town centre. The project came about following feedback from the Clydebank charettes which requested more activity brought to the town centre and projects which could make better use of the Canal.
- 4.8 Community Alliance Community Conference** – Representatives of groups such as Community Councils, Tenants and Residents Association, Parent Councils and the Champions Board gathered with service providers including Scottish Community Development Centre, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, Greenspace and HSPC and community media group The Clydesider for the first ever community alliance conference in 2020.

The event was organised and facilitated by four members of the Community Alliance, supported by West Dunbartonshire Council, and aimed to raise awareness of the Community Alliance and its role as well as to promote and increase membership. Over the course of the day attendees participated in a soft launch of the WDC Community Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan, received inputs from the Community Transport Action Group and The Clydesider both raising awareness of their role and then culminated in the afternoon with a presentation from the Community Alliance.

After each of the themed presentations on Empowerment and Community Alliance, attendees were invited to participate in workshops to answer challenging questions regarding Empowerment and the Community Alliance. Workshops were facilitated by a mixture of service providers and council employees who used the opportunity to stimulate meaningful discussion, receive feedback from the community and identify solutions to barriers to participations.

4.9 Community soup – The first Community Soup event was held in Whitecrook, Clydebank, This was jointly staged by West Dunbartonshire’s Communities Team and Clydebank Housing Association staff based at the centre. Community Soup is a simple idea which allows local people to provide small amounts of funding to support projects and ideas being delivered in their area. Local people are asked to turn up on the night, donate what they can afford to gain entry at the door, enjoy a bowl of soup, listen to people from their local community speak about projects they would like to deliver in the area and vote on which project they think should be funded. The project or idea which gets the most votes on the night takes away the money raised on the door to deliver their idea to the community.

4.10 Viresco Studios – West Dunbartonshire Council, working in partnership with local charity Viresco Studios SCIO, has been awarded funding to create an arts and creative venue in a derelict church.

The £750,000 grant from the Scottish Government’s Regeneration Capital Grant Fund will go towards plans to transform the B-Listed former St Andrew’s Church in Alexandria, creating studios, workshops, training space, event and exhibition areas and a cafe.

The creation of Viresco Studios and Arts Centre will encourage wider participation in the arts, creative enterprises and cultural activity in the area. The workshop areas will focus on micro manufacturing of materials like wood and textiles, with the aim of encouraging startups to make use of the space. Seven artists’ studios will be created in addition to recreational space which will give local residents the opportunity to participate in creative activities and supporting people to access the wider creative industries sector, with particular emphasis on developing the young workforce through work placements and experience.

The venue will also have a training kitchen focused on using local food producers and growers and organising bespoke dining experiences. The interior will include bespoke furniture and features designed and manufactured by local artists and craftspeople, all inspired by local history and heritage.

The programme will also engage local residents, offering them the opportunity to work alongside artists to bring their own designs to life.

4.11 Holiday Hunger Programme – SHINE: A holiday programme of involvement and engagement across the council open to all children, young people and their families was devised and has been built upon year on year. Key elements of the programme are the provision of lunch and opportunities to play and engage with others; including family opportunities. Delivery of the programme was adapted to meet the restrictions of COVID and its impact on local families. By working collaboratively it is estimated that Holiday Hunger 2020 actively supported more than 21,000 young people and families.

Working together with local community groups 14,700 packed lunches, family weekly brunch bags and activity packs were distributed during the Easter and Summer school holidays. 1,524 4-17yr olds participated in free activity projects during summer'20 - learning news skills, exploring their environment and inter-generational work linking up with Strathleven Care home. In addition 910 Farmfoods cards credited to £30 were distributed over Christmas to support local families identified by schools and community partners.

- 4.12 Improving the cancer journey:** A pioneering service for people affected by cancer in West Dunbartonshire has supported more than 300 people in its first year. Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ), which is a partnership between West Dunbartonshire Council and Macmillan Cancer Support, offers all newly-diagnosed adults the opportunity to meet with a dedicated support worker on a one-to-one basis.

The worker will then help the patient access a wide range of support, from benefits advice and emotional support to help at home or with other practical needs. All of the items have been provided to West Dunbartonshire residents free of charge through the Macmillan Warm at Home scheme. In addition, the service has made numerous referrals to Occupational Therapy to ensure people are allocated any item that will support them through their cancer journey.

Counselling and clinical psychology referrals have also been made to help people receive the psychological support they need following their diagnosis. In partnership with West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust's Live Active Programme, the ICJ team have also provided opportunities to help service users improve physical fitness, as well as build friendships and resilience.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Existing resources

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications at this stage

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** A risk analysis would be undertaken for individual projects by those working on the project.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment was not required for this report.

9. Consultation

9.1 This report has been developed between the Shared Service Community Planning Manager and Selina Ross, Empowered DIG Lead with input from other DIG Leads.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 Ensuring citizens in West Dunbartonshire are empowered is a strategic priority for the Community Planning Partnership.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All