

**Supporting best practice in community development**

# **Review of West Dunbartonshire Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils**

**Report on Stage 2 Consultation  
September-December 2021**

**Scottish Community Development Centre  
1 February 2022**

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# 1 Introduction

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West Dunbartonshire Council has commissioned the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) to facilitate community engagement in the review of the West Dunbartonshire's existing 2015 Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils. This independent process complements the Council's own review of Community Councils support arrangements and is linked with ongoing implementation of the [West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan](#).

There are three public consultation stages for review of the [existing Scheme](#):

1. **An initial 16 week consultation between 9<sup>th</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to gather views on Community Council boundaries and other issues for possible inclusion in the revised Scheme.** A report explaining that initial consultation and its findings can be see [here](#); it was presented to a Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 together with an [initial draft Scheme of Establishment](#), which was approved by the Council for public consultation.
2. **A subsequent 16 week consultation between 31<sup>st</sup> August and 21<sup>st</sup> December 2021 on a draft Scheme and associated documents.** A number of draft documents were published for consultation:
  - a. [Initial draft Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils](#) approved by the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 for public consultation
  - b. [Draft Model Standing Orders](#)
  - c. [Draft Model Constitution for Community Councils](#)
  - d. [Draft composition and boundaries of Community Councils](#)
  - e. [Draft Code of Conduct for Community Councillors](#)
  - f. [Draft Community Council Handbook](#)
3. **A final 4 week consultation anticipated to take place in March 2022 to consider a final draft of the Scheme of Establishment.** This will follow a Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

This report refers solely to the second stage of consultation. It does not contain final changes to Community Council boundaries, which will be consulted on separately with Community Councils and the public in the coming weeks.

More detail about the review and the approach to consultation in general can be found in the [report of the first stage of consultation](#).

## 2 The second stage of consultation

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The second stage of the three consultation stages (see page 3 above) focussed on a series of draft documents that comprise the draft revised Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, accompanied by a new Handbook for Community Councils. The components of the overall Scheme are shown in the diagram below.



Once the revised Scheme is approved in 2022, the Scheme of Establishment document itself will form the overarching document incorporating the Code of Conduct, Model Constitution and Model Standing Orders as appendices. The Handbook would complement the approved Scheme with advice, guidance and support.

Target groups for the second round of consultation were similar to the first round of consultation:

- **Community workshops** – two online workshops for any community groups or member of the public, repeated at lunchtime and early evening in November 2021 (see section 4.1 for more information).
- **Community Councils Forum** – half-day online workshop in October 2021 (see section 4.2 for more information).
- **Community Councils** – direct email contact with all active Community Councils (see Appendix 1), including offers of individual meetings or discussions.

- **Community groups in areas without active Community Councils** – direct email contact with community groups in areas without an active Community Council (see Appendix 1), including offers of individual meetings.
- **‘Stronger Voices’ group** – two online sessions with representatives from a number of West Dunbartonshire community and third sector organisations (see section 4.4 for more information).
- **Elected members** – online briefing meeting in November 2021. This was attended by three elected members.

Each of these target groups and of course the general public was encouraged to engage however they wished and ultimately to respond to the consultation in writing (to West Dunbartonshire Council’s Communities Team email address), and were provided with information about the consultation and links to the consultation materials. [A dedicated webpage](#) was created about the second stage of consultation, as a public information resource with links to relevant documents and contact details for an SCDC team member in the case of any queries.

In workshops and briefing sessions, team members shared summaries of the draft revised Scheme’s aims and of the main suggestions generated by the stage 1 consultation. These summaries proved a useful aid to prompt discussion, and are shown in basic text format in Appendix 2.

## 3 Overview of comments received

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This part of the report provides a summary of responses to the draft Scheme received through the various engagement channels described in the previous section:

- Most comments and suggestions came from Community Council members (including West Dunbartonshire Councillors, who are *ex-officio* members of Community Councils within their ward), the Community Council Forum, participants in the community workshops, and other community / third sector organisations involved in the 'Stronger Voices' group set up for this specific project (including West Dunbartonshire Equalities Forum, West Dunbartonshire Youth Forum, Y Sort It and West Dunbartonshire Community Alliance). These suggestions and comments are covered in sections 3.1 to 3.4 below.
- One formal written consultation response was received, from Alexandria Community Action Network (ACAN). This is reported on in section 3.5 below.

Within each section below, suggestions and comments are grouped under the four themes of suggestions raised during the first stage of consultation (see Appendix 2). The various suggestions and comments will shape the final draft of the Scheme for Establishment.

### 3.1 Community workshops

Two online workshop discussions were held about the draft Scheme of Establishment on 15 November 2021 (early evening) and 17 November 2021 (lunchtime). Each workshop was open to the public. Participants included Community Councillors, members of other community organisations and members of the public. The two sessions were attended by a total of 16 people (excluding WDC officers and the SCDC facilitation team).

Participants' comments were captured live during the sessions on four 'jamboards', based on the themes that emerged from the stage one consultation (see Appendix 2), which were used to structure the discussions.

Small images of the four jamboards are shown on the following two pages. Larger, more easily readable versions can be seen in Appendix 3.

# 1 Engaging and representing your community

## BASIC

Understand & represent local views  
 Equalities & diversity: e.g. varied membership, accessible meetings  
 Open & accountable  
 Non-political  
 Promote meetings & successes

## EXTRA

Projects  
 Activities  
 Participatory events like Community Assemblies

"Non-political" - need to be clear we mean non PARTY political

Everything is political! Need to clarify - i.e. non party political

When communities raise issues, they need to be heard by the local authority - need evidence of change as a result - otherwise we'll just continue the local apathy

Bellsmyre has never had a CC - every community needs to have a CC! The areas left out inevitably have the most need and often the least confidence to set up a CC.

Need to make CCs attractive to people - it's intimidating when there are more WDC officers there than CC members

Online meetings need to be accessible and accountable to local residents

**YOUNG PEOPLE:** some see CCs as old fuddy duddies... others want to be involved in CCs or asked for their views, but don't have a platform

We need to look at how we engage young people - e.g. where are the MSYPs? How can we make CC mtgs more attractive for young people, balancing their interests with other community issues?

CCs structure, roles, how they do their business - all are really important to tease out - critical for success. Maybe different ways for different CCs, no one 'right' way. Mix of different methods? eg trad mtgs, online etc

Clarify principles of engagement / empowerment in the Scheme - e.g. in the exec summary

15 Nov

17 Nov

Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

# 2 Influencing the Council and Community Planning Partners

Develop relationships with WDC Communities Team, other key officers (e.g. planning, licencing) and Community Planning Partners

Produce a Locality Place Plan

Participatory Budgeting

Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

15 Nov

17 Nov

Need 'service level agreements' between CCs and WDC - a framework to help define relationships / expectations

People need to see real, physical changes - to tackle scepticism about changing power imbalance

Officers need to commit to communities and deal with trust, honesty, respect - some do, some don't. The Community Empowerment Act / Strategy are real things now!

Communities need to have confidence that they will be listened to, and there will be action as a result

Authorities need to listen & respond to communities' legitimate concerns - eg Core Paths on roads interfering with livestock

There are already lots of Codes of Conduct, policies and procedures - but they aren't always adhered to. Need joined up thinking and practice, culture change, respect - it's in everybody's interests

Communities struggle to influence decision making generally

How can the new Scheme give more confidence that community views will be heeded?

All officers need to be accountable and do their job by replying, even if it's just a holding response. Contributes to the feeling that communities aren't listened to.

When CCs write to WDC, they need a reply! (eg roads/lighting) Some depts don't stick to WDC rules about replying to CCs. Designated CC officer is a good idea to help make sure CCs get replies.

Officers should feel part of the whole system, and want to be part of it.

Enforcement of Code of Conduct needed too

LDP/PLANNING: Too often there's a disconnect between community aspirations and the LDP/planning decisions - which don't reflect what the community wants. Need more transparency, more

How can communities change the LDP and planning decisions? Policy is set in stone for 10 years, eg for new housing.

How will Local(ity) Place Plans and Community Empowerment Strategy (delivery plan being developed) resolve this?

Need a Code of Conduct for WDC officers as well as Community Councillors - or maybe more than that, a whole new culture change!

Communications should be a 2-way street - CCs try hard to raise issues, but don't always get adequate responses. Replies need to be constructive, not 'fobbing off'.

Online meetings need to be accessible and accountable to local residents - applies to Community Councils and also to Council run mtgs (eg Alexandria Town Centre Forum)

### 3 Working with other local groups

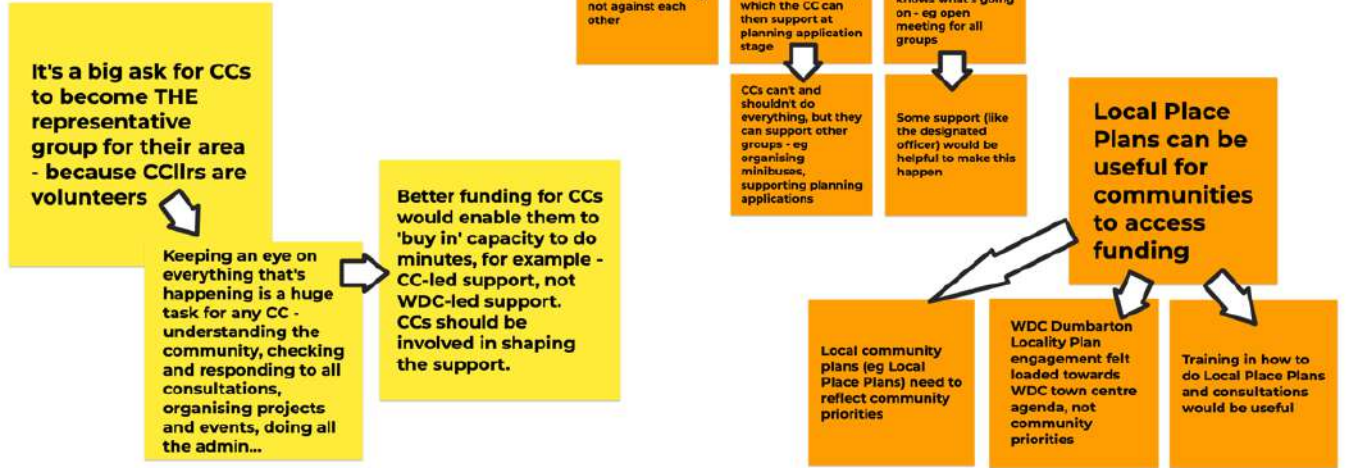
Develop collaborative relationships with other local groups to complement each other

Associate members

Deliver projects

Produce a Locality Place Plan

Become the local umbrella or anchor organisation



Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

15 Nov  
17 Nov

### 4 Administration and support

Membership: growth, succession planning, new Associate category

Office bearers and roles

Organising and running meetings (including online)

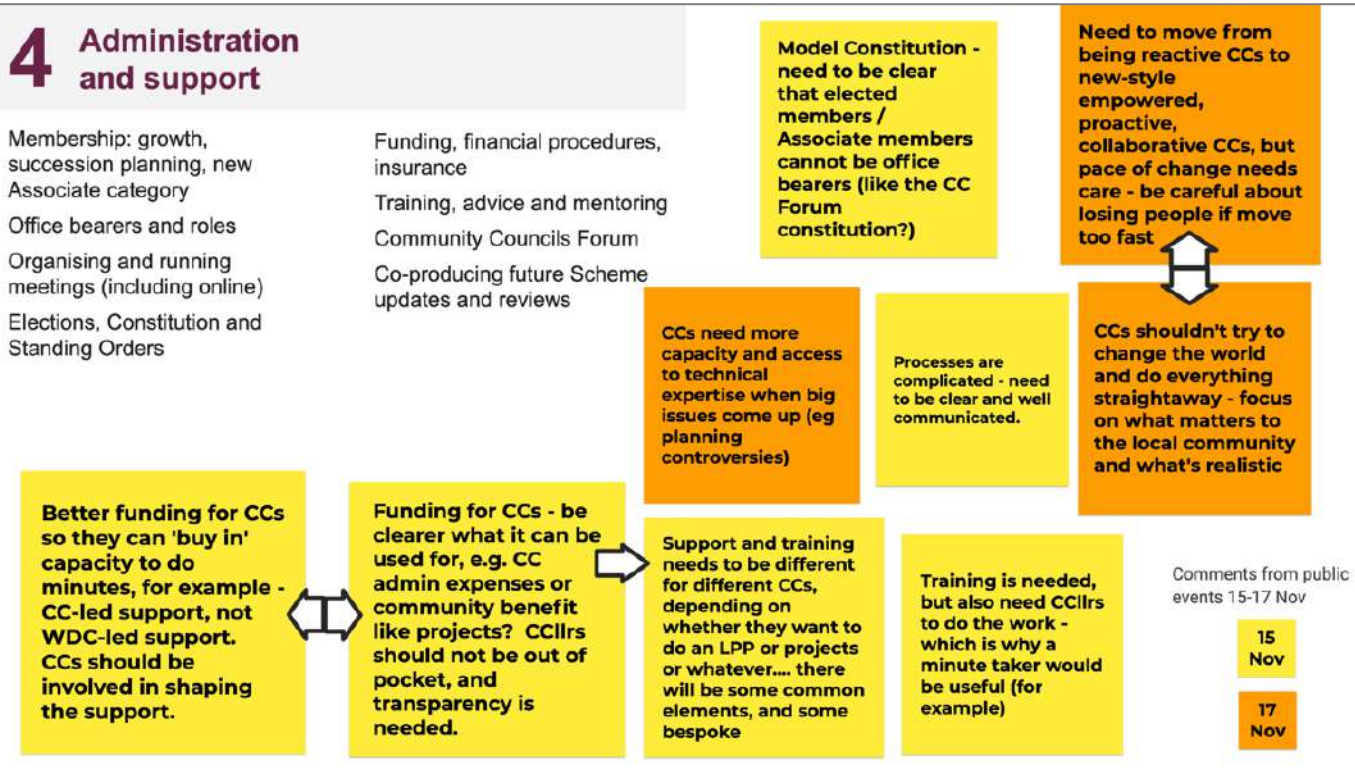
Elections, Constitution and Standing Orders

Funding, financial procedures, insurance

Training, advice and mentoring

Community Councils Forum

Co-producing future Scheme updates and reviews



Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

15 Nov  
17 Nov



## 3.2 Community Councils Forum

This section notes the main points raised by members of the West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum at an online presentation and workshop discussion about the draft Scheme of Establishment on 8<sup>th</sup> October 8 Oct 2021. The headings reflect the themes that emerged from the first stage of consultation (see Appendix 2), which were used to structure the discussion.

### 1. Representing and engaging communities (including membership, equality & diversity)

Main discussion points:

- How often do CCs need to engage with our communities to satisfy WDC?
- Community action plans are a good idea, but they are so often a wishlist and based on limited involvement.
- Go out to communities at gala days etc and ask what they want, don't consult straightaway on a plan.
- What happens when self-interested people try and take over a CC for their own agendas?

Potential amendments to the draft Scheme and supporting materials:

- Beef up Code of Conduct to cover members thinking only of self-interest rather than the wider community.
- Handbook should give advice on how to gather community views.

### 2. Influence and liaison with the Council and Community Planning partners

Main discussion points:

- Communities need to be educated to understand that CCs cannot change the LDP, they must abide by it.
- People need to understand that LDPs etc are not fixed but are updated every few years, and they can influence those reviews.
- WDC lighting need to reply to fault reporting (like WDC greenspace do) - otherwise CCs don't know if the report is being acted on or not.
- Community views put forward by CCs are often ignored by higher authorities like WDC or Scottish Government planning Reporters – with the consequence that residents say CCs are a waste of time.
- Police don't come along as they used to.
- How can CCs work together across local authority boundaries, for example in response to proposals by health boards that cut across local authority boundaries?

Draft Scheme content which was supported:

- Code of conduct for police and others on how to participate in CCs

Potential amendments and additions to the draft Scheme:

- Scheme could usefully set out how CCs and the public relate to LDPs and other LA/PPP plans, and how to influence those plans.
- Code of conduct for WDC officers which should require response to all enquiries and fault reports.
- Guidance on how CCs might collaborate across local authority boundaries in relation to cross-boundary issues (e.g. health board proposals).

### **3. Working collaboratively with other local groups and organisations**

Main discussion points:

- Question about the Community Alliance: an umbrella 'communities' group is needed, but is the Community Alliance appropriate? The Community Councils Forum (CCF) is concerned it is being side-lined and does not have access to local authority Head of Service etc.
- How can the CCF have more influence, as it used to in the past? How it can secure more support and participation from individuals CCs?
- Difficult to see how larger CCs might work well with Housing Associations and others, as those organisations have their own agendas.
- Other local groups joining CCs is a nice idea, but only if there is space on the CC – for example OKCC already has 2 groups represented, how many more can/should they have?
- Would other groups have to abide by rules that CCs have to abide by?
- Different views on whether group representatives on CCs should be able to vote: some say yes, other suggested that CCs should not have a vote on planning applications. There are potential constitutional difficulties with associate members having voting rights (e.g. if they are not resident in the CC area).

Potential amendments:

- Should there be a limit on numbers of other groups joining CCs? Should they join as group reps or as individuals?
- Clarity on role of group representatives (e.g. join discussions and work collaboratively, but not vote, for example on planning applications) and how Community Councillors Code of Conduct applies to them.

### **4. Administrative arrangements and support**

Main discussion points:

- Budgets needed for training and necessary equipment to undertake CC duties (for example tablets, laptop, printer).
- Essential communications equipment should be provided by WDC to avoid VAT.
- Online meetings useful, especially for more informal discussions.
- Some existing administrative requirements are impractical, such as sending agendas to WDC 14 days in advance.
- Encourage CC planning convenors to get training on complex matters (e.g. from PAS on planning matters) – should not be mandatory, but highly advisable.

Draft Scheme content which was supported:

- Include ability to hold online CC meetings.

Potential amendments and additions to the draft Scheme:

- Financial arrangements should make explicit reference to budgets for training and essential communications equipment/broadband.
- Make detailed administrative requirements more CC-friendly; for example, remove the requirement to send meeting agendas to WDC 14 days in advance.

### **3.3 Individual Community Councils**

This section notes main points raised by individual Community Councils in discussion with SCDC team members in meetings and by email. Of the eleven active Community Councils who were individually contacted, seven gave feedback to SCDC team members and two others participated in the community workshops described in section 4.1.

Main points raised by Community Councils are summarised below, using the headings that emerged from the stage one consultation (see Appendix 2).

#### **1. Representing and engaging communities (including membership, equality & diversity)**

- Challenge for CCs to get beyond being seen as old and stuffy, and to get new members – especially younger residents and groups like mothers-and-toddlers.
- Some CCs would like to do more projects like events, playparks or whatever the local community aspires to; all CCs should be enabled and encouraged to do so, as these effect positive changes in communities and build support for CCs.
- Literacy can be low in some areas, so communications need to be accessible to all.
- Advice on how to use communications to good effect would be useful – for example, social media can be good for CCs to broadcast information, but not to facilitate discussion.

#### **2. Influence and liaison with the Council and Community Planning partners**

- Communities Team are good at collaborative working, need to focus on other services who are less so (e.g. roads, estates). Too often, WDC Roads does not respond to CC contact, and WDC Estates appears to make decisions about land disposals on purely commercial grounds (so some CCs no longer approach them to acquire land in case it encourages its sale for commercial purposes).
- Need for a ‘remedy of last resort’ if statutory authorities fail to reasonably respond or CCs have been ignored – for example, direct contact with a Council Committee – because individual CCs otherwise lack the ability to make their points at WDC level.
- Suggestion of annual ‘local meetings’ in each CC area with relevant WDC/CPP representatives to discuss and inform future plans, service delivery and budget setting.

- Previous local community planning engagement arrangements (now scrapped) had worked well.

### **3. Working collaboratively with other local groups and organisations**

- Clearer division of roles and responsibilities needed between the Community Councils Forum and the Communities Alliance.
- CCs should be encouraged to support and complement other local organisations and initiatives; WDC Communities Team could help broker collaborative working.

### **4. Administrative arrangements and support**

- CCs need dedicated staff support for administration (particularly minute taking and distribution), such as access to a WDC officer or budget to employ a local person.
- More support needed with equipment (e.g. laptops, printing, tablets) and volunteer support (especially for office bearers, such as secretarial support).
- WDC finance officer's role needs to be clearer and more constrained – CC accounts are already independently examined, WDC officers should not check and query legitimate items of expenditure (e.g. Remembrance wreaths).
- The inability to remove inactive CC members can prevent CCs from taking on new members by taking up space in the membership quota.
- Clarification of elections, voting and membership arrangements is welcomed.
- CCs should be encouraged to regard CC business and community engagement as rolling activities not limited to monthly meetings: for example, transacting business between meetings by email and video calls, organising sub-committees, using social media, organising community events and so on. Monthly meetings can simply be ratifying all the other activities that are happening.
- The Handbook should be easily and regularly updated.

## **3.4 'Stronger Voices' group**

The 'Stronger Voices' group is an informal short-life working group brought together solely for the purpose of supporting the review of the Scheme for Establishment. The purpose is to consider how to enable Community Councils to be 'stronger voices' in their communities by tapping into advice and support from other voluntary sector organisations operating in West Dunbartonshire.

The group comprises voluntary sector organisations with a pan-West Dunbartonshire (WD) interest including WD Community Councils Forum, WD Community Alliance, WD Tenants and Residents Organisation, WD Equalities Forum, WD Youth Council, Y-Sort It, WD Champions Board, ISARO, The Clydesider and WDCVS.

Two meetings of the group were held during the stage two consultation. Suggestions and comments from participants included:

1. To bring the documents to life, it was suggested they should include examples of case studies (e.g. Local Place Plans and community engagement in West Dunbartonshire or other areas), FAQs and simple/straightforward language.
2. The Handbook should be printed together with other materials to recruit new Community Councillors. Again, keep things simple.
3. A PR and publicity strategy is needed for Community Councils and the Community Councils Forum (including through The Clydesider).
4. Links are needed between CCs and the Equalities Forum and Youth Alliance, plus contact with senior school pupils to encourage participation. CCs could set up sub-groups or hold events for youth or equalities matters. The Clydesider Network, established during lockdown for third sector and statutory organisations to co-ordinate and make connections, was seen as a useful model. The Handbook should contain details of networks.
5. Targeted engagement was felt to particularly important for young people, rather than simply encouraging and expecting them to come to CC meetings. Information needs to be made accessible for young people, identifying youth leaders, working with experienced organisations like Y-Sort it, going into schools and using appropriate online platforms like ourCloud and text messaging.
6. For ethnic minorities, ISARO and The Clydesider can be effective at reaching out, overcoming barriers such as language (including British Sign Language for hearing-impaired people) and understanding the needs of new residents.
7. CCs have potential roles in producing Local(ity) Place Plans.

### **3.5 Formal consultation response**

One formal consultation was received, from Alexandria Community Action Network (ACAN) who also participated in one of the community workshops described in section 4.1 above. ACAN's consultation response was based on discussions with local businesses, elected members, tenants' and residents' representatives, teachers and community group representatives. The response is very comprehensive, covering the following areas:

- Strengthening proposed actions and processes, particularly in terms of relationships between Community Councils and the local authority.
- Clarifying statutory and non-statutory areas of interest for Community Councils.
- Defining and clarifying participation duties and opportunities for Community Councils, and participation commitments from public bodies.
- Defining requirements for community consultation and participation, financial controls and succession planning.
- Guidelines on the interface between Community Councils and elected members.

- The need for a skills and training programme, with detailed suggestions of topics to be covered.<sup>1</sup>
- Linking Community Council's roles to the principles of West Dunbartonshire Empowerment Strategy.

The full text of the submission is included as an appendix.

### 3.6 Elected members

This section summarises points raised by elected members in a briefing session held in November 2021. Three elected members participated in the session. It should be noted that all elected members are also *ex-officio* members of Community Councils within their wards, and were also therefore invited to input to stage two consultation through other mechanisms like any other Community Council member. The headings reflect the themes that emerged from the first stage of consultation (see Appendix 2), which were used to structure the discussion.

#### 1. Representing and engaging communities (including membership, equality & diversity)

- Meetings can be feisty, but that's healthy.
- CCs often have speakers from WDC or other organisations – which can inform, galvanise, spark good conversations, raise ambitions.
- How can we attract more varied age/diversity of CC members?

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<sup>1</sup> ACAN's suggested list of training topics:

- West Dunbartonshire Empowerment Strategy framework, opportunities, needs and behaviours.
- Planning and delivering community engagement, including designing and conducting community surveys.
- Recognised consultative mechanisms.
- Methods for encouraging participation.
- Understanding our community.
- Identifying and prioritizing community priorities.
- Analysing and presenting data.
- Properly structured and regulated CC structure.
- Community Councillors code of conduct.
- Conducting effective meetings.
- Dealing with conflict, creating behaviours for change.
- Delivering change: creating strategy and action plans.
- Effective participatory working relationships.
- Community and Participatory Budgeting.
- Local Development Plan processes.
- Local democratic processes - community and service planning.
- Community Empowerment Act - opportunities.
- Equality Act 2010 - CC responsibilities.
- Ensuring CC's compliance and application.
- Use of appropriate financial software.
- Applying agreed financial controls and responsibilities.
- Creating funding applications.

## **2. Influence and liaison with the Council and Community Planning partners**

- Community Alliance has always struggled to find a role.
- Elected members, Community Councillors and officers could work better together.
- CCs are concerned about their voice not being heard, e.g. in planning.
- CCs are more successful when they have things to do, like projects. Could WDC help by giving clear roles, like inviting CCs to present to Council committees on specific local issues or aspirations?
- How can CCs get professional help to prepare Local Place Plans?
- Need to encourage CCs where they don't exist.

## **3. Working collaboratively with other local groups and organisations**

- Some CCs worried about other groups diminishing their role.
- Risk that an increasing number of local groups confuses residents about who to go to.

## **4. Administrative arrangements and support**

- Joining a CC should not be difficult or intimidating.
- Meeting times need to be accessible for working people (e.g. not during normal working hours on weekdays).

## 4 Analysis and recommendations

Table 4.1 below summarises key points from the stage two consultations, with recommendations on how they should be tackled in the final drafting of the Scheme, Code of Conduct, model Constitution, model Standing Orders and Handbook. Individual consultation responses contain more detailed suggestions on specific items.

In addition, two overarching points were made by a number of contributors:

- Community Councils are voluntary organisations consisting of people who often have many other commitments in their lives. Although they wish to increase the scope of who they represent and what they can do to improve people's lives, this is affected by how well they are supported to recruit, train and retain active members. That is why the forthcoming Community Councils Handbook, currently being produced to complement the Scheme for Establishment, will be key in setting out what support Community Councils can expect to achieve their aims over time.
- Community Councils' ability to achieve their communities' goals is very dependent on how they were treated by partner organisations including the Council and other public service partners. The need for mutual respect, effective engagement and shared commitment to achieving change were important features of this. The need to build greater confidence that the process would deliver change was an important starting point.

Table 4.1: Summary of specific points from Stage 2 consultations

	<i>Issue</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
1	<b>Representing and engaging communities</b> (including membership, equality & diversity)	
1.1	Secure increased and more diverse membership to reflect diversity of local population, with a common aspiration across consultation respondents for more involvement of young people.	<p><i>Scheme</i> should set expectations for CCs to be as representative and diverse as possible given appropriate support.</p> <p><i>Handbook</i> should encourage this and provide advice, illustrated with examples from local CCs and (if useful) CCs from elsewhere in the country.</p> <p>WDC and the CCs Forum should consider how they can promote CCs generally across the whole of West Dunbartonshire, working in partnership with local organisations such as WDCVS, WD Equalities Forum, WD Youth Alliance, Y-Sort It and The Clydesider.</p>



1.2	Enabling and encouraging CCs to do more community-led projects and events, effect positive change in communities and build support for CCs.	<p><i>Handbook</i> should encourage this, illustrated with examples from local CCs and (if useful) CCs from elsewhere in the country.</p> <p><i>Scheme, Standing Orders, Constitution and Handbook</i> should ensure that there are no barriers to community-led projects (e.g. inappropriate scrutiny or administrative requirements by WDC officers).</p>
1.3	Good communications with local communities, using a variety of channels to reach as many people as possible (e.g. social media, posters, email updates) and ensuring accessibility/inclusiveness.	<p><i>Scheme</i> should set an expectation of appropriate communication required to reach diverse community interests.</p> <p><i>Handbook</i> should include simple advice on good communications, drawing on examples from local CCs and (if useful) CCs from elsewhere in the country.</p>
1.4	Advice on how to gather community views and undertake community consultation, including any WDC/ CPP minimum requirements.	<p><i>Scheme</i> should emphasise the importance of good community engagement to delivering the roles of CCs.</p> <p><i>Handbook</i> should give advice, with examples, on how to gauge community opinions views in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement.</p>
1.5	Make CC meetings as interesting, relevant and accessible as possible to local residents.	<p><i>Scheme</i> should ensure that meetings are accessible to the public (including appropriate days/times of public meetings and basic accessibility requirements for face-to-face and online public meetings).</p> <p><i>Handbook</i> should include simple advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to ensure meetings are accessible to the public (including appropriate days/times of public meetings and basic accessibility requirements for face-to-face and online public meetings).</li> <li>• How to make meetings interesting and relevant for local communities (e.g. through integration with Participatory</li> </ul>

		Budgeting and invited speakers), which can be illustrated through examples from local CCs and (if useful) CCs from elsewhere in the country.
1.6	Encourage and support establishment of CCs where they do not already exist.	WDC should be proactive in these areas, facilitating contact with active CC members in other communities to show the benefits of establishing a CC.
1.7	Clarify principles of engagement and empowerment, for example the aim for CCs to become proactive agents for community empowerment and to work collaboratively with other local groups and WDC/ CPP partners, and build capacity with that aim in mind.	<i>Scheme</i> should clarify and highlight the importance of this for the success of CCs as vehicle for local democracy and community empowerment. <i>Handbook</i> should further explain how to deliver these principles.
1.8	Code of Conduct should emphasise need for CC members to think of the wider community.	<i>Code of Conduct</i> should emphasise role of members in realising this aim. <i>Handbook</i> should provide advice and examples on this can be achieved.
<b>2</b>	<b>Influence and liaison with the Council and Community Planning partners</b>	
2.1	<p>WDC Communities Team provides good support.</p> <p>Other WDC services and CPP partners need to ensure they work collaboratively with CC and are responsive to CC requests.</p> <p>Code of Conduct should be not only for Community Councillors but for WDC/ CPP officers, and needs to be put into practice.</p> <p>More information about community empowerment, planning, equalities responsibilities, community planning etc.</p> <p>More collaborative approach with WDC/ CPP about future plans, service delivery and budget setting.</p>	<p><i>Scheme and Handbook</i> should lay out protocols for collaborative working and responsiveness between CCs and WDC/ CPP services (including a simple process to address inadequate responses or disputes).</p> <p>This could usefully include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information relating to services with particular requirements or characteristics, such as licensing, planning (to explain the role of the LDP and Locality Place Plans, and that planning decisions must legally take account of other factors as well as community views) and other departments/Committees which produce plans or deliver services (see also row 3.1 below).</li> <li>• How CCs can be involved in other statutory process such as Community planning, or exercise other rights</li> </ul>

		<p>under the CE Act or other legislation where there are statutory duties for community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols for collaborative working such as annual ‘local meetings’ with relevant WDC/CPP representatives in each CC area.</li> <li>• Protocols for responding to enquiries and complaints from Community Councils, including explanations of how to resolve any disagreements or disputes using existing channels such as senior officers, elected members Participation Requests and mechanisms such as the local authority Ombudsman.</li> </ul> <p><i>Handbook</i> should contain officer names and contact information for each service, including roles and responsibilities.</p>
2.2	Community and Participatory Budgeting needs to be defined (section 11 of the Scheme).	<i>Scheme</i> should be updated accordingly and the potential roles of CCs highlighted.
<b>3</b>	<b>Working collaboratively with other local groups and organisations</b>	
3.1	CCs should be encouraged to support and complement other local organisations and initiatives.	<p><i>Handbook</i> should encourage this and explain the potential complementary roles of CCs relative to other community groups, illustrated with examples from local CCs and (if useful) CCs from elsewhere in the country (see also row 1.1 above).</p> <p>WDC Communities Team could play a useful role in facilitating collaboration within individual CC areas.</p>
3.2	Support for Locality Place Planning and other technical matters like planning.	<i>Handbook</i> should clarify the support and training that is available to enable CCs and other local organisations to produce LPPs, illustrated by examples of how local communities have produced and used LPPs to their benefit (e.g. by signposting to emerging Scottish Government guidance). See also row 2.1 above.

3.3	Clearer division of roles and responsibilities needed between the Community Councils Forum and the Communities Alliance, including increased role for the CCs Forum as in the past so that it can secure support from more CCs.	Roles and responsibilities should be reviewed and clarified by WDC and the two organisations.  <i>Handbook</i> should explain the roles and responsibilities of the two organisations, plus the helpful roles that can be played by other WD wide groups like the Youth Council or Equalities Forum.
<b>4</b>	<b>Administrative arrangements and support</b>	
4.1	Training and support for CC members.	<i>Handbook</i> should lay out the potential scope of support that is available and means of accessing it, including training, advice and mentoring from WDC/CPP partners and others.
4.2	Access to paid support for administrative tasks such as minute-taking and distribution.	<i>Handbook</i> should explain a range of options to access paid support (e.g. access to WDC staff and ability to employ a local book-keeper or minute-taker).
4.3	Easier access to equipment, facilities and support such as training, financial software, laptops, broadband, printing and tablets, and ability for CC members to recoup legitimate expenses.	<i>Handbook</i> should clarify what support is available from WDC, including what WDC grant funding can be used for and what expenses can be reclaimed (e.g. use of personal IT, phone and broadband for CC business).
4.4	Ability to remove inactive CC members to free up membership spaces.	<i>Scheme and Handbook</i> should explain and clarify the relevant procedures.
4.5	Encourage CCs to expand their capacity and effectiveness by inviting Associate members from other organisations, creating sub-groups on specific topics (e.g. planning, communications, events) and undertaking activity between formal public meetings.	<i>Handbook</i> should encourage this, illustrated with case studies or examples from local CCs and (if useful) CCs from elsewhere in the country (see also 1.1 above).
4.6	Associates and ex-officio members: clarify voting rights, roles, whether they can be office-bearers, and how the Code of Conduct applies to them.	<i>Scheme, Constitution, Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and/or Handbook</i> should clarify.

4.7	Clarify that the non-political nature of CCs refers to party politics.	<i>Scheme, Code of Conduct and Handbook</i> should reassure CCs that taking a view based on local opinion is legitimate but that CCs and their representatives should not actively favour any specific political party, acknowledging that community issues regarding local needs, priorities and decisions about resources have a political aspect.
4.8	WDC/CPP operational procedures should be relevant, appropriate and consistently applied (e.g. notice periods for CC agendas and financial procedures).	WDC/CPP partners should ensure that there are no unnecessary or time-consuming barriers to CC activity (e.g. inappropriate scrutiny or administrative requirements).
4.9	Scheme should clarify CC duties and responsibilities, so that their scope is clear.	<i>Scheme</i> should clarify accordingly.
4.10	The updated Scheme and future amendments must, not should, be endorsed by CCs (e.g. the CCs Forum) as well as WDC.	<i>Scheme</i> should be revised accordingly and the endorsement of CCs Forum sought, to ensure that it is jointly owned by WDC and CCs.
4.11	CC membership nomination form should include questions to garner the experience and skills of the nominee.	WDC should review nomination form.

SCDC, January 2022

## Appendix 1: List of Community Councils

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Community Councils currently **active** in West Dunbartonshire:

- Balloch and Haldane
- Bonhill and Dalmonach
- Bowling and Milton
- Clydebank East
- Dumbarton East and Central
- Faifley
- Kilmarnock
- Linnvale and Drumry
- Old Kilpatrick
- Parkhall, North Kilbowie and Central
- Silverton and Overtoun

Community Councils currently **inactive** in West Dunbartonshire:

- Alexandria
- Dalmuir and Mountblow
- Dumbarton North
- Dumbarton West
- Duntocher and Hardgate
- Renton

## **Appendix 2: Summary of workshop/briefing presentation**

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In workshops and briefing sessions, discussions were prompted and structured by sharing summaries of the **aims** of the draft revised Scheme, and the **main points** to have emerged from the stage one consultation.

### **AIMS OF THE DRAFT REVISED SCHEME**

- More empowered Community Councils
- More proactive Community Councils
- Better represent local communities
- Better supported by local communities
- Stronger membership
- More collaborative relationships with the Council and Community Planning Partnership
- Support equalities and diversity

### **MAIN POINTS TO HAVE EMERGED FROM STAGE 1 CONSULTATION**

#### **1. Engaging and representing your community (including membership, equality & diversity):**

- Promote good work of CCs
- Understand & represent local views - using National Standards for Community Engagement
- Equalities & diversity - varied membership, accessible meetings, involve equalities groups
- Get more people involved
- Consider local action plans - e.g. Locality Place Plans
- Work towards positive projects & activities as well as reacting to issues
- All with the support of WDC officers

#### **2. Influencing the Council and Community Planning Partners:**

- Develop relationships with WDC Communities Team and other key officers (e.g. planning, licencing) and Community Planning Partners
- Early notice of planning and other proposals affecting your area
- Produce a Locality Place Plan
- More say on how money, buildings and land are used - e.g. Participatory Budgeting
- All part of Community Empowerment Strategy

#### **3. Working collaboratively with other local groups:**

- Refresh how you can represent the area as a whole
- Strengthen collaborative relationships with other local groups to complement each other
- Explore CC role as a 'community anchor group'

- Be supported with engagement and action planning

#### **4. Administration and support:**

- More support and training from WDC Communities Team
- Updated Handbook with advice and guidance
- Update model Constitution and Standing Orders
- Membership: growth, succession planning, refresh the Associate category
- Revisit funding, financial procedures and insurance
- More support for Community Councils Forum
- Co-produce future Scheme updates and reviews (WDC and CCs)



## **Appendix 3: Community workshops**

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This appendix contains transcriptions of the four online 'jamboards' which were used to capture participants' comments during the community workshops in November 2021 (see section 3.1 of this report for more information).

(see overleaf)

# 1 Engaging and representing your community

## BASIC

Understand & represent local views  
 Equalities & diversity: e.g. varied membership, accessible meetings  
 Open & accountable  
 Non-political  
 Promote meetings & successes

## EXTRA

Projects  
 Activities  
 Participatory events like Community Assemblies

"Non-political" - need to be clear we mean non PARTY political

Everything is political! Need to clarify - i.e. non party political

When communities raise issues, they need to be heard by the local authority - need evidence of change as a result - otherwise we'll just continue the local apathy

Bellsmyre has never had a CC - every community needs to have a CC! The areas left out inevitably have the most need and often the least confidence to set up a CC.



Participatory Budgeting etc needs to be visibly community-led - not appear to be decided by officers in advance

Need to make CCs attractive to people - it's intimidating when there are more WDC officers there than CC members

Clarify principles of engagement / empowerment in the Scheme - e.g. in the exec summary

Online meetings need to be accessible and accountable to local residents

**YOUNG PEOPLE:** some see CCs as old fuddy duddies.... others want to be involved in CCs or asked for their views, but don't have a platform

We need to look at how we engage young people - e.g. where are the MSYPs? How can we make CC mtgs more attractive for young people, balancing their interests with other community issues?

CCs structure, roles, how they do their business - all are really important to tease out - critical for success. Maybe different ways for different CCs, no one 'right' way. Mix of different methods? eg trad mtgs, online etc

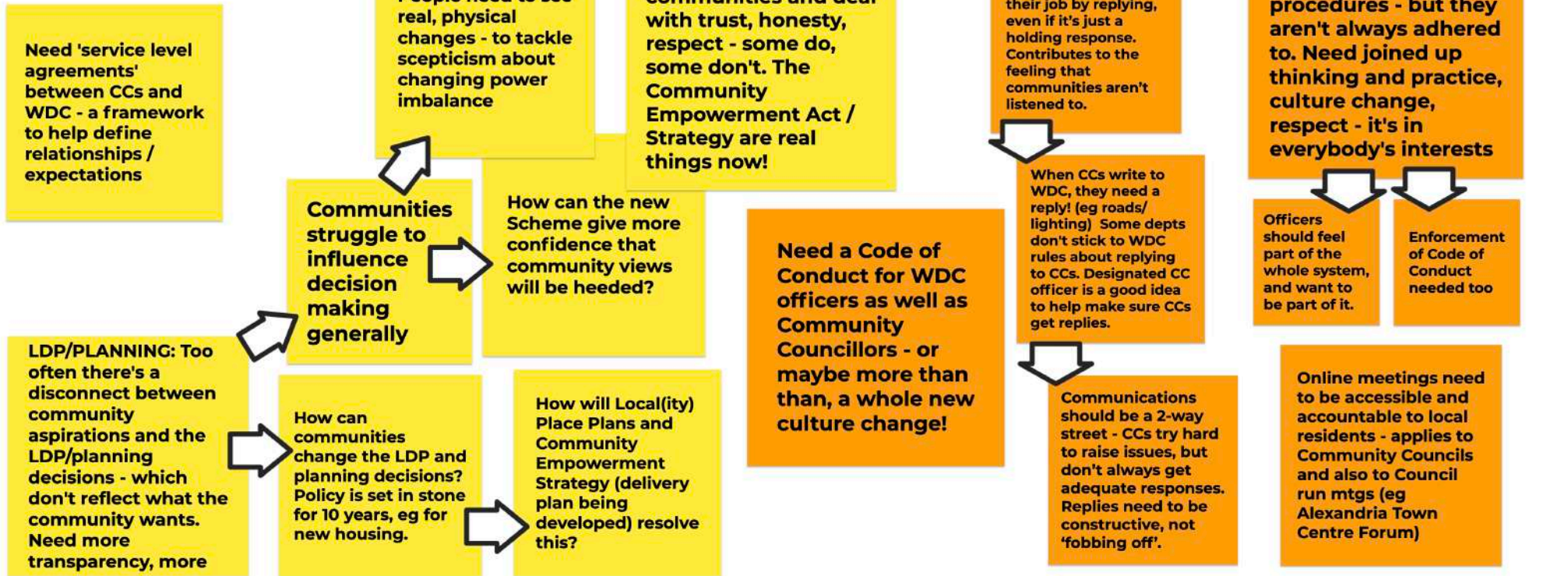
15 Nov 17 Nov Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

# 2 Influencing the Council and Community Planning Partners

Develop relationships with WDC Communities Team, other key officers (e.g. planning, licencing) and Community Planning Partners

Produce a Locality Place Plan

Participatory Budgeting



# 3 Working with other local groups

- Develop collaborative relationships with other local groups to complement each other
- Associate members
- Deliver projects
- Produce a Locality Place Plan
- Become the local umbrella or anchor organisation

**It's a big ask for CCs to become THE representative group for their area - because CCLRs are volunteers**

Keeping an eye on everything that's happening is a huge task for any CC - understanding the community, checking and responding to all consultations, organising projects and events, doing all the admin...

**Better funding for CCs would enable them to 'buy in' capacity to do minutes, for example - CC-led support, not WDC-led support. CCs should be involved in shaping the support.**

**Communities working together would be a good thing - bring people together, unified voice**

Relative power of groups waxes and wanes over time - TRAs, CCs - one group may suffer less turnout if another becomes more popular

Groups need to work together (or at least communicate), not against each other

CCs can help other groups - eg LDCC working with Glasgow group to extend a BMX track, which the CC can then support at planning application stage

Would be good for CCs to encourage other groups to join them, so everyone knows what's going on - eg open meeting for all groups

CCs can't and shouldn't do everything, but they can support other groups - eg organising minibuses, supporting planning applications

Some support (like the designated officer) would be helpful to make this happen

Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

15 Nov  
17 Nov

**Local Place Plans can be useful for communities to access funding**

Local community plans (eg Local Place Plans) need to reflect community priorities

WDC Dumbarton Locality Plan engagement felt loaded towards WDC town centre agenda, not community priorities

Training in how to do Local Place Plans and consultations would be useful

# 4 Administration and support

Membership: growth, succession planning, new Associate category  
 Office bearers and roles  
 Organising and running meetings (including online)  
 Elections, Constitution and Standing Orders

Funding, financial procedures, insurance  
 Training, advice and mentoring  
 Community Councils Forum  
 Co-producing future Scheme updates and reviews

**Model Constitution - need to be clear that elected members / Associate members cannot be office bearers (like the CC Forum constitution?)**

**Need to move from being reactive CCs to new-style empowered, proactive, collaborative CCs, but pace of change needs care - be careful about losing people if move too fast**

**CCs need more capacity and access to technical expertise when big issues come up (eg planning controversies)**

Processes are complicated - need to be clear and well communicated.

**CCs shouldn't try to change the world and do everything straightaway - focus on what matters to the local community and what's realistic**

**Better funding for CCs so they can 'buy in' capacity to do minutes, for example - CC-led support, not WDC-led support. CCs should be involved in shaping the support.**

**Funding for CCs - be clearer what it can be used for, e.g. CC admin expenses or community benefit like projects? CCllrs should not be out of pocket, and transparency is needed.**

**Support and training needs to be different for different CCs, depending on whether they want to do an LPP or projects or whatever.... there will be some common elements, and some bespoke**

**Training is needed, but also need CCllrs to do the work - which is why a minute taker would be useful (for example)**

Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

15 Nov

17 Nov

## **Appendix 4: Formal consultation response from ACAN**

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This appendix contains a transcription of the one formal consultation response received, from Alexandria Community Action Network (see section 3 of the report.)

The format of the consultation response is such that it reproduces the previous draft version of the Scheme (approved by West Dunbartonshire Council for public consultation in August 2021) and incorporates comments and suggestions.

(see overleaf)



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## **Introduction**

Our feedback reflects discussions with traders, Council Leader, ward 2 elected members, tenants and resident reps, VOLA teachers and community group representatives, in addition to learnings from Alexandria Master and Neighbourhood plan processes.

## **Summary points**

1. Document all possible statutory and non-statutory areas of interest.
2. Create a Skills and training program covering
  - i. West Dunbartonshire Empowerment Strategy framework, Opportunities, needs and behaviours
  - ii. Planning and delivering community engagement
  - iii. Designing and Conducting community surveys
  - iv. Analyzing and presenting data
  - v. Recognised consultative mechanisms
  - vi. Delivering change: Creating strategy and action plans
  - vii. Properly structured and regulated CC structure
  - viii. Community councilors code of conduct
  - ix. Conducting effective meetings
  - x. Understanding our Community
  - xi. Effective participatory working relationships
  - xii. Local development plan processes
  - xiii. Local democratic processes; Community and service planning
  - xiv. Community Empowerment Act; Opportunities.
  - xv. Identifying and prioritizing community priorities.
  - xvi. Use of appropriate financial software
  - xvii. Applying agreed financial controls and responsibilities.
  - xviii. Equality Act 2010; CC responsibilities
  - xix. Ensuring CC's compliance and application
  - xx. Community and Participatory Budgeting
  - xxi. Methods for encouraging participation
  - xxii. Creating funding applications.
  - xxiii. Dealing with conflict, the right behaviours for change
3. Define process requirements for consulting communities, partners roles and responsibilities, financial controls and community participation and succession planning.
4. We propose the creation of guidelines to direct the interface between community council's and relevant elected members.



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**Scheme for the establishment of Community councils.**

## **2. Statutory Purposes of Community Councils**

*'Since Community Councils were created by virtue of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, **other statutory duties** have been created for public bodies to engage with local communities.*

- Please list 'other statutory duties'.

*Community Councils should be encouraged to use these **additional statutory responsibilities** to complement and enhance their original statutory powers, working with other community organisations to whom these more recent duties also apply.*

- Are these statutory responsibilities different from the duties referenced in the previous paragraph?

## **3. The Roles and Responsibilities of Community Councils**

*'The general purpose of a Community Council is **to act as a voice** for its own local area. This will involve **articulating the views** and concerns of local people in their area on a wide range of issues of public concern and **make representations** to its local authority, other public sector bodies and private agencies on matters within its sphere of interest.'*

- To support the above, we propose the identification of a training and skills program for community council members, full and co-opted.
- For example, developing presentations, analyzing and presenting data, conducting community surveys.
- We propose that a training and skills development assessment is conducted on an annual basis.
- A WDC point of contact is identified to address development requests out with the proposed annual assessment.

*'It is essential that these views be demonstrated to be accurately representative of the community. Accordingly, each Community Council will have in place, in consultation with the local authority, **recognised consultative** mechanisms to validate their views and **devise strategies** to **secure greater involvement** by all sectors of the community.'*

- The capacity to conduct survey's and devise strategies will vary across communities.
- Identify the consultative mechanisms.
- Provide training to effectively deliver recognised consultative mechanisms, creating strategy and action plans





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*‘Community Councils may carry out other activities that are in the general interests of the communities they represent, provided these activities fall within the objects of their Constitution and the terms of the Council’s Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils. There should be **mutual engagement** in the establishment of **working relationships** with the local authority and other agencies.’*

- We propose that guidance is agreed to define the standards of engagement and responsibilities to underpin consistent, and practical working guidelines.
- These guidelines shall be based on the WDC Community empowerment act executive summary.

*‘In carrying out their activities Community Councils must at all times adhere to the law, the terms of the Council’s Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and the Community Councillors’ Code of Conduct (Appendix 1). The Code of Conduct for Community Councillors is based largely on the Code of Conduct for local authority councillors and relevant public bodies as provided for in The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000.’*

- We propose that the principles outlined in the WDC Community empowerment act executive summary are used to shape the conduct guidelines within the November 2021 Code of conduct draft.
- The executive summary is at a minimum, referenced in the Code of conduct for Community councillors.

*‘Each Community Council is required to adopt a Constitution, based upon the Model Constitution (Appendix 2), which has been produced for national use, together with **Model Standing Orders (Appendix 3)**, to encourage and maintain consistency for all Community Council’s membership, and to facilitate their proceedings being **properly structured and regulated**, to ensure that items of business relevant to the community are properly debated and decisions reached in a democratic manner. A Community Council’s Constitution is required to be approved by the Chief Officer for Housing and Employability of West Dunbartonshire Council.’*

- We propose that the local elected members are also included in the Community councils Constitution approval process, increasing awareness and links between elected members and community council members.
- We propose ‘properly structured and regulated’ is a training and skills development item.

*‘Community Councils have a statutory right to be consulted on **planning applications**. **Licensing matters** and any **other matters may also be jointly agreed between Community Councils, the local authority and other public sector and private agencies**.*



- 
- List all statutory areas and other matters for consultation.
  - We propose a strengthening of the above suggestion to establish a requirement of consultation unless the community council specifically states that such consultation is not required.
  - This reflects our previous recommendation for engagement and responsibility guidelines between community councils' and local authority and other elected members public sector and private agencies, who, how, when, deadlines.

*'This should include the types of activity indicated below'*

*'Promotion of Community Councils:*

*To ensure that communities know about Community Councils, they **should produce clear information** about meetings in appropriate and accessible formats, including **information on how people can influence the agenda.***

- We propose conducting meetings is a training and skills development item.
- We propose that the proposed consultative mechanism training activity covers methods for community to shape the CC agenda.

*'The local authority **should** assist by posting agendas, reports and minutes of meetings, subject to data protection requirements. These should be in hard copy posted in public places such as libraries and/or by electronic means (for example by email or on a website) with hard copies available on request.'*

- We propose a strengthening of the above local authority support so that local authority shall assist community councils' as identified.
- We propose the above paragraph is amended to include reference to social media sites relevant to the community council area.
- Specific WDC support officer input to be identified and agreed via a roles and responsibilities format.

*'Agendas for Community Council meetings should be sent to the local authority in advance of the meeting. Draft minutes of Community Council meetings must be presented to the local authority within 14 days of the meeting date and be circulated to Community Council members and local elected members.'*

- What's the reasoning behind the provision of the CC agenda to the local authority?
- Can the local authority request/insist changes to the agenda?
- We propose that the agenda is sent to elected members for the appropriate ward.



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'Representation:

Community Councils **have a legal duty to represent the views of their community**. They should reflect the broad spectrum of local opinion and interests as far as is practical, whilst also trying to ensure that those most seriously affected by proposals have their voices heard. Community Councils should make particular efforts to encourage young people and other under-represented groups to participate in Community Council business and to ensure equality of opportunity in the way the Community Council carries out its functions.'

- We propose 'Understanding Community profile' is a regular training and skills development item.

'Right to be consulted by and have meaningful engagement with public sector and other agencies:

Community Councils have a statutory right to be consulted on planning applications **and should be consulted on issues such as licensing matters** affecting the local community.

- We propose a strengthening of the above suggestion to establish a requirement of consultation for all relevant issues unless the community council specifically states that such consultation is not required.

*'As legitimate community bodies they increasingly also have rights to be engaged and involved in a wide range of other matters arising from duties in the Community Empowerment Act and other specific legislation'*

- Please list 'other matters' arising from the Community Empowerment Act which community councils 'should be engaged on.

'Partnership working:

Community Councils and public bodies should aim to establish **effective participatory working relationships**. This includes the local authority, Community Planning Partners and other relevant organisations. All concerned should expect to work in a spirit of partnership in line with the West Dunbartonshire Empowerment Strategy and the framework provided by the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.'

- We propose a strengthening of the above suggestion to establish a requirement for the establishment of **effective participatory working relationships** guidelines.
- Effective participatory working relationships to be defined and documented.
- We propose 'Effective participatory working relationships' is a regular training and skills development item.



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'Community engagement:

The Council **will work** with Community Councils to **develop their capacity** in order to **plan** and **deliver** consultation with the community. This will enable Community Councils to listen to and consider the views of local people. Methods may include Community Council meetings, public meetings, online meetings, social media, community surveys, comment or suggestion boxes or other legitimate and practical methods. The Council will support Community Councils to plan and deliver their engagement in line with the **National Standards for Community Engagement.**

- 'Planning and delivering consultation' process should be defined and documented.
- We propose 'Community consultation is a regular training and skills development item.

'Community-led planning:

Community Councils should be encouraged to develop skills in order **to lead or participate** in community-led **Locality Place Plans**, and **Place Plans or action plans**. These should be used as vehicles **to understand community issues** and aspirations and **to inform future service planning** and decision making, in line with the aspirations of the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy and the Community Empowerment Act. Guidance will be available in the Handbook for Community Councils.'

- We propose a strengthening of the above as follows; Community Councils **will** be encouraged and supported through delivery of planned training and skills development program.
- We propose the following topics for regular training and skills development items
  - Local development plan processes
  - Delivering change: Effective action plans
  - Local democratic processes; Community and service planning
  - Community Empowerment Act; Creating community led action.
  - Identifying and prioritizing community priorities.

*'Community Councils must maintain proper financial records and present financial reports at Community Council meetings. An example of a standard format for Community Councils' financial record-keeping is featured in the Scottish Government's Guidance Notes which will be reviewed from time to time. The Community Councils Handbook will contain further information if required.*

- We propose the use of accounting software to provide a consistent and structured basis for the management and provision of financial records and reports.



- 
- We propose the following topics for regular training and skills development items
    - Use of appropriate financial software
    - Applying agreed financial controls, as per policy.
  - Agreed arrangements for ensuring regular audit of CC's compliance and application of required financial controls.

*Within these overall responsibilities, detailed operating financial procedures should be developed by the local authority and West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum, balancing each other's needs and interests. More details can be found in the Handbook.'*

- We propose a strengthening of the above as follows; *detailed operating financial procedures will be developed by the local authority..*

#### **4. Equalities and diversity**

*'It is important that Community Councils understand and comply with the Equality Act 2010, which requires them to take reasonable action to work for equality of opportunity and outcome across the "protected characteristics" identified in the Act, which are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.'*

- We propose the following topics for regular training and skills development items
  - Equality Act 2010; CC responsibilities
  - Agreed arrangements for ensuring regular audit of CC's compliance and application.

*'Community Councils should therefore make particular effort to actively and sensitively engage people with protected characteristics and encourage membership from a diverse range of people.'*

- 'Planning and delivering consultation' process should be defined and documented.
- We propose 'Community consultation' is a regular training and skills development item.

*'Since everyone has the right to be treated fairly and have access to the work of the Community Council, meetings of the Community Council should take place in venues that are accessible to all, this could include digital meetings. Community Councils individually and through the Community Councils Forum are encouraged to learn about equalities issues and how to combat inequality. This will be further explored in the Handbook.'*



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*The Equalities Forum in West Dunbartonshire has committed to assist Community Councils to ensure they are as accessible as possible and make use of local organisations such as the West Dunbartonshire Access Panel.*

*The West Dunbartonshire Forum of Community Councils will work with the Equalities Forum and the Council officers to ensure that the Scheme of Establishment is subject to Equality Impact Assessment, and that Community Councils are supported to equality-proof their activities and ensure that all local people are entitled to be involved are able to do so despite any protected characteristics or other equalities issues they may have.'*

## **5. Community Council Areas within Local Authority Areas**

*'The local authority has produced a list of named Community Council areas and maps that define their boundaries. A list of Community Councils is attached as Appendix [to be added] to the Scheme. Any changes to Community Council boundaries should be considered as part of future Reviews of this Scheme.'*

- Alexandria Community Council Boundary Proposed change as follows
  - North: bound by the A811 to the River Leven
  - West: bound by the A82
  - South: from the Place of Bonhill
  - East: Bound by the River Leven

## **6. Membership of Community Councils**

*The overall aim of the membership process is to ensure that a Community Council, primarily made up of local people, is able to represent the views and aspirations of its community with a clear mandate to do so on behalf of residents as a whole.*

*The formula which determines the minimum and maximum numbers permitted for each Community Council should be that all Community Councils will have a base number of **seven elected Community Councillors**, plus one Community Councillor for every 1,000 members of the overall population up to five thousand plus 1 Community Councillor thereafter for every additional 2,000 of the population.*

*In this way, a Community Council with a population of 7,000 would have 13 Community Councillors (7, plus 5, plus 1). The minimum age to stand for election as a Community Councillor is 16 years. There shall be provision made for different categories of members, all of which are currently available through legislation:*

- **Full members** live in the area, are nominated for election, have full voting rights and serve a four year term.
  - Why 4 years? (Covid)



- **Co-opted members** are individuals who are willing and eligible to serve but who were not nominated for election. Co-opted members may represent a local group or organisation, such as a Development Trust or local school pupils. Their number should not exceed one third of the total membership, and their co-option must be confirmed by two thirds of Full members. Co-opted members who are local residents have full voting rights.
  
- **Associate members** are people who are not eligible for full or co-opted membership of the Community Council (for example they are not resident in the area or are below 16 years of age), but the Community Council considers they would help them to deliver their aims and purposes. There are two categories of associate member, neither of whom would be voting members:
  - A person whose eligibility may not be complete, e.g. a resident under 16.
  
  - A non-resident person who brings knowledge or skills to the Community Council. For example, a person who may work in the area like headteacher or for an organisation with a wider geographical remit like The Third Sector Interface.

*A more in-depth description of the roles and rights of Community Council membership categories will be included in the Handbook. Qualification for full membership is normally by residency within the specific Community Council area, normally evidenced by being named on the electoral register for the Community Council area in which they reside. Any Community Council member who no longer resides within that Community Council area is deemed to have resigned from that Community Council.*

*Any individual who is elected to serve on this local authority, or the Scottish or UK shall be ineligible to remain a Community Councillor, or to stand for election to a Community Council. Such persons, upon taking office, become ex-officio members of the Community councils Contained in whole or in part of their electoral constituency, without voting rights.*

*A broad outline of the remit and responsibilities of each of these institutions is featured in the Model Scheme of Community Councils Guidance Notes prepared by the Scottish Government.*

## **7. Establishment of Community Councils under the Model Scheme**

*Upon the local authority's revocation of its existing Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and decision to make a new Scheme, it will publish a Public Notice, which will invite the public to make suggestions as to the areas and composition of the Community Councils. Thereafter, a consultation process will be undertaken prior to its formal adoption by the local authority.*



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*There may be times when the Scheme needs to be updated between formal reviews, for example in order to include new ways of working in emergencies like the COVID 19 pandemic (such as the introduction of online meetings) or because of changes to legislation or national policy and guidance. For this reason, specific elements of the Scheme may be amended through consent of West Dunbartonshire Council and a majority vote at a competent meeting of **the West Dunbartonshire Community Council Forum**. **Appropriate consultation should take place with Community Councils in advance** of any such changes.*

- We propose a strengthening of the above as follows; Community Councils **will** be consulted with prior to any changes.

## **8. Community Council Elections**

*This section describes the processes for Community Council elections, should they be required.*

### **Nominations and elections**

*The first elections to be held under the Scheme will be held on a date to be determined by the local authority. Subsequent elections will be held on a four-yearly-cycle, outwith local government election years, on dates to be determined by the local authority.*

*Where the number of established Community Councils exceeds a level to be determined by the local authority, elections for a proportion of the total number of established Community Councils within the 4-yearly cycle may be arranged. Should Community Councils' election cycle fall in the year of Scottish local government elections the electoral proceedings will normally be held in the following year.*

*The local authority will administer all elections.*

### **Returning officer**

*The local authority will appoint an Independent Returning Officer. The Independent Returning Officer must not be a current elected member of that Community Council nor intending to stand for election to that Community Council.*

### **Nominations**

*Individuals seeking election to a Community Council require to be nominated by a proposer and seconder, both of whom must normally be on the Electoral Register for that Community Council area. Nominations require to be submitted with the candidate's consent. Self-nomination is not permitted.*

*A nomination form should be completed, the style of which will be prescribed by the local authority. Nomination forms require to be submitted on the date set down in the election timetable. No nomination forms submitted after that date will be accepted.*

- What is the nomination criteria?
- Please provide a copy of the nomination form





- We propose that the nomination form includes questions to garner the experience and skills of the nominee.

### **Process**

*On the expiry of the period for lodging nominations:*

1. *Should the number of candidates validly nominated equal or exceed **HALF**, but be less than or equal to the total maximum permitted membership as specified for the Community Council area in Appendix IV of the Scheme, the said candidates will be declared to be elected and no ballot will be held.*

2. *Should the number of candidates validly nominated exceed the total maximum permitted membership as specified for the Community Council area, arrangements for a Poll will be implemented. At the Poll, each voter will be entitled to vote for candidates up to the number of vacancies on the Community Council.*

*Should the number of candidates elected be below **HALF** of the total maximum permitted membership, as specified for the Community Council area, no Community Council will be established at that time. Where that one half is not a round number, it shall be rounded down. However, that does not preclude the local authority from issuing a second call for nominations for a Community Council area failing to meet the minimum membership requirement within 6 months of the closing date for the registration of the first call for nominations.*

### **Method of election**

*Elections will be based on whole local authority areas or devolved administrative areas, as deemed appropriate. Community Councillors will be elected on a simple majority basis.*

### **Filling of casual places/vacancies between elections**

*Casual vacancies on a Community Council may arise in the following circumstances:*

- *When an elected Community Council member submits her/his resignation;*
- *When an elected Community Council member ceases to be resident within that Community Council area;*
- *When an elected Community Council member has her/his membership disqualified (Clause 9).*

*Should a vacancy or vacancies arise on a Community Council between elections, it will be a requirement that the Community Council undertake appropriate election arrangements, in consultation with the local authority. Filling a vacancy can be undertaken either through the process of an interim election or by co-option. However, should circumstances arise that lead to the number of elected Community Councillors falling below **HALF** of the maximum permitted membership, the local*



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authority will be informed and will undertake arrangements for an interim election to be held. (See Model Constitution in Appendix)

### **Co-option to Community Councils**

Co-opted members must be eligible for membership of the Community Council as detailed in Section 5 of the Community Council Scheme. **They must be elected to the Community Council by a two-thirds majority of the elected (general and interim) Community Councillors present and voting.** Such co-opted members will have full voting rights, with the exception of voting on co-option of members, and will serve until the next round of elections (general and interim). Notice of any proposed co-option procedure is required to be intimated to all of that Community Council's members at least 14 days prior to the meeting when the matter will be decided.

The number of co-opted members may not exceed a **THIRD** of the current elected (general and interim) Community Council membership. Should the ratio of co-opted to elected Community Councillors become greater than one third, due to any circumstances, an interim election process will be triggered.

### **Additional membership**

#### *Associate Members*

Associate members may be appointed by a Community Council where there may be a need for individuals with particular skills or knowledge. These individuals do not have voting rights. Associate members may serve for a fixed period as determined by the Community Council or for the term of office of the Community Council that has appointed them. Associate members may also include representation from other constituted local voluntary organisations.

#### *Ex-Officio Members*

Local Authority Councillors and MPs whose wards or constituencies fall wholly or partly within the geographical area of the Community Council area will be deemed ex-officio members of the Community Council. Ex-officio members will have no voting rights on the Community Council.

## **9. Disqualification of Membership**

Membership of a Community Council is invalidated should a Community Councillor's residency qualification within that Community Council area cease to exist. If any member of a Community Council fails to attend any Community Council meeting, with or without submitting apologies, throughout a period of 6 months, the Community Council may terminate their membership. At the discretion of individual Community Councils, a period of leave of absence for Community Council members may be granted at any meeting of the Community Council.

## **10. Meetings**

The first meeting of a Community Council following a Community Council election, will be called by the Independent Returning Officer approved by the local authority and will take place within 21 days of the date of the election, or as soon as



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*practicable thereafter. The business of that meeting will include adoption of a Constitution and Standing Orders, appointment of office bearers and any outstanding business matters from the outgoing Community Council.*

*The frequency of meetings will be determined by each Community Council, subject to a minimum of one annual general meeting and 6 ordinary meetings being held each year. The annual general meeting will be held in a month of each year to be determined by the local authority. The quorum for Community Council meetings will be one third of the current voting membership of a Community Council, or 3 voting members, whichever is the greater.*

*An outline for the content of business that Community Councils should adhere to when holding ordinary, special and annual general meetings is contained within the Model Standing Orders.*

## **11. Liaison with the Local Authority and Community Planning Partners**

*Detailed arrangements shall be put in place for liaison between Community Councils and the local authority in order to reflect the ambitions of the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy. This section contains an outline to guide development and implementation of those arrangements.*

### **Communication**

*In line with the ambitions of the Community Empowerment Strategy there should be clear lines of communication between Community Councils and relevant local authority service areas. Clear contact information should be available to all Community Councils for this purpose. This should be as direct as possible with minimal unnecessary intermediaries.*

- Contact information proforma to be created with points of contact identified, department, role and responsibilities defined, email, phone.
- This requires a defined and consistent process which is included in the scheme of review appendices and is subject to regular audit.

### **Resource allocation**

*'West Dunbartonshire Council has made a strategic and operational commitment to increase the community role in influencing local decision making. This is reflected in the Community Empowerment Strategy and in the delivery of Community and Participatory Budgeting.'*

- 'Community and Participatory Budgeting' process should be defined and documented.



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- We propose 'Community and Participatory Budgeting' is a regular training and skills development item.

*'Community Councils should be encouraged to participate and promote participation in a significant and meaningful manner.'*

- We propose that the above requirement is strengthened to reflect the relevant priority, Community councils shall....
- Methods for encouraging participation defined and is added to the skills and training program.
- Methods for encouraging participation contains guidance on succession planning for community council roles and activities.

### **Officer support for Community Councils**

*Officer(s) contact details should be provided to Community Councils for the purpose of supporting and assisting community councils to operate as independent organisations.*

- This requires a defined and consistent process which is included in the scheme of review appendices and is subject to regular audit.
- Contact information proforma to be created with points of contact identified, department, role and responsibilities defined, email, phone etc
- Process shall include a list of support organisations and partners, role, point of contact etc,
  - The Equalities Forum in West Dunbartonshire
  - West Dunbartonshire Access Panel.
  - West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum
- The relationship between elected and members and community council should be defined and documented in relation to
  - Role and expectations
  - Escalation points

*'Officers will be available to offer support and guidance for developing skills, building capacity, training and development, advice on accessing funding, linking with other departments, and other matters, as resources allow.'*

- Documented skills and training program is created detailing core training topics required for the effective delivery of CC's core roles and responsibilities.



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## Consultation

*Local authority departments and Community Council Planning partners should encourage the participation of Community Councils in consultations as early as possible and be supportive in encouraging consultation responses - for example, development planning and licencing.*

- We propose a strengthening of the above as follows; Local authority departments and Community Council Planning partners **will** encourage the participation of Community Councils in consultations as early as possible,
- Participation and consultation arrangements are planned, documented and subject to regular audit against planned actions.
- The list of statutory and non-statutory topics for consultation must be defined and agreed.

## 12. Resources

*The financial year of each Community Council will be provided for in the constitution of each Community Council and will be from 1 April to 31 March in each succeeding year to allow for the proper submission of audited statement of accounts to the Community Council's annual general meeting on a specified date.*

*The system of financial support and accountability should be reviewed by the Community Councils Forum and local authority officers as required in order to ensure that the process is effective in ensuring the roles of Community Councils can be discharged while ensuring that public expenditure is properly accounted for. Details will be included in the Handbook.*

- Confirm review arrangements, with agreed frequency and scope documented and agreed.

*The Annual Accounts of each Community Council will be independently examined by one independent qualified examiner or two independent unqualified examiners appointed by the Community Council, who are not members of that Community Council. A copy of the independently examined statement of accounts/balance sheet will be forwarded immediately thereafter the statement is approved at the Community Council's annual general meeting to a named *officer in the Council's finance team*.*

*The named officer may, in consultation with the Council's Chief Financial Officer, require the Community Council to produce such records, vouchers and account books, as may be required. Each Community Council will have the power to secure resources for schemes, projects and all other purposes consistent with its functions.*

*Each Community Council will be eligible to apply for grants for suitable projects through the local authority's grant system. The local authority *will* provide an initial administrative grant to Community Councils to assist with the operating costs of the Community Council. The grant will be made up of a minimum flat rate and an*



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*additional per capita allowance. The amounts to be applied will be reviewed on an annual basis.*

- *Creating funding applications is a skills and training requirements.*
- *List resources which WDC can provide funding to cover or provide in kind support.*

*The local authority will determine any additional support services/resourcing to suit local requirements. The local authority will review the level of annual administrative grant and other support to Community Councils following each local government electoral cycle.*

### **13. Liability of Community Council Members**

*The local authority will support Community Councils to ensure that they have adequate insurance provision in place.*

### **14. Dissolution of a Community Council**

*The terms for dissolution of a Community Council, are contained within the Model Constitution.*

*Notwithstanding these terms, should a Community Council fail to hold a meeting for a period of 3 consecutive prescribed meeting dates, or its membership falls below the prescribed minimum for a period of 3 consecutive prescribed meeting dates (during which time the Community Council and the local authority have taken action to address the situation), the local authority will work with that Community Council to establish the reasons and assist towards a solution enabling it to continue. If continuation is not possible, advice and support will be provided on how to dissolve the Community Council.*

## **Appendices**

To be reviewed and updated after the draft Scheme has been approved (not included in this draft):

- Code of Conduct for Community Councillors
  - Model Constitution for Community Councillors
  - Model Standing Orders
  - Composition of Community Councils
  - West Dunbartonshire Council Community Council Boundaries
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- Are the appendices not a key part of the mechanics of CC operation and delivery? In this regard, we propose that they are reviewed and approved as part of the scheme review.