

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Planning Committee: 14 August 2013

Subject: Elected Member Training

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To identify the training needs of elected members involved in the planning system.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee agrees that the training needs detailed in Section 4.2 are forwarded to the Improvement Service together with any other training needs agreed by the Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1** It is important that elected members who sit on the Planning Committee receive relevant and an up to date training on the planning system and new planning initiatives. The Improvement Service has been delivering skills development training for planning authority staff and elected members since 2006 through the Planning Development Programme. Recently the Planning Development Programme has been reviewed due to a change in funding and its general focus has changed. Its current focus is on leadership and technical skills relating to five priority areas, one of which is elected member training. There has been a recent request by the Improvement Service to identify the specific needs of elected members involved in planning for this Council so they can arrange appropriate solutions.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** In the past elected members in West Dunbartonshire have received planning training such as an introduction to the planning system and the local review body. However elected members who have not previously been involved in planning and those who have previously been involved should receive regular training updates.
- 4.2** Suggestions for training are as follows:
- Local Review Body Training
 - Development viability
 - Place making
 - Trees and their impact on the environment
 - Future of town centres

The above are only suggestions and members are encouraged to suggest other planning matters which they feel that they benefit from more specific training.

- 4.3** The training could be done after the Planning Committee, a lunchtime session or shared with neighbouring authorities or even on site. One of the Planning Committee members has requested a visit to a wind farm in order to see the workings and impact of a wind farm. A site visit to a wind farm in Argyle and Bute Council area in the next few weeks is presently being arranged.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no personnel issues associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial implications.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** If elected members are not correctly trained there could be a risk to the reputation of the Council with costs awarded due to poor decisions.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** No issues were identified in relation to the equality impact of this report.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The purpose of the report is to seek the views of the Planning Committee.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The content of this report is in keeping with the strategic priorities of the Council

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Date: 25 July 2013

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Appendix: **None**

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All