

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 28 May 2008

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**Subject: West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership – Key Developments**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report provides Council with an update on key developments within West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, (CPP). Progress and key issues are reported to West Dunbartonshire Council on a quarterly basis – following CPP board meetings. The most recent Board meeting took place on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The Council has a statutory responsibility to lead Community Planning in the area. The Partnership comprises a range of statutory agencies and voluntary & community sector representatives. It has an overarching strategic planning remit in West Dunbartonshire, and aims to ensure that developments are co-ordinated to provide the best possible services and the most effective use of resources.
- 2.2** A new Community Plan for West Dunbartonshire, (2007-17) was adopted in June 2007. (This in turn has informed the development of the Council's Corporate Plan, and should also set the framework for the plans of all other partner agencies.) In general, the role of Community Planning is to focus on the wider strategic approach by all partners, and the most effective use of partner mainstream budgets. However historically, there have been, in addition to mainstream resources, a number of specific funding mechanisms which have supported partnership working. In the current financial year 2008/09, all previous funding streams were combined into the Fairer Scotland Fund, (FSF). This fund provides £5.946m in 2008/09, £5.507m in 2009/10, and £5.067m in 2010/11. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, this budget will be included in the Council's general allocation, and will not be subject to ring fencing.
- 2.3** The CPP is developing on a range of fronts, which are outlined in paragraph 3. The decisions made by the Board on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008 regarding the future governance structures and staffing of the CPP are among the most important points for noting.

### 3. Main Issues

#### Structures and Staffing

- 3.1 In 2006 it was recognised that the governance structures of the CPP required development. The structures underwent an initial review, and general proposals for revised structures were agreed by the Board in June 2007. The specific commitments required from partners and the working arrangements of the CPP were set out in a Partnership Agreement, which received final approval in December 2007. However during, and since this process, a number of other factors have emerged which impact on CPP arrangements.
- Following the change of Government in May 2007, and the subsequent revisions in the national approach to Community Planning structures & funding arrangements, it was recognised that the strategic role of the Board required further refinement
  - A new Community Plan was adopted, and launched in September 2007
  - The Community Plan will form part of the new Single Outcome Agreement, and this new approach to relationships with the Scottish Government will also have an impact of the structures needed to deliver Community Planning objectives
  - The Community Planning Partnership was considered as part of the Audit Scotland review of Best Value and Community Planning, and a number of issues were identified for consideration, including the effectiveness of the current governance structures
  - Although many agencies are mandated to be involved in Community Planning through the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 there was a perception that there has been a lack of clarity about expectations from these major players in West Dunbartonshire. In addition, the Partnership has experienced the effects of a range of partner agency restructuring which has not always provided consistency
  - There are now opportunities for development of greater community involvement through the system of Community Forums
- 3.2 It was recognised that new governance and funding arrangements would also mean that there would be a need to review staffing structures.
- 3.3 For these reasons, the CPP Board commissioned a full independent review of governance structures and staffing. The research work for this took place in February / March 2008, and the Board considered the final report on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2008. The implementation of the results of this review will be funded from the amount set aside for core support costs in the budget agreed on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008.
- 3.4 The review, which was carried out by Brodies LLP, gave a key focus to the importance of establishing Community Planning structures which have a **facilitating / co-ordinating role** – rather than a **delivery** function. The emphasis is on delivery of Community Planning objectives through the relevant agency – rather than through separate Community Planning structures. The aim was to increase the ownership and ‘buy in’ from partners

(the report suggested that this has been a problem) and reduce the potential for duplication.

### 3.5 *Governance Structures*

The report made a number of recommendations which aimed to streamline the decision making and governance structures. This was presented in the form of a 3 tier structure of:

- Executive Group, (involving statutory partners)
- Strategic Board, (with 3 places for elected members, wider agency representation, and community representation from the 3 Community Forums), and
- 6 Thematic Groups, (reflecting the 6 themes in the new Community Plan), led by appropriate partner agencies, and involving elected members, other relevant agencies and community representatives,

The focus was on ensuring that representation from all partners, including community representatives, was at the level where it would have most impact. For this reason, the emphasis was on the **delivery** of Partnership activity through the themed groups. The delivery would be the direct responsibility of the relevant partner agency. One of the main issues for elected members is that, in addition to the proposals for 1 place on the Executive Group for the Council Leader (as vice chair), 3 places for elected members on the Strategic Board (the Council Leader, 1 Administration and 1 Opposition), it was also proposed that there should be 1 position on each of the 6 Thematic Groups as chair. The structures proposed were similar to many others throughout Scotland.

### 3.6 *Staffing Arrangements – Core Staff*

The proposals for the Community Planning support team were for a smaller grouping than has previously been the case in West Dunbartonshire. However it was also proposed that the ongoing importance of the Community Planning function was such that the members of this team should be permanent members of staff of the appropriate agency. In the case of the core support and monitoring staff, the report suggested that the Council was the appropriate agency

- 3.7 It was recommended that the core Community Planning staff, which would be permanent posts within the Chief Executive's department of the Council, should consist of a manager, 2 coordinators and 2 administrative staff. They would have the responsibility of facilitating the Community Planning process, particularly supporting the links between partners and the governance structures. As noted above, it was proposed that the **delivery** of the Community Planning objectives should be the direct responsibility of the appropriate agency or agencies and that they should be responsible for deciding whether to 'embed' current Community Planning thematic staff within their organisations. The report also proposed that, due to the Council's lead responsibilities for Community Planning, and in the new environment of the SOA, not only should the financial monitoring function continue to be located within the council (in the Finance section), but also that the Performance Monitoring function should move. It was proposed that this be located within

the Chief Executive's Policy Unit, which has overall responsibility for corporate performance monitoring and the SOA.

**3.8** *Staffing Arrangements – Community Support Staff*

With regard to the Community Support function, the report proposed that this required review in terms of the new arrangements which would be needed to support the new structures. The report therefore proposed that current arrangements should cease at the end of June 2008, when current staff contracts come to an end, and that a review should take place to assess new requirements.

**3.9** The full Brodies Report is available as a background paper.

**3.10** The Brodies report was presented to the Board with a covering report from the CPP Executive Group recommending approval. Following a presentation from the consultants, and discussion by the Board, it was agreed to accept the recommendations of the report, and of the Executive Group, with some amendments. These amendments were that Scottish Enterprise and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, (SPT) should join the Strategic Board, and that Thematic Groups should not necessarily be chaired by elected members – although if they are not, then they should be chaired by the appropriate lead agency.

**3.11** The Board's acceptance of these recommendations means that the core Community Planning posts will now be permanent within the Council's staffing establishment. The costs of this will be met from the Fairer Scotland Fund. Work is now underway to implement the recommendations of the report. The issues regarding staffing are being progressed with advice from the Council's Human Resource services to ensure that all commitments are met, and that the appropriate support is provided.

Current Funding Issues

**3.12** *Budget for 2007/08*

The arrangements to ensure full expenditure of the 2007/08 budget have been implemented successfully. Financial details were reported to the CPP Board on 12<sup>th</sup> May. A final report of outcomes on the basis of previous commitments and funding arrangements is now being prepared, and this will be reported to the Scottish Government July 2008.

### **3.13** *Budget for 2008/09*

The CPP Board met on 14<sup>th</sup> January to approve the budget for 2008/09. Full details of the budget are available as a background paper. Appropriate provision in relation to Council services was included in the Council budget agreed 14.2.08. The one issue remaining to be finalised is the funding for various youth services. Proposals for 2008/09 included a review of all youth related services, to ensure effective co-ordination and identify any possible duplication. This review was reported to the Board on 12<sup>th</sup> May. (As an interim arrangement in January 2008, the Board had agreed to maintain all current youth funding at 2007/08 levels for the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 months of 2008/09 to allow the findings of the review to be implemented.) It has now been agreed that the findings of the Youth Review will be referred back to the Youth Strategy Group for comment, and that the CPP Executive Group will take the final decision on the funding of Youth Services for the remaining 9 months of 2008/09.

- 3.14** All CPP related funding is monitored by the West Dunbartonshire Council Head of Finance. Joint monitoring reports are prepared by the Head of Finance, in conjunction with the Partnership Manager, and are presented to each meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board. At a Council level, the impact of funding decisions is monitored by a senior officers' group, with key issues reported to Council on a quarterly basis.

#### Key Themes of the CPP

- 3.15** The procedures for thematic reporting on progress with Community Planning objectives will now be reviewed as part of the new governance structures. The main update of relevance to this report is the current position with the European Funding bid, which focussed on developments aimed at assisting people back into work.

### **3.16** *Getting People Back Into Work:*

The West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership (WDCPP) submitted an application in late November 2007 for the next round of European Funding, to support a West Dunbartonshire Employability Programme. On 8 April 2008, it was confirmed that the WDCPP bid was one of the top 8 ranking, and although the award was indicative it was anticipated that it was likely to receive the large majority of the £2.5 million match funding requested. Since the original announcement, ESEP, (the administrative body for the Government), have advised that in excess of £5 million of savings require to be made against a £30 million total value of all of the bids. West Dunbartonshire CPP has been asked to review its programme with a view to making appropriate adjustments. It was calculated that a delay in commencement of projects not yet started would result in a reduced claim on European Funds in the order of £176,000. It was considered that this would be an appropriate basis on which to respond to ESEP. This approach was approved by both the Executive Group and the Board, and the outcome of this proposal is awaited.

### Monitoring the activity of the CPP

**3.17** Previously, much of the reporting of CPP activity to Government was via Communities Scotland. Under the revised arrangements, mechanisms have been agreed by the Board to monitor progress on the new Community Plan. In addition, the new Single Outcome Agreement, (SOA), approach has a clear focus on Community Planning and individual partners. The development of the Council's approach to the SOA has ensured involvement of Community Planning from the start of the process. This is being developed as far as possible before the submission of the next version of the SOA at the end of June 2008. Nevertheless, work is also underway to ensure the full involvement of all partners in a **Community Planning** SOA for 2009/10 and subsequent years.

## **4. Personnel Issues**

**4.1** The personnel issues relate to the arrangements required to implement the agreement to accept the Brodies' recommendations. This will include the development of job profiles for posts, (which would also be subject to the Council's job evaluation process), and arrangements to support staff whose temporary contracts are terminating.

## **5. Financial Implications**

**5.1** The financial implications relate to the revised costs of changes to the staffing structure. The importance of keeping core staffing costs within agreed limits has been recognised. Precise costs will be subject to the results of the job evaluation. All costs can be met from within the allocation previously agreed within the 2008/09 FSF award.

## **6. Risk Analysis**

**6.1** There is a risk that if structural and staffing issues are not addressed, the CPP would not be in a position to respond to the issues outlined in paragraph 3.1.

**6.2** The report outlines the actions which are being taken to address these risks.

## **7. Conclusions**

**7.1** The CPP is now undergoing a significant restructuring, details of the main issues are summarised in paragraph 3. Further detail, (Board papers, minutes etc), are available on the CPP website or from the Community Planning office.

The key issues include:-

- Implementing the review of governance structures in accordance with the timescales suggested in the Brodies report

- Implementing the review of staffing structures in a way which meets all legislative requirements, and provides the maximum support possible to staff
- Ensuring the implementation of the decisions on 2008/09 funding from the Fairer Scotland Fund
- The implementation of the Community Plan 2007/17 and the monitoring arrangements which will include the new SOA
- The development of the approach to worklessness and the outcome of the bid for European Structural Funds

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1** Members are requested to consider the information in this report, and to request further detail if required.

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**David McMillan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Date: 19 May 2008**

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**Background Papers:** Brodies Report - Review of West Dunbartonshire CPP Governance and Staffing Structures – May 2008  
Fairer Scotland Fund Budget Agreement – Report to Special CPP Board 14.1.08

**Wards Affected:** All Council Wards.