

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Community Participation Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday 18 March 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Margaret Bootland, George Black, Jim Brown, Jonathan McColl, Iain Robertson, Martin Rooney and May Smillie; Murdoch Cameron and Francis McNeill, Community Councils Forum; Megan Harrison and Mary Theresa Doherty, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum; John Diamond, Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum; Rhona Young, West Dunbartonshire Seniors; Joe McCormack, West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Service and Brenda Pasquire, Dumbarton Credit Union Ltd.

Attending: Liz Cochrane, Head of Service – Policy & Performance; Anne Clegg, Policy Officer – Community and Consultation; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Lynda McLaughlin, Manager of Commercial Operations; Peter Barry, Manager of Community Planning Partnership; Dave Clarke, Head of Service (Resources); Craig Jardine, Manager of Educational Estates; Alistair Johnston, Section Head – Accounting and Budgeting; Marion Smith, Team Leader – Finance and Fiona Anderson, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim McElhill, Patrick McGlinchey and John Millar; and Jackie Maceira, West Dunbartonshire Access Forum and Tom Nimmo, West Dunbartonshire Community Care Forum.

Councillor Jim Brown in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare if they had an interest in any of the items of business appearing on this agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 (page 1660 refers), Councillor J. McColl confirmed that he had spoken to the Manager of Criminal Justice in connection with utilising those youths engaged in the community service programme to clean the War Memorials in West Dunbartonshire and confirmed that officers would submit a report to the next meeting of the Community Participation Committee.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Having heard the Chair, Councillor Brown, the Committee agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter recorded.

PRESENTATION ON COUNCIL TAX

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 (page 1661 refers), Vincent Gardiner, Manager of the Exchequer and Marion Smith, Team Leader - Finance, gave a presentation on Council Tax.

Packs containing information about Council Tax, the options for collection of payment, together with a copy of the draft framework document for a Corporate Debt Policy were distributed to Members of the Committee. The Manager of the Exchequer confirmed that members of the Committee could contact him direct if they required additional information.

The main points covered in the presentation were:-

- (a) methods of payment, including the introduction of a 12 monthly opt in scheme;
- (b) eligibility for discounts, exemptions and rebates;
- (c) administration and enforcement regulations and related timescales;
- (d) the introduction of a Corporate Debt Policy;
- (e) the role played by the Contact Centre in dealing with Council Tax enquiries;
and
- (f) the re-design and re-wording of the forms and correspondence issued by the Council Tax Section.

The Manager of the Exchequer was heard in response to Members' questions and confirmed that he would respond directly to the community representative for Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum to provide a summary of the Council Budget breakdown.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to note:-

- (1) (in response to concerns expressed) the progress made in collecting Council Tax arrears including monies owed by members of WDC staff;
- (2) (in response to a point raised that current Council Tax payment arrangements offer a choice of payment dates to those who pay by direct debit but not to others) that discussions are currently taking place with Credit Unions about them operating direct debits. This would allow a wider range of people choice of payment dates; and
- (3) that a Business Plan on this subject was currently being developed and would be submitted to the Community Participation Committee for information at a later date.

The Chair, Councillor Brown, on behalf of the Committee thanked the Manager of the Exchequer and the Team Leader – Finance for the interesting and informative presentation.

PRESENTATION ON COMMUNITY FORUMS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 (page 1661 refers), Peter Barry, recently appointed Manager of the Community Planning Partnership, gave a presentation on developments within the Community Planning Partnership.

The main points covered in the presentation were:-

- (1) the review and restructuring of the Fairer Scotland Fund (FSF);
- (2) the importance of community engagement in Community Planning processes and the co-ordination of engagement processes used by all partners;
- (3) key priorities including the need to make communities safer and improve the quality of daily life for people;
- (4) the introduction of the 3 Community Forums in Dumbarton, Vale of Leven and Clydebank and the need to encourage and widen representation;
- (5) the introduction of 6 thematic groups with programmes of action by June 2009; and
- (6) the revision of FSF investments by November 2009.

The Manager of the Community Planning Partnership was then heard in further explanation and in response to Members' questions.

In response to a request from the Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum (BNF) representative, it was noted that the Head of Service, Policy and Performance, would take action to ensure that BNF and Dumbarton North Community Council are included in any information distribution regarding Dumbarton Community Forum.

The Chair, Councillor Brown, on behalf of the Committee wished the Manager of the Community Planning Partnership every success in his new post and thanked him for updating the Committee on the current situation.

REGENERATION OF THE SCHOOLS' ESTATE

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 (page 1658 refers), a report was submitted by the Executive Director of Educational Services providing an update on progress of the regeneration of the Schools' Estate including information on the contractual agreement with BAM in relation to the disposal of the portacabins at the Vale of Leven Academy.

The Head of Service (Resources) and the Manager of Educational Estates were heard in further explanation and in response to Members' questions.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the timescale for submission of priced tenders for the new builds at Bonhill Primary School and Goldenhill Primary School had been extended until 25 March;
- (2) to note that these tenders would be submitted to a Special Meeting of the Tendering Committee and that work was planned to commence in June;
- (3) to note that although schools were scheduled for major adaptations or rebuilds, continuing maintenance work would still be necessary to ensure the buildings were wind and water tight and met Health and Safety Regulations;
- (4) to note that residents of the Bellsmyre area in Dumbarton should be kept updated about forward plans for schools in the area;
- (5) to note that no formal response had yet been received from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning following a meeting in September 2008 and to request that officers pursue this matter; and
- (6) to note that the next report on the Regeneration of the Schools' Estate would be submitted to the meeting of the Community Participation Committee to be held on 19 August 2009; and
- (7) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE GRANT FUNDING

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 (pages 1660/1 refer), the Section Head – Accounting and Budgeting provided a verbal update on the outcome of the Seminar held on 29 January 2009 to discuss old peoples' welfare grant funding.

The Section Head – Accounting and Budgeting was heard in response to members' questions.

Following discussion, Councillor Black, seconded by Councillor Rooney, moved:-

That the Community Participation Committee recommends to Council, that as a result of the opinions expressed by the 19 groups represented on the Focus Group, the status quo regarding Christmas payments be maintained.

The Committee agreed to approve the above motion and that officers should submit a report to the Council or appropriate Committee reflecting this recommendation.

WAR MEMORIALS - WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2009 (pages 1660/1 refer), a report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the current condition of the War Memorials within West Dunbartonshire and outlining remedial work requiring to be undertaken.

The Manager of Commercial Operations was heard in further explanation of the report and in response to members' questions.

Following discussion the Committee agreed to note:-

- (1) that the Council had no funding identified to undertake the work at Christie Park Memorial. However, the Council was developing a funding application for Christie Park in partnership with Greenlight to the National Environment Trust;
- (2) that the reference to the Cenotaph located in Christie Park in Alexandria within the Report should be the Bonhill Cenotaph;
- (3) that the possibility of relocating the war memorial monument in Kilmarnock was being investigated by a local Fund Raising Committee and it was hoped that West Dunbartonshire Council would be able to provide some assistance;
- (4) that it was hoped the Memorial Wall project in Clydebank would be completed prior to Remembrance Day 2009;
- (5) that it was hoped that there would be a Royal or Ministerial presence at the commemoration of the Memorial Wall;

- (6) that officers would refer the issues regarding the Bonhill Cenotaph and the Kilmarnock Monument to the appropriate Committee of Council; and
- (7) otherwise to note the progress in implementation of a programme of remedial works to memorials within West Dunbartonshire as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

Note: Councillor J. McColl and Community Representatives Rhona Young and Francis McNeill left the meeting at this point.

BUDGET PRIORITIES CITIZENS' PANEL SURVEY - DECEMBER 2008 BUDGET PUBLIC FORUM MEETINGS – 13, 14 & 15 JANUARY 2009

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing information on:-

- (a) the key priorities identified in the WD Citizens' Panel Budget Priorities Survey;
- (b) points raised by community representatives and members of the public at the public forum meetings held to discuss the Council's revenue budget for 2009/10;
- (c) points raised via the Council's budget website proforma; and
- (d) feedback provided.

The Policy Officer, Community and Consultation, was heard in elaboration of the report and in response to Members' questions.

Following discussion the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the public had received more information in advance regarding the options for budget than previously;
- (2) to note that the Council had taken into account public concerns regarding possible closures of facilities when making of the Budget Forum meetings;
- (3) to note that it was suggested that Community Forums could be used for next year's Budget Consultation (as they are open to the general public);
- (4) to note the excellent response by the Housing, Economic and Environmental Services regarding gritting roads and footpaths;
- (5) to note the suggestion that, while recognising that only one footpath in a street was gritted, consideration should be given to gritting alternate footpaths on alternate occasions; and
- (6) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting the latest draft of the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).

Peter Barry, Manager of the Community Planning Partnership, advised the Committee that he proposed to convene a one off workshop for community representatives on the Community Participation Committee and Community Forum members to facilitate discussion about the draft Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).

Following discussion, the Committee noted:-

- (1) that officers would meet to discuss the necessary arrangements for the workshop; and
- (2) that the deadline for providing any comments on the SOA by 17 April 2009 had now been extended to the end of April.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Committee members were reminded to provide information for the Community News item in advance of meetings on an on-going basis.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Community Representatives were invited to raise topics for inclusion on future Agendas in addition to the undernoted items which have already been agreed by the Committee.

- Regular update on Regeneration of the Schools' Estate
- Housing – Strategic Delivery Plans
- Fairtrade
- Gender Equality – Men's Health (Partnership Activity)
- Regular update on Recycling and Waste Minimisation

- Presentation on Social and Economic Profile (including coverage of most recent unemployment figures (May Meeting)
- Presentation on Facilities for Visitors (May Meeting)

Community Representatives were asked to elaborate on the request for a presentation on Facilities for Visitors. The Committee noted that one of the community representatives had expressed concern at the lack of public toilet facilities for visitors to the Dumbarton area. Following discussion, it was agreed that VisitScotland be invited to provide a presentation at the May meeting.

After discussion, it was agreed that reports should be requested on the undernoted issues:-

- (1) how the Council intends to deal with the current credit crunch and what strategies have been put in place;
- (2) an update on Addiction Services and in particular whether funding is internal or external; and
- (3) the effect of pricing of alcohol on consumption.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that there were no Open Forum questions from the member of the public who was present.

The meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.