



**Report by the Chief Officer - Housing and Employability**

**Management Group: 3 February 2022**

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**Subject: Up-date on the Community Empowerment Strategy**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Board members with an up-date on progress made in relation to West Dunbartonshire's Community Empowerment Strategy.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 Board members are asked to:
- Note the content of the report; and
  - Agree to the proposed reporting to CPWD Management Board.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 West Dunbartonshire's Community Empowerment Strategy and Action Plan was approved by Council in November 2019 and presented to the CPWD Management Board on 21 November 2019. The Strategy was developed in collaboration with the community to define how we should work together to further empower communities and to deliver on the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 3.2 Despite some delay to progress during 2020 the Community Empowerment Project Board and Project Teams have now been established and the governance arrangements for the project can be seen in Appendix One.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1 The Community Empowerment Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of work to support communities, the Council and partners to work in collaboration to improve the individual and collective resilience of communities across West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.2 The Strategy itself defines a series of Actions over 6 key themes. These themes are:

- Awareness, knowledge and understanding of Community Empowerment.
- Confidence
- Standards
- Collaboration
- Skills
- Resources and Infrastructure.

**4.3** In light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the significant impact this had, particularly on West Dunbartonshire's most deprived communities, the Project Board reviewed the delivery plan and took the decision to add one new theme, Social Renewal and Increased Participation.

**4.4** The work to deliver on all aspects of the Strategy is significant and will take a number of years to deliver. With this understanding the Board, through consultation with the Project Team, agreed four Year One priorities. These are:

- Development of a Communication / Engagement Strategy – this will outline how WDC, partners and the community will communicate, in both directions, to deliver the strategy;
- Participatory Budgeting Mainstreaming pilot – to define a corporate approach to embedding mainstreaming;
- A review of the current Community Asset Transfer approach – to identify where additional support is needed to improve the experience for communities and increase the number of asset transfers completed; and
- Develop an approach to training / awareness raising across WDC workforce, partners and communities – to support the roll-out of the community empowerment agenda.

**4.5** While work on the Year One priorities progress, there is on-going consideration of future priorities. This currently includes the potential to develop an employee volunteering policy. This proposal has received senior level support and a working group will be set up to determine how to take this forward. This is considered a significantly positive step forward in support of the community empowerment agenda as all employees will be offered time to volunteer within West Dunbartonshire. Although at the early stages of development, the development of this initiative should inspire or incentivise other community planning partners to develop similar schemes in the future.

**4.6** As set out in the governance diagram (Appendix One) the Project Board meets four times a year. It is proposed that the Chair of the Board, Peter Barry, Chief Officer for Housing and Employability, will bring a paper to CPWD Management Board on an annual basis or as required.

**4.6** The Project Team will continue to work in collaboration with the communities of West Dunbartonshire and directly with the Empowered Delivery Improvement Group (DIG). The Project Team, and Communities Team

specifically, will be happy to support any DIG to progress their role, specifically supporting empowered communities.

## **5. Options Appraisal**

5.1 There are no options appraisals required.

## **6. People Implications**

6.1 There are no people implication.

## **7. Financial and Procurement Implications**

7.1 There are no financial or procurement implications.

## **8. Risk Analysis**

8.1 The Community Empowerment Strategy aims to meet the requirements set out in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Failure to deliver on the Strategy could see a risk to the Council in not meeting these requirements. More fundamentally, community empowerment is a significant tool to help improve the lives of local people, to build resilience, improve health and mental health and to build social networks. Failure to progress the work of the Strategy would mean these opportunities are not delivered.

## **9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

9.1 An Equalities Impact assessment was carried out for the Community Empowerment Strategy and will continue to be reviewed and up-dated.

## **10. Environmental Sustainability**

10.1 There are no specific considerations relating to this paper however each individual project will consider environmental sustainability.

## **11. Consultation**

11.1 The Community Empowerment Strategy was delivered in collaboration with communities. Communities will continue to play a significant role in the delivery of the agree actions.

## **12. Strategic Assessment**

12.1 This paper responds to Community Planning West Dunbartonshire's Local Outcome Improvement Plan by supporting an empowered West Dunbartonshire.

Elaine Troup  
Communities Manager

29.12.21

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**Person to Contact:** Elaine Troup, Communities Manager, [07767007255](tel:07767007255)  
**Appendices:** Appendix One: Project Governance  
**Background Papers:** West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy & Action Plan 21 November 2019  
**Wards Affected:** All