

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Community Participation Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 17 November 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Gail Casey; Jim Bolland; Margaret Bootland; Dennis Brogan and Jackie Maceira. Murdoch Cameron, West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum; Francis McNeill, West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum; Jeanette Jennings, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum; Brian Rocks, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum; Jim Biddulph, Vale of Leven Community Forum; Hope Robertson, Association of Clydebank Residents Groups; Frances McGonagle, Gingerbread Scotland; John Diamond, Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum; Patricia Rice, Clydebank Community Forum; Mary Theresa Doherty, Clydebank Community Forum; Ian Campbell, Dumbarton Community Forum; Abdul Ghani, West Dunbartonshire Minority Ethnic Association; and Bill Rankin, West Dunbartonshire Access Panel.

Attending: Frank Newall, Head of Service – Schools' Estate; Sandra Davidson, Head of Section – Community Learning and Development; Ronald Dinnie, Head of Land Services; Liz Cochrane, Policy Manager; Anne Clegg, Policy Officer (Community and Consultation); Karen Fryer, Policy Officer – Corporate Planning and Performance Review; Miriam McKenna, Policy and Development Officer – Diversity; Lewis Morrison, Policy and Development Officer – Disability and Access; May Simpson, Policy Assistant; Bobby Jones, Lead Officer – Public Health Development and Fiona Anderson, Administrative Assistant, Legal and Administrative Services.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Marie McNair, Connie O'Sullivan and Andy White.

Councillor Gail Casey in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4185 The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 15 September 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

RESPONSES TO OPEN FORUM QUESTIONS

(a) Public Toilets

- 4186 Ronald Dinnie, Head of Land Services, provided an update on the situation concerning the provision of public toilets in West Dunbartonshire, and in particular Balloch. It was noted that the public toilets at Gartocharn and Alexandria toilets were also closed.
- 4187 After discussion and having heard Mr Dinnie confirm that there was no statutory obligation on the local authority to provide public toilets, the Committee agreed to recommend to Council that all the public toilets currently closed be re-opened until such times as the replacement toilets were fully operational.
- 4188 Thereafter, it was agreed that the Head of Land Services would arrange a visit to an Automated Public Convenience and that two community representatives and two elected members would attend.

(b) Disclosure Scotland

- 4189 The Policy Officer (Community and Consultation) gave feedback on the current position concerning checks by Disclosure Scotland.
- 4190 It was noted that a copy of an explanatory letter was available to Members of the Committee on request.

(c) Post of Director of Education and Cultural Services

- 4191 The Committee noted that the Chief Executive had confirmed that Mr Bob Cook would hold the title of Director of Education and Cultural Services during the one-year period of his new contract.

PRIVATISATION OF THE SCHOOLS' ESTATE – PPP – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4192 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee on 15 September 2004 (Page 1068, paragraph 3544 refers), when it was noted that the Chief Executive's report on the above would be submitted to the November meeting of this Committee, the relevant excerpt Minute from the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council on 29 September 2004 and the report by the Chief Executive providing an update on progress made in relation to the Building Our Future Programme, were submitted for consideration.
- 4193 Having heard Frank Newall, Head of Service – Schools' Estate, in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that, in relation to the establishment of a Project Board (Paragraph 7.3, bullet point 4 of the report refers), the Committee agreed to recommend to Council that there should be two parent members from non-denominational schools and two parent members from denominational schools (both primary and secondary sector) elected to the Board through the normal School Board Chairs' process; and
- (2) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

4194 Thereafter, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Patricia Rice, moved:-

4195 That the Committee recommends to Council that: -

- (a) an open public meeting should be called in every primary and secondary school in West Dunbartonshire to obtain the views of the public and that a vote be taken at the end of each meeting on the Council's Regeneration plans;
- (b) a one day seminar should be convened to discuss PPP and that this should be facilitated by two prominent academics and two prominent educationalists to give opposing views to stimulate debate and discussion; and
- (c) there should be a full page in the Council's newspaper to allow members of the public to make comment on the Council's proposals.

4196 As an amendment, Jim Biddulph, seconded by Murdoch Cameron, moved:-

4197 That the Committee recommends to Council: -

- (i) that each of the three campus areas (i.e. all the primary and secondary schools in the Dumbarton area, Vale of Leven area and Clydebank area) hold a public meeting to obtain the public's views; and
- (ii) that the one-day seminar proposed should include an evening summing-up session for the benefit of those unable to attend during the day.

4198 On a vote being taken, 5 members voted for the amendment and 7 for the motion, which was accordingly carried.

4199 Following discussion, it was agreed that copies of the figures relating to the Council's Regeneration Plan for Schools should be circulated to all Committee Members.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

(a) Presentation

- 4200 Miriam McKenna (Policy and Development Officer – Diversity) and Lewis Morrison, Policy and Development Officer (Disability and Access) gave a presentation on West Dunbartonshire Council's Policies on Equality and Diversity.
- 4201 Having heard the Policy and Development Officers in answer to Members' questions, the Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked them for their interesting and informative presentation.
- 4202 Following discussion on the issue of a specific group of Council employees being ineligible to claim tax credits due to an anomaly in working hours, it was agreed that the Policy and Development Officer (Diversity) would investigate the matter further and report back to the Committee.

(b) Report on Draft Outline Disability Equality Strategy 2005 - 2009

- 4203 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive inviting the Committee to comment on and ask questions about the Draft Outline Disability Equality Strategy 2005 - 2009, currently in development.
- 4204 Having heard the Policy and Development Officer (Disability and Access) in elaboration and in answer the Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Draft Disability Strategy.
- 4205 At this point, the Committee expressed its concerns on the disabled friendly surfaces which had been installed in the Council Offices, Dumbarton.

WDC CORPORATE PLAN

- 4206 Karen Fryer, Policy Officer (Corporate Planning and Performance Review) invited community representatives to ask their groups for volunteers to take part in focus groups to give their views on the design and presentation of the Council's Corporate Plan and how the public should be able to access the information. It was noted that copies of the current Corporate Plan and Information Cards had been circulated to all those present.
- 4207 Having heard the Policy Officer (Corporate Planning and Performance) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the information.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE – PROMOTING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN WDC – TRAINING NEEDS AUDIT

4208 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing feedback on the training audit issued to the Committee at its meeting on 15 September 2004.

4209 After discussion the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the feedback from the training needs audit and arrange training according to the priorities identified in the report;
- (2) that “Committee structure – how decisions are made in WDC” and “Decision-making structures in Community Planning”, should be the first training events to be arranged;
- (3) to consider participating in courses offered through the Community Capacity Training Learning Plan when details of the courses were available,
- (4) that training events should be arranged during daytime;
- (5) to note that the Policy Officer (Community and Consultation) would form a Sub Group of interested Members to organise training events;
- (6) that the Poverty Alliance be invited to speak at a Seminar; and
- (7) that the Head of Section, Community Learning & Development (CL&D) would give a future presentation about the work of CL&D to the Committee.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE – FORMAT FOR NEWSLETTER AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES’ LEAFLET

4210 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive outlining progress on plans for publicity materials and inviting the Committee to comment on specific publicity materials being developed for: -

- (a) a newsletter providing information about the business of the Committee; and
- (b) a leaflet publicising the role of the community representatives on the Committee.

4211 Having considered the proposed material, the Committee agreed: -

- (1) with the format proposed for the newsletter;
- (2) with the design of the community representatives’ leaflet as presented in Appendix 3 of the report;

- (3) that the community representatives' leaflet should include photographs of the representatives and the appropriate contact telephone numbers would be checked with each individual;
- (4) that Officers would assist an Editorial Team of community representatives in the production of this newspaper; and
- (5) that the Editorial Team (Jim Biddulph, John Diamond and Frances McGonagle) would advise on the content of the newsletter.

PROPOSALS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT NETWORK ON COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4212 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing the Committee about a proposal for training senior Council staff on issues related to community involvement and consultation and seeking views on the proposed content.

4213 Having heard the Policy Officer (Community and Consultation) in elaboration and in response to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the aims of the training session should be: -
 - (a) to raise awareness of the role and remit of the CPC;
 - (b) to discuss how links can be developed between the CPC and service departments;
 - (c) to share examples of service department mechanisms for involving the community – what works best, what needs improved;
 - (d) to look at ways of co-ordinating our consultation activities;
 - (e) to look at ways of developing best practice in standards of consultation and sharing expertise;
 - (f) to raise awareness of the resources available to support and equip employees to carry out consultation;
 - (g) to examine how we can link consultation more directly into our decision-making processes; and
 - (h) as part of the above, to look at how we can provide better feedback on consultation – not just on the raw data but also on how the consultation has influenced the decisions and subsequent action taken.
- (2) that the format for the event would be a mixture of short presentations and workshops;
- (3) to note that Councillor Casey, Convener, would speak about the role of the Corporate Participation Committee (CPC);
- (4) that interested community representatives be invited to speak about their involvement and to participate in the discussions; and

- (5) an invitation will be extended to an external speaker to make some key points about consultation.

PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE HEALTH SERVICE COMMUNITY HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS – PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP FORUMS

4214 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing the Committee about the development of Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) and Public Partnership Forums (PPFs).

4215 After discussion and having heard the Lead Officer, Public Health Development, in further explanation and in response to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that an invitation be extended to those present to attend an information and consultation event to be held on Thursday, 9 December 2004 at 1.30 pm in the Concord C.E. Centre, Dumbarton;
- (2) that a letter be sent to the Health Minister requesting that the decision to close the Christie Ward at the Vale of Leven District General Hospital be reconsidered; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

4216 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive: -

- (a) informing the Committee of the final figures for the Accounts Commission performance indicators for 2003/2004;
- (b) providing comparisons with previous years' figures where applicable; and
- (c) seeking views on how the performance information has been presented and publicised.

4217 Having heard the Policy Assistant in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed that the current format of presenting the information was satisfactory and easier to read than graphs.

OPEN FORUM

Sports Development Service

- 4218 Councillor Brogan raised the issue of promoting sports facilities for young people and suggested that there was a need for a post of Sports Convener.
- 4219 It was agreed that Officers should contact the Sports Development Service to obtain information on current sports developments in West Dunbartonshire and report back to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 13.05 p.m.