

Agenda



Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council

Date: Wednesday, 23 February 2022

Time: 14:00

Format: Hybrid Meeting

Contact: Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Email: christine.mccaffary@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Dear Member

Please attend a special meeting of **West Dunbartonshire Council** as detailed above.

The Convener has directed that the powers contained in Section 43 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 will be used and Members will have the option to attend the meeting remotely or in person at the Civic Space, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton.

The business is shown on the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

JOYCE WHITE

Chief Executive

Distribution:-

Provost William Hendrie
Bailie Denis Agnew
Councillor Jim Bollan
Councillor Jim Brown
Councillor Gail Casey
Councillor Karen Conaghan
Councillor Ian Dickson
Councillor Diane Docherty
Councillor Jim Finn
Councillor Daniel Lennie
Councillor Caroline McAllister

Councillor Douglas McAllister
Councillor David McBride
Councillor Jonathan McColl
Councillor Iain McLaren
Councillor Marie McNair
Councillor John Millar
Councillor John Mooney
Councillor Lawrence O'Neill
Councillor Sally Page
Councillor Martin Rooney
Councillor Brian Walker

Chief Executive
Chief Officers

Date of issue: 10 February 2022

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**SPECIAL MEETING OF
WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2022

AGENDA

1 STATEMENT BY CHAIR

2 APOLOGIES

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare if they have an interest in the item of business on this agenda and the reasons for such declarations.

4 RECORDING OF VOTES

The Council is asked to agree that all votes taken during the meeting will be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

**5 REVIEW OF THE SCHEME OF ESTABLISHMENT
OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

5 - 94

Submit report by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the second phase of consultation on the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils, and outlining the proposals for phase three.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer Housing & Employability****West Dunbartonshire Council Special Meeting: 23 February 2022**

Subject: Review of Scheme for Establishment for Community Councils.

1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update on the second phase of consultation on the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils which ran for 16 weeks from 31 August until 21 December 2021 and outline the proposals for phase three.

2. Recommendations**2.1** It is recommended that members:

- Review the findings of the second phase of consultation, as outlined in SCDC report at Appendix 1;
- Approve draft Scheme, Draft Constitution and Standing orders
- Approve the proposals for stage 3 consultation to conclude the process and finalise the new updated Scheme for the Establishment of Community councils; and
- Note the amended timescales to conclude the process in May and hold the Community Council elections in October 2022, following the local elections in May.

3 Background

3.1 At a Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 24 February 2021, Council approved the proposals to review the current Scheme of Establishment. The consultation is being carried out in three phases in line with legislation and guidance. The first two phases of consultation were both extended to 16 weeks by Council. It is recommended that the final stage is kept to the statutory four weeks to conclude the process.

3.2 The Scheme review has coincided with restarting community conversations on empowerment, as part of the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy (2019) with key priority projects now being taken forward as part of the first year of the Delivery Plan. These conversations have been valuable and will continue. In some cases they have led to interest in establishing new Community Councils in a couple of areas where there are currently none operating.

3.3 During the first two consultation phases there have been various opportunities for community councils, anchor organisations, wider community groups, forums and community members to input. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions most of the engagement has been carried out online. A Stronger Voices group was established for the purpose of the review to include representatives from equalities and other groups in addition to the Community Council Forum.

3.4 The second phase of consultation has delivered the following:

- Community workshops – two online workshops were held in November 2021;
- Community Council Forum – online session held in October 2021;
- Direct contact with individual community councils;
- Community groups in areas with no community councils;
- Stronger voices group – two online meetings were held; and
- Elected members session held in November 2021.

3.5 Further details of the key themes and findings from these consultations can be found in the Stage 2 Consultation report in Appendix 1.

4. Main Issues

4.1 The second stage of consultation built on many of the themes identified in stage one. The four key themes were:

- Engaging and representing your community (including membership, equality & diversity);
- Influencing the Council and Community Planning Partners;
- Working collaboratively with other local groups; and
- Administration and support.

4.2 A dedicated web page was set up to allow access to the first draft of the Scheme, Model Constitution, Standing orders and a draft Handbook. The handbook is to provide more detailed guidance for community councils in a more accessible format which can be updated more readily than the Scheme.

4.3 In each of the sessions there was more detailed discussion on the key themes noted above and an opportunity to discuss the draft documents. A number of new themes and recommendations emerged which are summarised in the report at Appendix 1. The key overarching themes were:

- Community councils are voluntary organisations made up of people with other commitments and therefore require to be supported to meet their potential;
- Arrangements to support community councils need to be clear, with clear lines of communication with council services and anticipated response times.

- The link with empowerment legislation and the Community Empowerment Strategy is important, as is the role of the Community Council forum and Community Alliance.
- Relationships between community councils and statutory and other partners need to be further developed to allow them to succeed in their goals and make change happen.

4.4 One detailed formal submission was received from ACAN, who represent some groups in Alexandria and are interested in establishing a community council. This contained many detailed recommendations and similar themes which emerged from the wider consultation. A representative from ACAN was invited to take part in the Stronger Voices group in January 2022, to further input and shape the final documents. The ACAN submission also included a boundary proposal which will be included in the final consultation on boundaries in Phase Three.

4.5 Based on the findings from this consultation further drafts of the Scheme, Model Constitution and Standing orders have been produced at Appendix Three. It is also worth noting that a national review of the Model Scheme is currently underway and there should be scope to make any necessary amendments required once this process is completed.

Next Steps

Proposals for Phase 3

5.1 Following approval by Council, the following steps are proposed to complete the review:

- The drafts of the Scheme, Model Constitution and Standing orders are made available for final consultation and comment. Stronger Voices Group will act as a key conduit to finalise the drafts;
- Boundary proposals are publicised for final comment before being incorporated into the final draft Scheme (see further detail below);
- Community council Handbook is co-produced with the Stronger Voices Group with support provided by the Communities Team and SCDC;
- Final drafts of all documents are presented for approval at a Special Council Meeting on 25th May 2022; and
- Timescales for Community Council Election are finalised by Committee Services later in 2022.

5.2 Final stage boundary consultation. To build on the findings from the first and second consultation on boundaries:

- Issues maps to all CCs clearly showing the proposed changes and giving an opportunity to comment.
- Compare with other boundaries such as those of the HSCP and National Park Authority.

- Publish an online consultation with the final proposed changes/ boundaries.
- Finalise the boundaries and produce maps for approval by Council with the final Scheme and appendices.

6 People Implications

- 6.1** The process is led by the Communities Team, working closely with the consultants and key community stakeholders. Officers from Legal, Finance and Committee Services are fully engaged in the process.

7 Financial & Procurement Implications

- 7.1** There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. The review will be concluded utilising existing service budgets. Consideration should however be given to actions arising from the review and consultation processes, and any associated costs.

8 Risk Analysis

- 8.1** Developing and supporting Community Councils is a key part of the Council's approach to Community Empowerment, as laid out in the Community Empowerment Strategy. Failure to review the Scheme using the correct process could have a negative impact on the reputation of the Council.

9 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 9.1** An equalities impact assessment has been updated throughout the process and a final version will be produced for approval with the final drafts. The review is being carried out as an inclusive process working closely with the Equalities Forum and other key stakeholders and seeking to engage with a wide range of residents including those who are seldom heard in local communities. A copy of the EIA as it currently stands is included at Appendix Four.

10 Consultation

- 10.1** The consultation process is ongoing with the plans for the 3rd round as outlined above.

11 Strategic Assessment

- 11.1** The review of the Scheme is being carried out in a manner to support the community empowerment agenda and the delivery of the Council's Strategic

Plan objectives, in particular in relation to meaningful engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.

**Peter Barry, Chief Officer Housing and Employability
West Dunbartonshire Council**

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Report on Stage 2 Consultation, March - June 2021
Appendix 2 – Draft Scheme of Establishment
Appendix 3 - Draft Model Constitution, Code of Conduct & Standing Orders
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers: Review of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, Special Council: 24 February 2021, and 26 August 2021.

Wards Affected: All

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

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 9th March and 29th 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 26th 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 31st August and 21st 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 26th 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 28th 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

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

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

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 struggle to influence decision making generally

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

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!

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

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.

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'.

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

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

Enforcement of Code of Conduct needed too

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)

Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

15 Nov

17 Nov

3 Working with other local groups

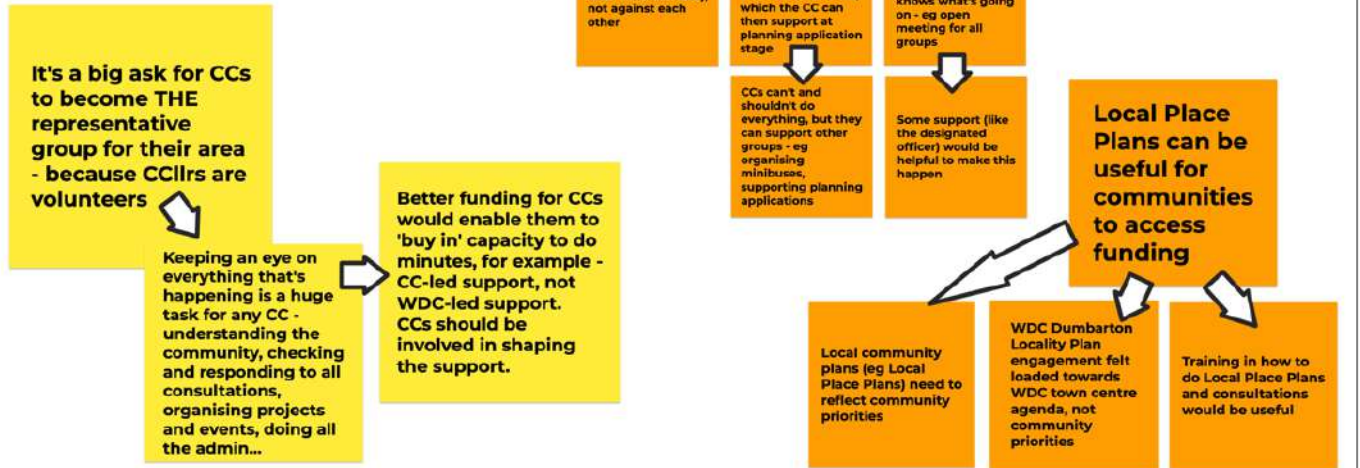
Develop collaborative relationships with other local groups to complement each other

Associate members

Deliver projects

Produce a Locality Place Plan

Become the local umbrella or anchor organisation



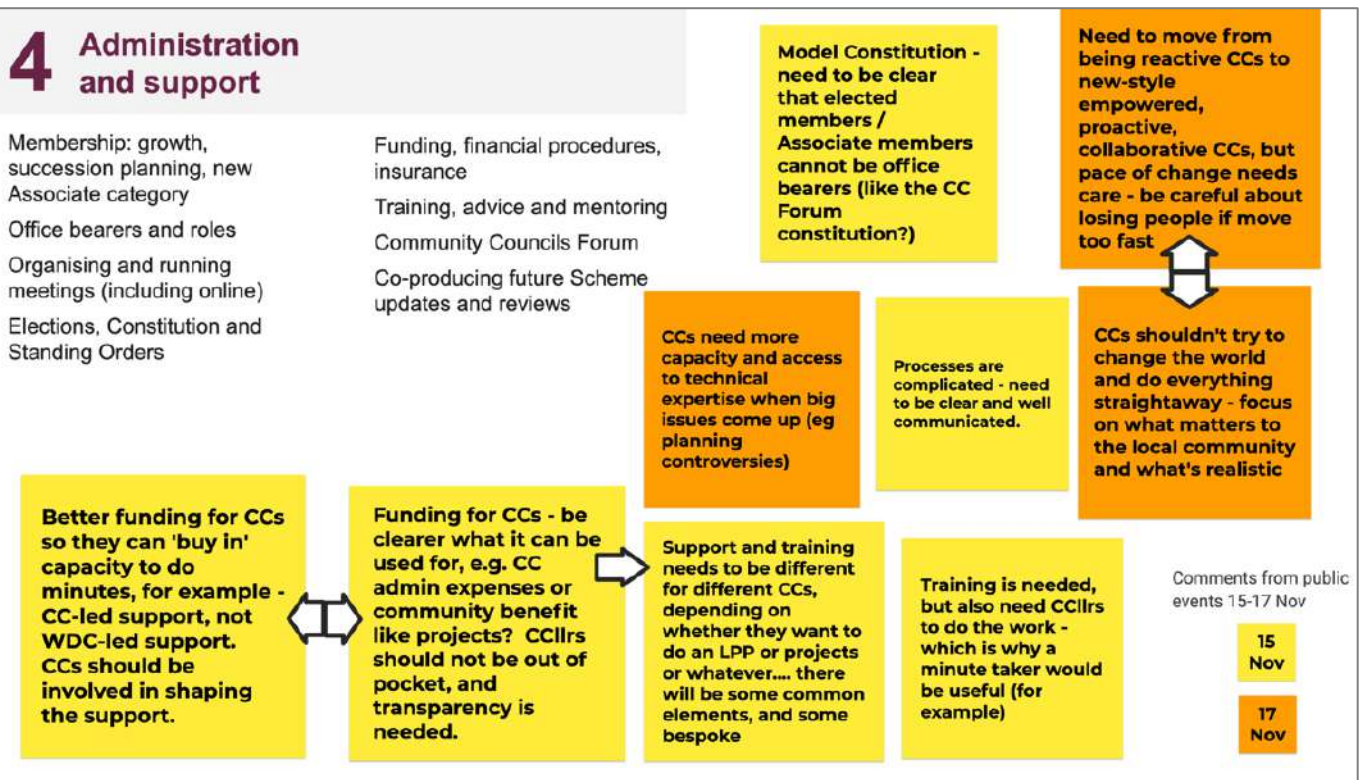
Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

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



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 8th 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/CPP 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.¹
- 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?

¹ 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	Representing and engaging communities (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"> • 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). • How to make meetings interesting and relevant for local communities (e.g. through integration with Participatory

		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.
2	Influence and liaison with the Council and Community Planning partners	
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"> • 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). • How CCs can be involved in other statutory process such as Community planning, or exercise other rights

		<p>under the CE Act or other legislation where there are statutory duties for community engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols for collaborative working such as annual 'local meetings' with relevant WDC/CPP representatives in each CC area. • 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. <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.
3	Working collaboratively with other local groups and organisations	
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.	<p>Roles and responsibilities should be reviewed and clarified by WDC and the two organisations.</p> <p><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.</p>
4	Administrative arrangements and support	
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

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

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

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.



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

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

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

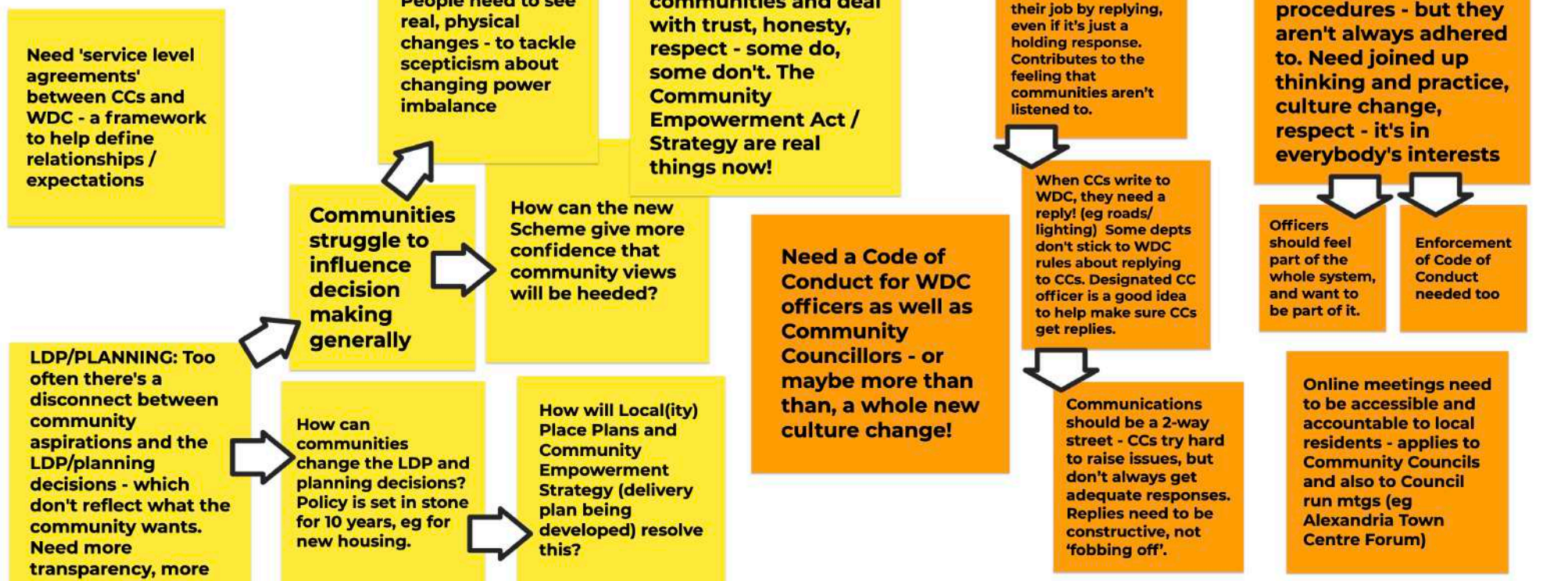
Comments from public events 15-17 Nov

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

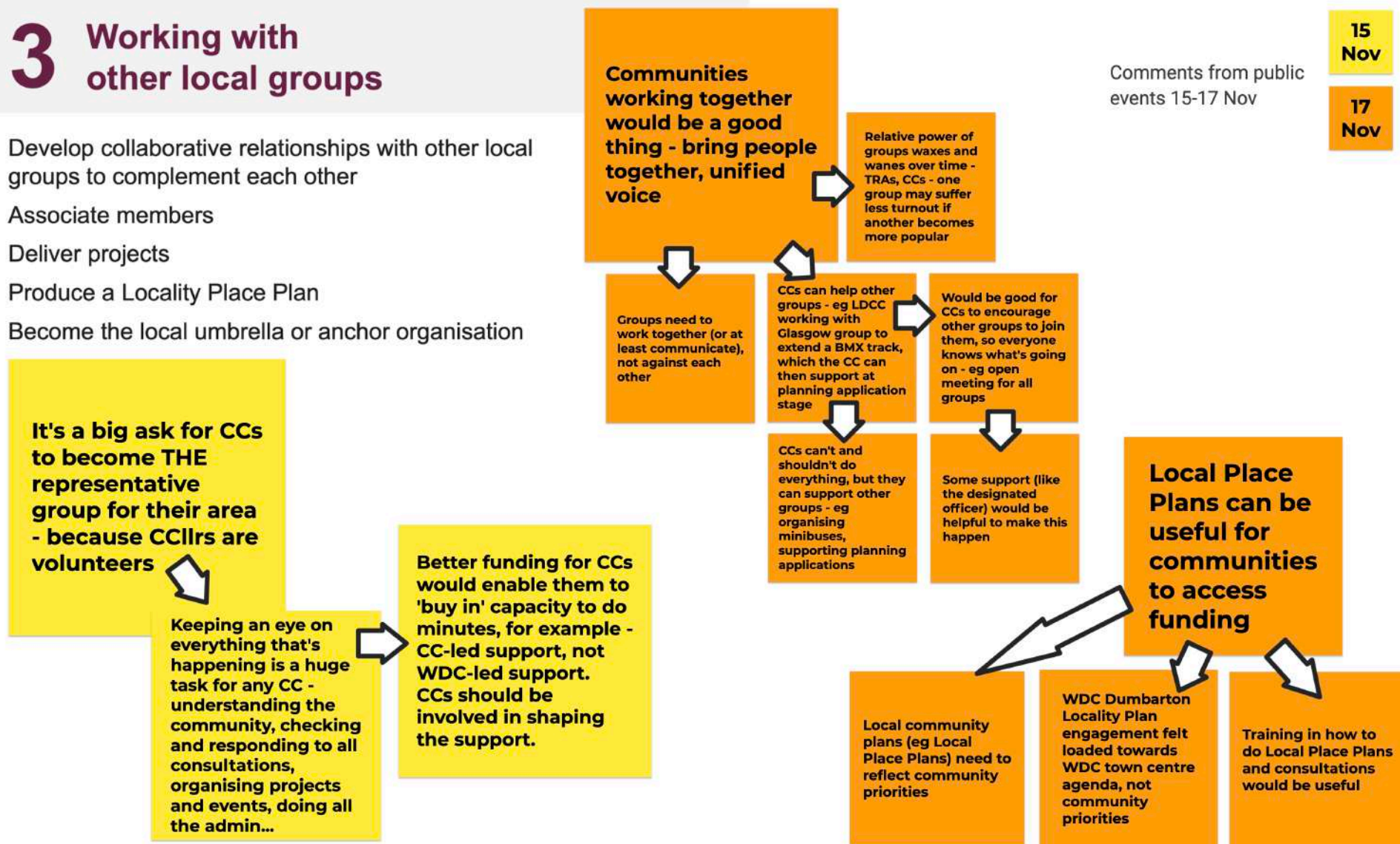
Develop collaborative relationships with other local groups to complement each other

Associate members

Deliver projects

Produce a Locality Place Plan

Become the local umbrella or anchor organisation



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

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)



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.



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



*‘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.



'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.

'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.'



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.



*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*



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



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.



-
- 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.



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*



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
-
- 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.

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

**For approval of West Dunbartonshire Council
(at Special Council meeting 23 February 2022) for public consultation**

**This draft reflects the feedback from Stages 1 & 2 of the consultation process.
It is for information purposes only at this stage
as part of the Scheme Review process.**

**Stage 3 of the consultation will allow a final round of consultation and input
into the final version of the Scheme and appendices (including the Code of
Conduct and model Constitution and Standing Orders). This will include a
session with the Stronger Voices group to co-produce the Handbook that will
sit alongside the Scheme.**

**The final draft documents will then be presented to a further
Special Council Meeting on 25 May 2022.**

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1. Introduction

Community Councils are voluntary bodies which exist within a legal framework, based on Section 51 (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Under legislation, every local community in Scotland is entitled to request their local authority to establish a Community Council in their area. Although they complement the role of the local authority, they are not part of local government.

West Dunbartonshire Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils is designed to enable the development of effective Community Councils locally. It also seeks to ensure that they are able to make a representative contribution to the process of democratic empowerment and community participation in the areas they operate in and across West Dunbartonshire as whole. It will come into operation from June 2022 with Community Council elections being held as soon as practicable after this date. The Scheme will be reviewed before each new Community Council electoral term.

Contemporary duties for empowerment and engagement:

In addition to the original 1973 legislation, this Scheme also seeks to promote and support the role of Community Councils in implementing the wider legal framework for community engagement and empowerment in Scotland.

2. Statutory Purposes of Community Councils

Section 51 (2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 states that “The purpose of a Community Council is to determine the aspirations and views of local people, organise these effectively to clearly represent opinions and present ideas for development and make proposals for improving people's lives. They have clear rights as legitimate community bodies to express these with local authorities and other public bodies providing services for its area and work for service improvement where appropriate.”

This involves finding out the views of the community which the Community Council represents, on matters which these authorities are responsible; and advocating for, or taking action in the interests of, that community wherever it is justifiable and practical.

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. These seek to ensure that community views are heard by public bodies and influence how they meet community needs. The scope of these additional duties confers rights on communities in local areas and those sharing other common bonds of identity or because of protected equality characteristics.

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.

This wider legal framework will be described in a Handbook for Community Councils in West Dunbartonshire. It will include information on the Community Empowerment Act and other legislation on specific services which require providers to engage communities in setting priorities and reviewing progress.

Since Community Councils have a specific role in relation to engaging with the statutory planning system, the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 have particular importance. They seek to involve communities more proactively and at an earlier stage in planning, with increased focus on sections of the community such as young people.

When taken together these legal provisions place duties on public bodies to respond to community views and proposals and involve them in decision making on a wide range of factors, including:

- How public assets are managed, disposed of or subject to greater community control.
- How greenspaces like allotments are managed.
- Setting the direction of local policy and the design of services across the Community Planning Partnership.
- Having rights to request participation in many aspects of service delivery by public bodies.

Although these rights are not exclusive to Community Councils, they are one of a number of types of groups recognised as legitimate bodies for community participation. They are also part of an evolving environment where policy is being developed on an ongoing basis, demonstrated by examples such as participation in health and social care organisations, and planning for children and young peoples' services or community justice issues.

These rights support the role of Community Councils to identify issues and improve their communities for local residents. This is in line with both the original legal purpose of Community Councils outlined above and the intention of the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy.

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 involves 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.

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.

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 needs to be a genuine commitment to collaboration and good working relationships with the local authority and other agencies. To allow Community Councils to meet their potential, there will be support and training available, facilitated by the Council's Communities Team. An annual skills audit will be carried out and a training programme developed in collaboration with Community Councils and the Community Councils Forum.

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 Scheme is informed by the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy (2019).

Each Community Council must adopt a Constitution and Standing Orders, based upon the Model Constitution (Appendix 2) and Model Standing Orders (Appendix 3) developed nationally and subsequently adapted locally for West Dunbartonshire. They serve to encourage consistency for Community Councils across West Dunbartonshire, and to ensure their proceedings are properly structured and regulated, that business is properly debated and that decisions are reached in a democratic manner. Each Community Council's Constitution must be approved by the Chief Officer for Housing and Employability of West Dunbartonshire Council.

Community Councils may carry out activities that are in line with:

- the general interests of the communities they represent
- their purpose
- the associated legal framework
- the Code of Conduct for Community Councillors
- the contents of this Scheme of Establishment, which should be agreed by the Council and Community Council Forum or other group representing Community Councils collectively.

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.

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, on a website or via social media) with hard copies available on request.

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 as soon as possible following the date of the meeting and be circulated to Community Council members and local elected members.

- **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 be non-party political when expressing views and representing local residents.

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.

- **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. Other matters may also be jointly agreed between Community Councils, the local authority and other public sector and private agencies. As legitimate community bodies, Community Councils 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. The Handbook that complements this Scheme will contain details of these opportunities and be updated as regularly as is practical.
- **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 involved should 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. This could include setting up annual meetings to review progress or address issues through the Community Alliance or other groupings representing the community voice in Community Planning West Dunbartonshire.
- **Community engagement:** The Council will seek to work with Community Councils to develop their capacity to plan and deliver consultation with the community. This will enable Community Councils to gather, 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.

- **Community-led planning:** Community Councils will be encouraged to develop skills to lead or participate in community-led Locality Place Plans, Local 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.
- **Training:** A programme of training will be developed with Community Councils covering these and other topics. The design and delivery of the programme will be undertaken jointly with the Community Council Forum and the Council's Communities Team.
- **Flexible membership:** One way to assist Community Councils to broaden their representation and expertise is by promoting different categories of membership with the overall purpose of involving more local people and local organisations in ways that make participation easier.

Categories of membership are set out in section 6 (Membership). As a general principle the representative role of Community Councils is best served by the recruitment of a majority of members from those living within the boundary with an active interest in the community. However there are times where it can be useful to bring in views and experience from outwith the Community Council area, or from third sector organisations, for example to contribute to specific projects or issues. Such members may only vote if they are registered at an address in the Community Council area.

- **Information:** Community Councils must inform the local authority of any changes in membership (resignations, co-options etc.) and circumstances (such as changes in office bearers or status of the Community Council itself) as soon as is practicable, and complete an annual return on membership.

4. Equalities and diversity

It is important that Community Councils understand and comply with the Equality Act 2010, which requires them to take have 'due regard' in their operation to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

They must do this in terms of 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.

Everyone has 'protected characteristics', but it is the treatment that individuals and groups receive, the level of autonomy they have, and the positive or negative outcomes for them, which should be the focus.

Community Councils should therefore make particular effort to engage people with protected characteristics actively and sensitively, and encourage membership from a diverse range of people living in their areas.

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 or online platforms which are accessible to all. This will involve using accessible venues and online platforms, meeting at times which suit people, offering a range of opportunities to participate, and using face to face or digital meeting methods which maximise the numbers and diversity of people taking part.

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.

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 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 future changes to Community Council boundaries will be considered as part of future Reviews of this Scheme, and each review will include a consultation on boundaries. Any mid-term requests will be assessed based on whether these can be met outwith a full review of the Scheme process.

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 minimum 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.
- **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 who the Community Council considers they would help them to deliver their aims and purposes. They may bring a particular perspective, such as a young person, or have particular experience or expertise relevant to a local issue perhaps by virtue of being involved with another organisation. Associate members need not be local residents, nor do they have voting rights. They 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.
- **Ex-officio members** are politicians such as local authority Councillors, MSPs and MPs whose wards or constituencies fall wholly or partly within the geographical area of the Community Council area. They have no voting rights on the Community Council.

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 full Community Council member who no longer resides within that Community Council area is deemed to have resigned from that Community Council six months after they have moved away from the area. The purpose of that six month period is to enable Community Councils to retain membership whilst they seek replacement candidates for co-option, particularly where the membership and viability of the Community Council may be affected.

Any individual who is elected to serve on this local authority, or the Scottish or UK parliaments 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. Replacement or updating of this Scheme

From time to time it will be necessary to review the Scheme as required by law. When the local authority revokes its existing Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils to make a new Scheme, it will publish a Public Notice. This notice will invite the public to make suggestions as to the areas covered by Community Council boundaries, composition of Community Councils, and any other aspects of the Scheme. Following this, a consultation process will take place before the replacement Scheme's formal adoption by the local authority.

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 of the West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum. Appropriate consultation will take place with Community Councils in advance of any such changes. More detailed information will be available in the Handbook.

8. Community Council Elections

All reasonable assistance should be given to Community Councils to promote and organise their elections using a wide variety of effective communication methods in to ensure that they are as representative of local views as possible. This section describes the processes for Community Council election nominations and, should they be required, polls.

Nominations and elections

The first elections to be held under the Scheme will be held on a date to be determined by West Dunbartonshire Council.

Subsequent elections will be held on a four-yearly-cycle, outwith local government election years, on dates to be determined by the Council and agreed by the Community Council Forum.

Where possible, when Community Councils' election cycle fall in the year of Scottish local government elections, the electoral proceedings will be held in the following year. There may however be exceptions where there are clear reasons to hold them in the same year.

West Dunbartonshire Council will administer all elections using the most suitable method of election.

Returning officer

The Council will appoint an Independent Returning Officer, who must not be a current elected member of the Community Council whose election (s)he is administering, 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 must be submitted with the candidate's consent. Self-nomination is not permitted.

A nomination form should be completed, the style of which will be determined by the Council. 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.

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 4 **[to be added]**, those 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; or
- 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 West Dunbartonshire Council. 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 Council must be informed and it 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 6 above. 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, 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.

9. Disqualification of Membership

Full or Associate membership of a Community Council is invalidated six months after a Community Councillor moves away from the Community Council area (see section 6 above for more information). That person may however be (re-)appointed as an Associate member by the Community Council.

If any member of a Community Council fails to attend any Community Council meeting, with or without submitting apologies, for 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 its 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 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 each year. The annual general meeting will be held in a month of each year to be determined by the local authority/Community Council.

Meetings can be held either in person, digitally or a combination of both. The times and dates of meetings and methods used should be accessible to all; for example, meetings should be held at times which are suitable for the general public, and any digital platforms should be free and easy to access (see section 4 above).

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. Where a meeting does not meet these criteria, no decisions may be made without ratification at a subsequent quorate meeting, and the lack of quorum shall be noted in any note or minute of the meeting.

An outline for the order 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

Robust arrangements will be put in place for liaison between Community Councils and the local authority, in line with the ambitions of the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy. Community Councils have a key role to play in achieving the ambitions laid out in this strategy and representing communities across West Dunbartonshire.

This section contains a summary of what these arrangements will include. Further detail will be provided in the Handbook.

Communication

To support Community Councils to take on a role in community empowerment, there must be clear lines of communication between Community Councils and relevant local authority service areas and other Community Planning Partners. Contact information will be provided in the Handbook.

Where possible direct contact with appropriate officers is the preferred method. Where no response is received there will be a process to follow thereafter to ensure that Community Council needs for engagement are met. The West Dunbartonshire Council Communities Team can support with general enquiries and capacity building and organising training for Community Councils.

Participation in allocation of resources

West Dunbartonshire Council has made a strategic and operational commitment to increase the community role in influencing local decision making. Community Councils will be encouraged to participate and promote participation in a significant and meaningful manner. This includes in the delivery of the Community Empowerment Strategy and in initiatives to increase participation and local democracy, such as community budgeting and participatory budgeting.

Consultation

Local authority departments and Community Council Planning partners will encourage the participation of Community Councils in consultations as early as possible, and be supportive in encouraging consultation responses (for example, planning and licencing applications).

Community Councils Forum and influence in Community Planning

West Dunbartonshire's Community Councils come together and have a collective voice via the Community Councils Forum. This strengthens their influence with the Council and other Community Planning Partners and allows collaborative working to take place. It is a mechanism for Community Councils to voice shared issues and concerns and to influence how these are met, and also to act as a collective voice in bringing about change and shaping service delivery.

As well as directly representing Community Councils, the Community Councils Forum is represented on the Community Alliance, or any other agreed groups to represent the community voice in Community Planning West Dunbartonshire, including how Community Councils' collaboration can influence the development of Local Outcome Improvement and Locality Plans.

Further details of Community Councils' role and influence will be provided in the Handbook and will be updated as required. The roles of Community Councillors and elected members will also be laid out in the Handbook and the Community Councillors' Code of Conduct (see Appendix to this Scheme).

12. Resources

Community Councils are required to keep financial records and present financial reports at Community Council meetings and support will be given by the Council's Finance team to assist them to do so. The financial year of each Community Council should run from 1 April to 31 March in each succeeding year and be stated in the their Constitution.

The Handbook will contain more detailed information on finance processes. Each Community Council will be eligible to apply for grants for suitable projects and expenditure through the Community Council grant process and support will be provided with this process where required. Community Councils will also have the power to secure resources for schemes, projects and all other purposes consistent with their aims.

The Handbook was developed with input from the Community Councils Forum and as part of the wider consultation process to develop the Scheme and associated documents. These arrangements can be reviewed as required to ensure that they are fit for purpose and in response to any changes.

The Handbook will outline the process for examination of Community Council accounts and their annual submission to the Council's Finance team.

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.

West Dunbartonshire Council will provide a Community Council grant to assist with the operating costs of the Community Council. The grant will consist of a flat rate and an additional per capita allowance. The applicable amounts will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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

13. Liability of Community Council Members

West Dunbartonshire Council will support Community Councils to ensure that they have adequate insurance provision in place. This will include working with the Community Councils Forum and the Council's Finance team to ensure that arrangements are in place for the yearly renewal process.

14. Dissolution of a Community Council

The arrangements for dissolving a Community Council are contained in the Model Constitution.

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 provide any support as appropriate (whether to continue with or to dissolve the Community Council).

Appendices

- *Code of Conduct for Community Councillors*
- *Model Constitution for Community Councillors*
- *Model Standing Orders*
- *Composition and boundaries of Community Councils [to be added]*

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

REVISED VERSION
FOR PRESENTATION TO WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
AT SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 23 FEBRUARY 2022,
FOR APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Appendix

**Code of Conduct for
Community Councillors**

February 2022

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

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.

Community Councillors, as elected representatives of their communities, have a responsibility to make sure that they are familiar with, and that their actions comply with, the Principles set out in this Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct and its Principles, apply particularly to Full members of Community Councils (whether elected or co-opted) who have voting rights on the Community Council. Associate and *ex-officio* members of Community Councils, who do not have voting rights, should also reflect the spirit of the Principles.

The Principles are as follows:

1. Service to the Community (Public Service)
2. Selflessness
3. Integrity
4. Objectivity
5. Accountability and Stewardship
6. Openness
7. Honesty
8. Leadership
9. Respect

Each Principle is explained in more detail below, followed by a concluding section on the Community Councils Complaints Procedure.

If you have any uncertainties about any aspect of this Code of Conduct or would like support in how to comply with the Code, please ask West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Team for assistance in the first instance.

Principle 1: Service to the Community

As a Community Councillor you have a duty to act in the interests of the local community, which you have been elected or nominated to represent. You also have a duty to act in accordance with the remit of the Council's Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, as set out by your local authority under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

You have a duty to establish and reflect, through the Community Council, the views of the community as a whole, on any issue, irrespective of personal opinion.

It is important that you and your Community Council understand and comply with the Equality Act 2010, which you take reasonable action to work for equality of opportunity and outcome across the 'protected characteristics' defined in the Act. More information is contained in section 4 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

You should ensure that you are, within reason, accessible to your local community and local residents. You should support the Community Council to make available, where possible, various mechanisms to allow the general community to express their views, such as suggestion boxes and community surveys. More information is available in the West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Handbook.

Principle 2: Selflessness

You have a duty to make decisions solely in terms of the interest of the community that you represent. You must not use your position as a Community Councillor to gain financial, material, political or other personal benefit for yourself, family or friends.

Principle 3: Integrity

You must not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in your representation of your community. If you have any private and/or personal interest in a matter to be considered by the Community Council, you have a duty to declare this and, if deemed necessary by other members, withdraw from discussions and the decision making process for the matter in hand.

You should not accept gifts or hospitality that may be seen to influence, or be intended to influence, your opinion or judgement. The offer and/or receipt of any gifts, regardless of form, should always be reported to and noted by the Secretary of the Community Council.

Principle 4: Objectivity

In all your decisions and opinions as a Community Councillor, you must endeavour to represent the overall views of your community, taking account of information which is provided to you or is publicly available, assessing its merit and gathering information as appropriate, whilst laying aside personal opinions or preferences.

You may be appointed or nominated by your Community Council to serve as a member of another representative body. You should ensure that this Code of Conduct is observed when carrying out the duties of the other body on behalf of the Community Council.

You are free to have political and/or religious affiliations and to campaign or lobby on particular issues of interest or concern to the local community. You must however ensure that you represent the interests of your community and Community Council, and not the interests of a particular political party or other group.

Principle 5: Accountability and Stewardship

You are accountable for the decisions and actions that you take on behalf of your community through the Community Council.. You must ensure that the Community Council uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law. If you are unsure about relevant legal requirements, you should contact West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Team in the first instance for clarification.

Community Councillors must individually and collectively ensure that the business of the Community Council is conducted according to the Council's Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and this Code of Conduct.

Community Councillors must individually and collectively ensure that annual accounts are produced showing the financial undertakings of the Community Council, as set out in the Council's Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and the Council's Handbook for Community Councils. You must also ensure that all resources are used efficiently, effectively and fairly, and are used strictly for the purposes of Community Council business and for no other purpose.

Minutes of Meetings should be produced which record all actions and decisions made by the Community Council. They should be produced and circulated to all members of the Community Council and made publicly available as soon as possible after each meeting.

Complaints about the Community Council or individual Community Councillors should be handled in accordance with the Community Councils Complaints Procedure (see the final paragraph of this Code of Conduct).

Principle 6: Openness

You have a duty to be open about your decisions, actions and representations, giving reasons for these where appropriate. You should be able to justify your decisions publicly and be confident that you have not been unduly influenced by the views and/or opinions of others with personal or private interests (see 'Integrity' principle above) .

If you have dealings with broadcast or print media, social media, members of the public, or others not directly involved in your Community Council, you should ensure that an explicit distinction is made between your personal views and statements made on behalf of the Community Council.

Principle 7: Honesty

You have a duty to act honestly. You also have an obligation to work within the law at all times. You must declare any private interest relating to your Community Council duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the interest of the community and the Community Council. If you are unsure about potential legal requirements or conflicts of interest, you should contact West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Team in the first instance for clarification.

Principle 8: Leadership

You have a duty to promote and support the principles of this Code of Conduct by leadership and example, to maintain and strengthen the community's trust and confidence in the integrity of the Community Council and its members in representing the views and needs of the local area.

You must also promote social inclusion and challenge discrimination in any form, guided by the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils (Section 4: Equalities and Diversity).

You should act to assist the Community Council, as far as possible, in the interest

of the whole community that it serves. Where particular interest groups' concerns are in conflict with those of other groups or other areas, you should help to ensure that the Community Council is aware of them and help achieve consensus amongst local groups which reflects wider community aspirations.

Principle 9: Respect

You must respect fellow members of your Community Council and those that you represent, treating them with courtesy, respect and in a non-discriminatory manner at all times. This should extend to other community organisations and other people, regardless of their position, with whom you have dealings with in your capacity as a Community Councillor.

Recognition should be given to the contribution of everyone participating in the work of the Community Council. You must comply with Equal Opportunities legislation and ensure that equality of opportunity be given to every participant to have their knowledge, opinion, skill and experience taken into account (for more information, see Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, Section 4: Equality and Diversity).

You should ensure that confidential material, including details about individuals, is treated as such and handled with dignity and discretion, and is not used for personal, malicious or corrupt purposes.

Community Councils Complaints Procedure

Any complaints about a Community Council or individual Community Councillor(s), for example about an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct, should be made in accordance with the Community Councils Complaints Procedure outlined in the West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Handbook.

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Appendix

**Model Constitution for
Community Councils**

February 2022

MODEL CONSTITUTION FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS

All Community Councils are required to have a Constitution and Standing Orders, both of which must comply with the West Dunbartonshire Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

This appendix contains a model Constitution as a starting point for Community Councils to use. It should be read in conjunction with the model Standing Orders, which provide more detail on meetings, agendas, discussion, voting and minutes.

If the Community Council or individual Community Councillors have any uncertainty over wording, intent, application or interpretation of any aspect of this model Constitution, or how it may be amended, they should in the first instance contact West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Team for assistance.

1. Name

The name of the Community Council is (referred to as "the Community Council" in this document).

2. Area of the Community Council

The area of the Community Council shall be as shown on the map attached to the local authority's Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Community Council shall be:

- (a) to ascertain, co-ordinate and reflect the views of the community which it represents, to liaise with other community groups within the area, and to fairly express the diversity of opinions and outlooks of the people;
- (b) to express the views of the community to the local authority for the area to public authorities and other organisations;
- (c) to take such action in the interests of the community as appears to it to be desirable and practicable;
- (d) to promote the well-being of the community and to foster community spirit;
- (e) to be a means whereby the people of the area shall be able to voice their opinions on any matter affecting their lives, their welfare, their environment, its development and amenity.

4. Role and Responsibilities

In discharging its function and the conduct of its business:

- (a) The Community Council shall have regard to their role and responsibilities as set out in section 3 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

- (b) Individual members shall comply with the Community Councillors' Code of Conduct.

5. Membership

The Community Council's membership is governed by section 6 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils and as determined from time to time by the local authority. The membership can consist of Full, Co-opted, *ex-officio* and Associate members as defined in section 6 of the full Scheme.

6. Method of Election

Election procedures shall be governed by the method of election laid down in section 8 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

7. Casual Vacancies on the Community Council

Where a vacancy arises which does not result in the number of Community Councillors falling below the minimum number as specified in section 5 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, and at least 6 months has passed since the last election, the Community Council may, if it considers it to be desirable, agree to one of the following:-

- (a) an extraordinary general meeting be held in order that the vacancy (and any other outstanding vacancies) can be filled, on the basis that such vacancies would be publicised, nominations invited and an election held where the number of candidates exceeded the number of places available. Interim elections will be administered by the local authority.
- (b) the filling of a vacancy by co-option with voting rights to a maximum of one quarter of the total membership of the Community Council, as governed by section 8 of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.
- (c) the vacancy to be left unfilled until local public interest is expressed or until the next set of regular elections.

8. Voting Rights of Members of the Community Council

In the event that a vote is required, only Full members of the Community Council may vote (not Associate or *ex-officio* members, nor the general public).

All decisions of the Community Council will be decided by a simple majority of those eligible to vote who are present and voting, with the exception of the following circumstances which require a two-thirds majority:

- (a) Co-option of new Community Councillors (see section 8 of the full Scheme).
- (b) Alterations to the Constitution (see clause 16 below).
- (c) Dissolution of the Community Council (see clause 17 below).

9. Election of Office-Bearers

- (a) At the first meeting of the Community Council after elections in the year when

elections are held, and at the Annual General Meeting in (to be determined locally) in the year when elections are not held, the Community Council shall appoint a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other such office-bearers as it shall from time to time decide.

- (b) All office-bearers shall be elected for one year, but shall be eligible for re-election, without limitation of time.
- (c) Without the express approval of the local authority, no one member shall hold more than one of the following offices at any one time: Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer.

10. Committees of the Community Council

The Community Council may create committees of its members for whatever topics it feels appropriate (for example planning, events or projects) and shall agree and record the composition, terms of reference, duration, duties and powers of those committees. Any decisions made by Committees should be subject to ratification by the full Community Council.

11. Meetings of the Community Council

- (a) Including an Annual General Meeting, the Community Council shall meet publicly at least six times each year. All meetings shall be organised and advertised in accordance with the Community Council's Standing Orders.
- (b) The Community Council shall abide by its Standing Orders for the proper conduct of its meetings, including having a quorum of one-third of voting membership or three voting members (whichever is the greater) before any decisions can be taken (see paragraph 3 of the Standing Orders).
- (c) The Community Council has a duty to be responsive to the community it represents, as explained in the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils (Section 4). Should the Community Council receive a written petition signed by at least 20 persons resident within the Community Council area to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting or Special Meeting for a particular matter or matters to be debated, it shall call such a meeting within 21 days of receipt of the request and advertise it publicly in the usual manner (see paragraph 12(b) below).
- (d) The Community Council can meet to discuss items of business in private where it considers it appropriate to do so and in exceptional circumstances. Care should be taken to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Community Councillors. The decision to meet in private will be agreed in advance and decided by a majority vote. Notice of such a meeting will be given to the public in the usual way. However, the Notice will record that the meeting, or a part thereof, shall be held in private.

12. Public Participation in the Work of the Community Council

- (a) All meetings of the Community Council and its committees shall be open to members of the public and may be held in person or online. Proper provision is to be made for the accommodation of members of the public and the opportunity should be afforded at each meeting to permit members of the public to address the Community Council, under the guidance of the Chairperson.

- (b) Notices calling public meetings of the Community Council shall be posted prominently within the Community Council area for a minimum period of ten days before the date of any such meeting and, where possible, be advertised by other suitable means such as appropriate websites, social media and local press.

13. Providing information to West Dunbartonshire Council

The local authority's Communities Team shall be sent an annual calendar of the Community Council's prescribed meeting dates, times and venues (which should be agreed at the Community Council's annual general meeting), minutes of all meetings, the annual report, the annual financial statement and any other such suitable information, as may from time to time be agreed between the Community Council and the local authority. When Extraordinary General Meetings or Special Meetings are to be held, the local authority's Communities Team should be advised of the date, time, venue and subject(s) of debate of such meetings, at least 10 days in advance of the meeting date.

14. Control of finance

- (a) All funds raised by or on behalf of the Community Council or provided by the local authority and other sources shall be applied to further the objectives of the Community Council (see section 3 above) and in line with any conditions imposed by the providing organisation.
- (b) The Treasurer shall keep proper accounts of the finances of the Community Council.
- (c) Expenditure should be approved by at least two authorised Community Council office-bearers (or other members agreed by the Community Council) and ratified in minutes of meetings. The two authorising members for any transactions cannot live at the same address.
- (d) A statement of accounts for the last financial year should be independently examined by two examiners (as explained in the Community Councils Handbook) appointed by the Community Council. The accounts shall be presented and approved at the Annual General Meeting of the Community Council, made available for inspection on request to the Secretary, and submitted to the local authority within 21 days of the Annual General Meeting.

15. Title to property

Property and other assets belonging to the Community Council shall be vested in the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Community Council and their successors in these respective offices.

16. Alterations to the Constitution

Any proposal by the Community Council to alter this Constitution must be first considered by a public meeting of the Community Council. The terms of the proposal to alter the Constitution shall be stated on the notice calling the meeting, which shall be issued not less than ten days prior to the meeting and published in accordance with paragraph 12(b) above. Any proposed alterations to the Constitution must comply with the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

If the proposal is supported by two-thirds of the total voting membership of the Community Council and is also approved in writing by the local authority, the alteration shall be deemed to have been duly authorised and can then come into effect.

17. Dissolution

If the Community Council by a two-thirds majority of the total voting membership decides at any time that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve, it shall agree a date for a public meeting to be held to discuss the proposed resolution to dissolve. That meeting shall be publicised at least ten days in advance and in accordance with paragraph 12(b) above. If the resolution is supported by a majority of those persons present and qualified to vote and is approved by the local authority, the Community Council shall be deemed to be dissolved and all assets remaining, subject to the approval of the local authority, after the satisfaction of any proper debts or liabilities shall transfer to the local authority who shall hold same in Trust for a future Community Council representing that area.

In the event that the Community Council is dissolved under the above procedure, and twenty or more electors subsequently propose to re-establish a Community Council for the area, these electors shall submit a request to the local authority in accordance with Section 52(7) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, on receipt of which the Returning Officer shall arrange for elections to be held in accordance with the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

Where for any reason, the number of Community Council members falls below the minimum specified in the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, the local authority may, by suspending the Constitution of the Community Council, cause the Community Council to be dissolved. In that event, the procedures for the establishment of a new Community Council explained in the previous paragraph may be initiated.

18. Approval and adoption of the Constitution

This Constitution was adopted by Community Council, on

.....[insert date]

..... Name and signature: Chairperson

..... Name and signature: Community Councillor

..... Name and signature: Community Councillor

and was approved on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council on

..... Name

..... Signature

..... Position

..... Date

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

REVISED VERSION
FOR PRESENTATION TO WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
AT SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING 23 FEBRUARY 2022,
FOR APPROVAL FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Appendix

**Model Standing Orders for
Community Councils**

February 2022

MODEL STANDING ORDERS FOR COMMUNITY COUNCILS

All Community Councils are required to have a Constitution and Standing Orders, both of which must comply with the West Dunbartonshire Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

This appendix contains model Standing Orders as a starting point for Community Councils to use. It should be read in conjunction with the model Constitution.

If the Community Council or individual Community Councillors have any uncertainty over wording, intent, application or interpretation of any aspect of these model Standing Orders, or how they may be amended, they should in the first instance contact West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Team for assistance.

1. Meetings

- (a) Including an Annual General Meeting, the Community Council shall meet publicly at least six times each year.
- (b) Once in each year in the month of (to be agreed with the local authority) the Community Council shall convene an Annual General Meeting for the purpose of receiving and considering the Community Council's annual report (to be prepared by the chairperson, officer bearers or other agreed representatives), the submission and approval of the independently examined annual statement of accounts and the appointment of office bearers.
- (c) Dates, times and venues of Ordinary Meetings of the Community Council shall be fixed at the first meeting of the Community Council following ordinary elections and thereafter at its annual general meeting.
- (d) Ordinary meetings of the Community Council shall normally be held in the months of [to be entered].
- (e) The notice of Ordinary and Annual General Meetings of the Community Council, featuring the date, time and venue, must be provided by the Community Council Secretary to each Community Council member and the local authority's named official, at least 10 days before the date of the meeting.
- (f) Special Meetings may be called at any time on the instructions of the Chairperson of the Community Council on the request of not less than one-half of the total number of Community Council members; or upon receiving a written petition signed by at least 20 persons resident within the Community Council area, to convene a special meeting for a particular matter or matters to be debated, which must be held within 21 days of receipt of the request. Special meetings shall require at least 10 days public notice.
- (g) An officer of the local authority has the discretion to call a public meeting of the Community Council.
- (h) Notices calling public meetings of the Community Council shall be posted

prominently within the Community Council area for a minimum period of ten days before the date of any such meeting and, where possible, be advertised by other suitable means such as appropriate websites, social media and local press.

- (i) Meetings may be held either in person, digitally or a combination of both. Dates, time, locations and online platforms should be freely accessible to all.

2. Minutes

- (a) Draft minutes of all Community Council meetings (Ordinary Meetings, Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings or Special Meetings) shall be distributed within 21 days from the date of that meeting in accordance with paragraph 11 of the model Constitution, and shall, following their approval at the next meeting of the Community Council, be signed by an officer bearer and retained for future reference.
- (b) Draft minutes of each Community Council shall be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting, within a maximum of 21 days from the date of each meeting, to Community Council members, West Dunbartonshire Council's Communities Team and other appropriate recipients.
- (c) Minutes of meetings of the Community Council and of any of its committees shall be approved at the next prescribed meeting of the Community Council.

3. Quorum

A 'quorum' (the smallest number of people needed to be present at a meeting before it can officially begin and official decisions be taken) shall be one-third of the current voting membership of the Community Council, or 3 voting members, whichever is the greater. Where a meeting does not meet these criteria, no decisions may be made without ratification at a subsequent quorate meeting, and the lack of quorum shall be noted in any note or minute of the meeting.

4. Meeting agendas

(i) Ordinary Meetings

The normal agenda for ordinary Community Council meetings should be as follows:

- (1) **Present and apologies:** The names of Community Councillors present should be recorded together with any apologies received, together with the names of any members of the public who wish their presence or apologies to be recorded.
- (2) **Minutes of last meeting:** Draft minutes of the last meeting of the Community Council shall be considered and approved, with any necessary amendments approved by the meeting.
- (3) **Matters arising:** Any matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting shall be considered, as directed by the Chairperson.
- (4) **Other agenda items:** Other items of business should be considered, as

directed by the Chairperson.

- (5) **Any other business:** Any other competent business raised by Community Council members or members of the public.
- (6) **Date of next meeting:** Announcement of the date of the next meeting before the Chairperson closes the meeting.

(ii) Annual General Meetings

The normal agenda for annual general meetings of should be as follows:

- (1) **Present and apologies:** The names of Community Councillors present should be recorded together with any apologies received, together with the names of any members of the public who wish their presence or apologies to be recorded.
- (2) **Minutes of previous AGM:** Draft minutes of the last annual general meeting shall be considered and approved, with amendments if necessary.
- (3) **Annual reports:** Presentation of the Community Council's annual report(s) of activity, normally presented by the Chairperson and/or Secretary (followed by any questions or comments from Community Council or members of the public).
- (4) **Financial report:** Presentation by the Treasurer, discussion and approval of the annual accounts. The accounts should already have been certified in accordance with paragraph 14 of the model Constitution, and after the meeting should be submitted to the local authority after the meeting (again in accordance with paragraph 14 of the model Constitution).
- (5) **Election of new office bearers:** Nomination and election of new office bearers for the coming year (see section 9 of the model Constitution). Elections will only be required if there is more than one nomination for any particular office, and should be held in accordance with section 6 below.
- (6) **Date of next meeting:** Announcement of the date of the next annual general meeting (if known) before the Chairperson closes the meeting.

An ordinary Community Council meeting commonly take place immediately after the end of an Annual General Meeting, but this is not a requirement.

(iii) Extraordinary General Meeting

The order of business at every extraordinary general meeting, or special meeting, of the Community Council shall be as follows:

- (1) **Present and apologies:** The names of Community Councillors present should be recorded together with any apologies received, together with the names of any members of the public who wish their presence or apologies to be recorded.
- (2) **Business discussion:** Discussion of the subject of the meeting, as described in the published notice for the special meeting.

- (3) **Close of meeting:** The Chairperson should close the meeting as appropriate.

5. Ensuring Effective Debate

- (a) To facilitate good discussion and decision-making, the Chairperson should facilitate meetings reasonably and fairly. The Chairperson's decisions shall be final and shall not be open to discussion; this applies to Community Councillors and the public.

In particular, the Chairperson's role should be to:

1. Decide the order of discussion.
2. Decide what is relevant to be discussed and is within the powers of the Community Council.
3. Facilitate fair debate and ensure that an equitable range of balanced views are heard.
4. Ensure decisions are reached in a fair and democratic manner and by mutual agreement whenever possible.
5. If the Chairperson determines that a vote is required, it shall take place in accordance with section 6 below.
6. Curtail discussion and move on to the next agenda item if appropriate.
7. Adjourn the meeting if appropriate.

6. Voting

- (a) In the event that a vote is required, only Full members of the Community Council (whether elected or co-opted) may vote, not Associate or ex-officio members, nor the general public.
- (b) All decisions of the Community Council will be decided by a simple majority of those eligible to vote who are present and voting, with the exception of the following circumstances which require a two-thirds majority:
1. Co-option of new Community Councillors (see section 8 of the full Scheme).
 2. Alterations to the Constitution (see clause 16 of the Constitution).
 3. Dissolution of the Community Council (see clause 17 of the Constitution).
- (c) Voting shall be taken by a show of hands (which may be electronic if the meeting is online) of those present and eligible to vote, with the exception that at an Annual General Meeting the election of office bearers may be held by secret ballot. (See also section 8 of the model Constitution.)
- (d) Motions should be proposed by one Community Councillor and seconded by another. The Chairperson may invite amendment(s), which must also be proposed by one Community Councillor and seconded by another. Motions or amendments, once made and seconded, can only be withdrawn with the consent of the mover and seconder. The original proposer of the motion shall then be offered a right of reply, including to accept any amendments, before a vote takes place.

- (e) A motion or amendment contrary to a previous decision of the Community Council shall not be considered within six months of that decision.
- (f) The Chairperson shall have their own vote and also, in the event of there being no majority, an additional casting vote.

7. Alteration of Standing Orders

A proposal to alter these Standing Orders may be proposed to the local authority to be altered or added to at any time by the Community Council, provided that notice of motion to that effect is given at the meeting of the Community Council previous to that at which the motion is discussed. The local authority shall have final discretion on any proposed change. (See also section 16 of the model Constitution.)

8. Suspension of Standing Orders

These Standing Orders shall not be suspended except at a meeting (1) at which three-quarters of the total number of Community Council members are present, and (2) with the consent of least two thirds of voting members of the Community Council who are present.

AssessmentNo	347	Owner	smason	Appendix 4
Resource	Regeneration, Environment and Growth		Service/Establishment	Housing and Employment
	First Name	Surname	Job title	
Head Officer	Suzanne	Mason	Community Empowerment Officer	
	(include job titles/organisation)			
Members	Mick Doyle,SCDC Paul Nelis, SCDC Nick Wright Ricardo Rea, WDC Performance and Strategy Officer			
	<i>(Please note: the word 'policy' is used as shorthand for strategy policy function or financial decision)</i>			
Policy Title	Review of Scheme for the Establishment (SOE) of Community councils			
	The aim, objective,purpose and intended out come of policy			
	To produce an updated Scheme to meet legislative requirement and reflect the input of community councils and citizens.			
	Service/Partners/Stakeholders/service users involved in the development and/or implementation of policy.			
	Stronger Voices group - comprising representatives from WD CC Forum, Community Alliance, Equalities Forum, Youth council, WDTR0 Community councils Community organisations and citizens of West Dunbartonshire			
Does the proposals involve the procurement of any goods or services?			Yes	
If yes please confirm that you have contacted our procurement services to discuss your requirements.			No	
SCREENING				
<i>You must indicate if there is any relevance to the four areas</i>				
Duty to eliminate discrimination (E), advance equal opportunities (A) or foster good relations (F)			Yes	
Relevance to Human Rights (HR)			Yes	
Relevance to Health Impacts (H)			Yes	
Relevance to Social Economic Impacts (SE)			Yes	
Who will be affected by this policy?				
Established community council or possible future community councils, community organisations and residents in WD.				
Who will be/has been involved in the consultation process?				
There are 3 stages of consultation as laid out in legislation and guidance. The first phase focused on establishing the stronger voices groups and consulting with existing CCs and anchor organisation where there are no CCs, there will be some wider consultation towards the end of this phase. Each phase commences with the publication of a public notice and is widely publicised. Discussions up to mid June 2021 have demonstrated a positive direction in discussing equality diversity and inclusion from participating Community Council members, and equality groups via the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum, including equality proofing the new SOE and building shared understanding of the role of these groups across West Dunbartonshire. Discussions up to January 2022 at the stronger voices group between member so Community Council and the West Dumbarton Equality Forum have reflected a strong input from equalities groups around engaging with young people, seldom heard and diverse groups. This will continue to be built on to finalise the Scheme and strengthen relationships between groups and the representativeness of community councils.				

Please outline any particular need/barriers which equality groups may have in relation to this policy list evidence you are using to support this and whether there is any negative impact on particular groups.

	Needs	Evidence	Impact
Age	There is much evidence around loneliness and isolation of older people, and some for younger people. Ensuring that intergenerational cohesion is supported is very important	Older people are heavily represented on the membership of Community Councils in WD, younger people are under represented in most put not Community Councils memberships.	The process will highlight the importance of considering representation from across age groups. It is acknowledge that substantial change might not be immediate.
Cross Cutting	Community Council are a listed Local Authority in terms Equality Act 2010, and therefore need to meet the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty, that is - Eliminating discrimination etc. - Advancing equality of opportunity - Fostering good relations Participation across all protected groups is an opportunity to build community cohesion	Specific consultation was carried out with members of the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum. It was noted that strength of the groups was it brought different experiences and perspectives together Discussions at the Stronger Voices Group have made clear the importance of equality and good equalities practice	The proposed guidance highlights the needs of the equality duty. Equality groups identified coproduction and involvement in Equality impact Assessing proposals as key tools for community empowerment To help ensure positive impacts generally the approach to empowerment should strengthen these elements Capture the possible gains, the approach needs to move away from a 'business as usual' approach to one that acknowledges the considerable challenges of a realistic and sustained increase in empowerment
Disability	Evidence suggests disabled people are more likely to be socially isolated, and less likely to be involved in community life than	West Dunbartonshire access panel are keen to contribute to the SOE review and on moving towards co-production of key	The review of the SOE provides a positive opportunity for disabled people to influence the shape of the SOE, and potentially get

	non disabled people.	processes	involved more in the work of Community Councils.
Social & Economic Impact	It is important that when projects or considerations that may impact in this area are considered that they are evidence based and informed by the lived experience of those they may effect	WD is an area of high deprivation and child poverty. Those from more deprived communities currently have a weaker voice, and /or may be less well heard. this is likely to have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.	The review is linked to the Community empowerment strategy which has the potential to give communities greater input into decisions that will have an economic impact
Sex	Participation by age and sex varies greatly: older men are over presented as Councillors, older women in many voluntary organisations	Availability of childcare can be a barrier for participation, especially for women	The general approach should support increased participation by removing barriers created by the design of processes
Gender Reassign	Those under going or who have undergone gender reassignment can be particularly excluded social and in civil society, it is important that people have an opportunity to participate in things that might effect them	National evidence suggests that trans people are under represented in many processes	Ensuring that the new SOE has a clear message on equality and inclusion will be of general benefit. This should be of benefit to Trans people.
Health	Being able to participate and be included is important for people's and communities health and well being	Health outcomes in WD are generally poor, and many groups noted in this assessment can sufferer poorer health and well being on top of this. Health inequalities are therefore important considerations.	the review is linked to the community empowerment strategy which aims to build resilience and may help boost the mental health of some
Human Rights	ECHR, Article 8, with ref to participation Article 14 "right not to be subject to discrimination" is	West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum recognize the disconnectedness of	Equality and Human Rights overlap greatly, in this case a better approach to empowerment will

	relevant here, as is the need to interpret all legislation through the lens of Human Rights, for Example the Community Empowerment Scotland Act 2015	fairness, equality and human rights. Honest and timely dialogue was recognised as a primary concern	help reduce exclusion and discrimination, this approach should be made explicit
Marriage & Civil Partnership	The needs here can cross cut with sex and sexual orientation	No evidence of exclusion of this group, apart from where this might cross cut with sexual orientation	The impact is likely to be neutral compared to other groups
Pregnancy & Maternity	The needs here can cross cut with sex	No evidence of exclusion of this group, apart from where this might cross cut with sex	The impact is likely to be neutral compared to other groups
Race	Fostering good relations is in practice an often neglected element of the public sector equality duty. The strategy provides an opportunity to forward the duty in the WD area.	Evidence from Scottish Social Attitudes surveys and other sources suggests that people who have contact with people from other groups are less likely to hold negative views on other groups.	The approach is likely to increase opportunities for intercultural contact, this will have potential positive benefits for good relation
Religion and Belief	Please see comments above at 'race'	National evidence suggests that some religions and beliefs may be people are under represented in many processes, these tend to cross cut with ethnicity	The impact is likely to be neutral compared to other groups, apart from where this might cross cut with ethnicity
Sexual Orientation	National evidence suggests that LGB people are under represented in many processes	There was no particular local evidence on LGB and empowerment, but nothing to suggest that the picture in WD was any different from that nationally	The general approach should support increased participation by removing barriers created by the design of processes

Actions

Issue Description	Action Description	Actioner Name	Due Date
Important to 'Equality Proof' the new SOE	Mick Doyle from SCDC to do a short presentation	ricardo.rea@west-dunbarton.gov.uk	30-Jun-2021

	on SOE development at the WDEF on 30th June 2021 Reach agreement about how WDEF members will input to 'Equality Proofing' session held at WDEF meeting 30th June, range of ideas to be noted by SCDC and feed into process, WDEF members keen to contribute at SOE is developed		
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Policy has a negative impact on an equality group, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

No negative effects likely on any protected group, or in terms of health, socio-economic impact or human rights

Will the impact of the policy be monitored and reported on an ongoing basis?

A clear strand of this is close working with communities and community organisations/ key stakeholders, including co - production of some aspects. The review is linked to the Community Empowerment Strategy and Delivery plan. Progress will be reported to Special council meetings in line with the requirement of legislation and guidance. A stronger voices group has been set up to co-produce the final scheme and it is hoped that this group will also have a role in the Community Empowerment strategy delivery and the redevelopment of the Community Alliance to lead on the community lead for the empowerment agenda. the delivery plan will be monitored via the DIGs and Community Empowerment project board. Q7 What

Q7 What is your recommendation for this policy?

Please provide a meaningful summary of how you have reached the recommendation

The process is an opportunity to 'Equality Proof' the SOE, increase diversity of membership of Community council, and to mainstream equalities in the work of Community Councils. It is also been an opportunity to strengthen links between the Equalities Forum, community councils, equalities groups and the Community Council Forum. Following the first phase of consultation there has been positive feedback to embedding equality considerations and this will be built on in the subsequent stages. West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum members have agreed to provide support to Community Council in driving forward greater diversity and inclusion and best equalities practice.