

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 20 December 2006

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership – Key Developments

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides Members with 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 27th November 2006.

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 was 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

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

The agreed structure is now in place, although some elements are continuing to evolve. The CPP Manager has been seconded to the Scottish Executive until March 2008 to lead the development of the Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG), worklessness target in the 7 priority areas, (including West Dunbartonshire). The temporary Manager's post has been advertised and interviews were held on 6th December 2006. The structure of the CPP is also one of the issues raised by the Best Value Audit Report. There was some initial discussion of this at the November Board meeting, where it was agreed

that this should be the subject of more detailed discussion when the report of a recent CPP development day became available.

- 3.2** The Board membership is almost complete. A space exists for a young person. 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.
- 3.3.** Sitting between the Board and the Thematic Groups, the Partnership Development Group, (PDG), is key to the Partnership's development. As well as having a co-ordinating role, the group drives the Worklessness agenda and makes overall recommendations on issues such as funding, and the future sustainability of the CPP to the Board. One elected member and 3 WDC officer representatives sit on the PDG, with additional officers providing financial advice as required.
- 3.4** Key Themes and Thematic Groups

The Thematic Groups which deliver on the agreed objectives are at different stages of development as noted below. These groups involve all stakeholders in their work. All Thematic Groups include officer representation from WDC, and some include elected member representation. A review of community representation on all thematic groups is underway.

- Getting People Back Into Work: A new Thematic Group was formed in June of this year 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 main focus has been on developing West Dunbartonshire Workforce Plus and NEET Strategy Action Plans for 2006/07. These were submitted to the Executive at the end of October. These plans will help co-ordinate and drive partnership activity on the priority Community Planning theme of Worklessness. Initial feedback from the Executive has been very positive and the group will now focus on developing the three-year action plan, due to be submitted to the Executive on 31st January 2007. This plan will cover the period 2007 to 2010, in line with the Closing the Opportunity Gap, (CtOG), Target A time span. It will set out how partners will work together to achieve the target of supporting 840 people off benefits by 2007, and 2190 people by 2010. Proposals contained within the plan for 2006/07 included the development of the BG&ESG's role to include functioning as a mechanism for the joint commissioning of employability services amongst Community Planning partners. A number of pilots are proposed to test this approach over the coming 18 months.
- 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 has recently reconvened and the membership of

the revised group was agreed at a meeting on 4th October. The group's action plan was revised at the meeting on 29th November 2006.

- *Safe, Attractive Communities*: Currently, the Community Safety Partnership addresses this theme in a Community Planning context. There remains a need to address the issue of Housing and its fit within this theme. (Discussions are underway with WDC and Communities Scotland on the development of a group to take this forward.) The first Citizens Panel survey, on the topic of community safety and anti-social behaviour, is now complete. The questionnaire was issued to nearly 1200 people and generated a high response rate (77%). The findings are being considered by the panel steering group.
- *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 is well established and focusing on developing its role aligned to the ROA. The recommendations to the August Board, arising from the review of the HISG, were approved and are being actioned. The Head of Planning & Health Improvement of the Community Health Partnership is now chairperson of the HISG. The HISG has a Finance Advisory Group which has been held up as good practice. Work is also ongoing to ensure that the HISG Sub-groups and short-life working groups are operating in the most effective manner to meet the objectives of the HISG.
- *Youth Strategy*: This group is focusing on service delivery issues, co-ordination of services and developing an Outcome Agreement for Young People. A Youth Outcome Agreement Framework has been designed and is currently being populated with information by partners. A sub-group is being formed to focus specifically on the Youth Strategy Employment theme and will also work to the Business Growth & Employability Strategy Group to help take forward the Partnership's worklessness theme in relation to young people. The Youth Trust will play a key role in this to ensure that young people are central to the development of effective, innovative and user-led facilities across West Dunbartonshire. The new Youth Trust co-ordinator is now in post.

3.5. Financial Position – Community Regeneration Fund

The November meeting of the CPP Board noted that there is a danger that the planned CPP programme will not achieve the £5.130m minimum spend required of the CRF in 2006/2007. Failure to achieve the minimum spend level will result in any shortfall being retained by Communities Scotland. The CPP had identified allocations from the CRF for 2006/2007 of £5.717m. The actual spend to the 30 September 2006 was £1.744m (30% of the funds allocated). The report to the November meeting of the CPP Board identified slippage of £411,500 from the original allocation and projected a revised 2006/07 spend of £5.305m which leaves a balance of £0.175m over the minimum required spend for the year. The Partnership Development Group had discussed this issue at its meeting on the 9th November and agreed to

recommend a fall-back position of seeking proposals from existing projects which could be funded at short notice should underspend materialise. An assessment was presented to the Board of the potential risk of each project not being in a position to maximise the sum allocated to it in 2006/07. The Board noted the need for urgent action to ensure the minimum required spend in 2006/07, and has agreed to delegate responsibility to the PDG to address the situation. The PDG had recommended that any underspend should be focussed on either existing projects which were able to deliver additional services, or on capital expenditure. This is because the lead in time for any new work would be such that it would not be likely to meet the necessary timescales. The Partnership Manager has contacted existing projects regarding preparation of a reserve list of options that could be introduced, if required, in the last quarter of the year to protect the position. It was agreed that the PDG will convene a sub group to consider and approve any new applications that this process generates.

3.6 Financial Position – Childcare and Family Support

At its August meeting, the Board noted that discussions on the level of finances required by Childcare and Family Support, (managed by Education and Social Work Services), were ongoing and agreed to a flexible approach to increase the funding, if available. It was subsequently agreed to transfer £100k to Childcare and Family Support. The Partnership Manager in consultation with the project representatives has agreed a total allocation of £550,000 for 2007/2008, an increase of £100,000 from the previous proposed reduction,

3.7 Financial Position - Financial Inclusion Fund

Allocations of £600,000 have been identified by the Scottish Executive for both 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 and an offer of grant has been accepted with a carry forward restriction of 20%, £120,000. Spend to date in the current year has been low and an approach has been made to the Executive to increase the year end flexibility in 2006/2007 to approximately 30% for which a response is currently awaited.

3.8 Financial Position - Workforce Plus

Allocations of £420,000 have been identified by the Scottish Executive for both 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. The formal offer of grant has been received and accepted with the expenditure profile carry forward being negotiated as part of the Action Plan. It should be noted that under the terms and conditions of grant that any underspend against this planning total will be lost.

3.9 Financial Position - NEET

Allocations of £400,000 have been identified by the Scottish Executive for both 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. The formal offer of grant has been received and accepted with the expenditure profile and carry forward being negotiated as part of the Action Plan. It should be noted that under the terms and conditions of grant that any underspend against this planning total will be lost.

3.10 Project Allocations 2007/08

Indicative project allocations of £4.471m from a potential sum of £5.01m have been identified for 2007/2008. When determining these indicative allocations, the Board has considered the outcomes of the ongoing review process. Projects have requested confirmation of CRF financial commitment for 2007/2008 to allow forward planning and to provide some reassurance to staff currently on short term contracts. The Board agreed that WDC, as grant recipient for the Community Regeneration Fund, could issue 'Offer of Grant' letters for 2007/2008, advising that these allocations are provisional and are subject to the ongoing review process.

3.11 Development of the New Community Plan 2007 - 2017

Community Planning has a wider remit than delivering on the Regeneration Objectives in the ROA. At a previous Board meeting, (September 2005), partners prioritised wider issues which CPP stakeholders should focus on and incorporate these into our new Community Plan. The process of developing the revision of the 2000 Community Plan commenced early in 2006. This also addresses one of the factors noted in the Best Value Audit report. Some of the wider issues identified include Transport, Joint use of premises by partners, West Dunbartonshire's Waterfronts (added value issues), Joint ventures and Business Developments, and Sustainable Development. A Writers Group has been established to take this forward involving key stakeholders. The fourth Civic Forum was held on the 7th September and was attended by over 50 community representatives. The meeting focused on the Community Plan, with input from a range of speakers. Participants were able to have further discussion around particular themes and issues during facilitated discussion groups in the second part of the meeting. An update was submitted to the Board meeting in November. A consultation draft will be available in December 2006, with consultation events planned early in 2007. The new Community Plan will provide a basis for the CPP's work from the year 2007/08, and will be subject to regular review until 2017.

3.12 Longer Term Sustainability of the CPP

The last report to Council on CPP developments noted that new structural options were under investigation – most particularly a Regeneration Trust model – which would allow the Partnership to access funding not available to any of the statutory partners. A number of visits have been made to look at such models in operation, and these will be discussed at a special meeting of

the PDG on 15th December. Members will be kept informed of the implications of any plans to change the constitutional structure of the CPP.

3.13 Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA)

The Annual Report for 2005/06 has been submitted to Ministers. Feedback has been positive. Communities Scotland noted that “a considerable amount of work has clearly been undertaken by the CPP since approval of the ROA” and that the document includes “a strong and very useful summary of major changes”, “comprehensive” output and outcome reporting, “positive signs on community engagement”, gives an “excellent overview of partnership working” and provides “useful case studies in terms of good practice”. The ROA will be developed further after the mid-term stock take meeting with Communities Scotland, due to be arranged in the next few weeks. The ROA are available on the WDC website. The document will be subject to regular updates as the Monitoring Framework evolves.

3.14 Financial Inclusion

A total of £1.2 million has been allocated to West Dunbartonshire for 2006/07 and 07/08 to tackle financial exclusion across the area. Following work with partners and agencies involved in the finance/information and advice sector, proposals were submitted to the CPP Board and then to the Scottish Executive. Full details of the guidance and submission can be obtained from the Partnership support team. Approval has now been received from the Scottish Executive and the three strands of activity will deliver information and advice, awareness raising and education services, and a Credit Union development pilot. Recruitment of staff is complete and the initiative will represent a key delivery strand under the umbrella of the Building Better Futures worklessness project.

3.15 Information Sessions

Two further information sessions have been held and feedback received was positive. The sessions covered:-

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation: Tour of ROA target areas September 2006.
- The Social Economy/Social Firms: October 2006.

Two further sessions during November and December will conclude the program for this financial year. Health and Well-being - School Health Survey Evidence and Equalities in Community Regeneration - Making it Mainstream

3.16 Citizen's Panel

The fourth Citizens Panel survey, relating to worklessness and employment progression issues, is currently being prepared and will be sent to panel members in January. The Panel Steering Group has agreed that Hexagon consultants have performed well and arrangements are being made to re-commission them in 2007 for a further year. The Board agreed *up to* £39k per annum for the next 3 years from Community Voices Fund to support the development of the Citizen's Panel. The panel utilises a postal questionnaire format and is sent quarterly to a mailing list of 1200 local residents who have volunteered to respond to questions set on a variety of issues.

3.17 Mainstreaming equalities & diversity

Guidance on Regeneration Outcome Agreements highlights the need to ensure that equality is mainstreamed into all areas of work. It states that Community Planning Partnerships should ensure that they eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good race relations (Race Relations Amendment Act 2000). Community Planning Partnerships have overall responsibility for their actions and decisions; however the legal liability for meeting the race equality duty rests with the listed public authorities in the Community Planning Partnership. A short-life steering group has met to consider how to progress equalities and diversity within community planning. Initial discussions established the clear and explicit statutory requirements that Community Planning must comply with. In line with current legislation and good practice in Scotland, the six "equality strands" for consideration and action are: age, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, religion/faith, sexual orientation. It has been agreed that a multi-agency Equality & Diversity working group will begin meeting in December 2006 to develop equalities work within West Dunbartonshire through Community Planning. As a first step, *Communicating Effectively*; a guide for communicating with people from minority ethnic groups and disabled people, was adopted by the CPP Board at its August 06 meeting.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** The personnel issues relate to the appointment of the temporary Manager of the CPP. Interviews were held on 6th December, and an update will be provided to Members at the Council meeting.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The financial implications relate to the potential underspend of the CRF allocation for 2006/07. Steps have been taken to address this as outlined in paragraph 3.5.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The CPP is continuing to develop on a number of fronts, details of the main issues are summarised in paragraph 3. The key issues include:-

- Ensuring the minimum spend required from the CRF and other funding streams.
- 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.

David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 12 December 2006

Wards Affected: All Council Wards

Background Papers: 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)

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