

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Community Participation Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 14 April 2010 at 2.00 p.m.

- Present:** Councillors Jim Brown, George Black, Jonathan McColl, Jim McElhill, Marie McNair, John Millar, Martin Rooney and May Smillie; Murdoch Cameron, MBE, and Francis McNeill, Community Councils Forum; Mary Theresa Doherty, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum (Sub); Megan Harrison, Faifley Neighbourhood Forum; Anne MacDougall, Clydebank Crime Prevention Panel; Justeen Peacock, West Dunbartonshire Access Panel; June Todd, MBE, Clydebank Community Forum; Tom Wilmshurst, Association of Clydebank Residents Groups; Rhona Young, Clydebank Seniors Forum; Tom Nimmo, West Dunbartonshire Community Care Forum; and Haji Munir, West Dunbartonshire Minority Ethnic Association.
- Attending:** Anne Clegg, Policy Officer - Community and Consultation; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Alan Douglas, Manager of Legal Services; Mary Holt, Acting Section Head, Welfare Rights and Money Advice; Lewis Morrison, Policy Officer (Disability and Access) and Fiona Anderson, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.
- Apologies:** Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillors Bootland and Robertson; and John Diamond, Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum.

Councillor Jim Brown in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business of the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 17 February 2010 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to clarification being provided on the undernoted issues:

(a) Consultation Training Arrangements

With reference to Consultation Training Arrangements (page xxx refers), Councillor Rooney requested an update regarding the further training session and was advised by the Policy Officer - Community and Consultation that Councillors would be notified when a suitable date had been identified;

(b) Future Agenda Items from Community Representatives

In response to comments by Councillor Black and the Community Representative for the Community Council Forum, the Policy Officer - Community and Consultation, advised the Committee that, as a result of the discussion at the previous meeting, a report would be submitted to a future meeting on the costs incurred to the Council as a result of an increased incidence in fly-tipping as a direct consequence of the introduction of a £15.00 charge for uplifts; and

(c) A request was made by Murdoch Cameron, M.B.E. to name Community Representatives in the Minute (as done for Councillors).

PROPOSAL FOR A PETITIONS COMMITTEE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services seeking the views of the Community Participation Committee on options available to the Council for the handling of petitions.

The Manager of Legal Services was heard in further explanation and in response to Members' questions.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to continue consideration of the report until the next meeting to allow Members more time to consider the available options;
- (b) to note that any questions on the options prior to the next meeting should be referred directly to the Manager of Administrative Services or the Manager of Legal Services; and
- (c) that the Manager of Administrative Services should be invited to attend the next meeting to respond to any questions.

COUNCIL TAX AND TACKLING THE CREDIT CRUNCH

Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer, gave a presentation on Council Tax and how the Council was dealing with the credit crunch.

Issues of particular interest covered were:-

- The introduction of an alternative option of a 12 month payment plan for council tax instead of paying over 10 months;
- The fact that 2,000 households had opted to pay over a 12 month period;
- The freezing of the council tax rate for the third year in a row;
- The possibility of changes to the staffing structure, including co-locating benefits staff and council tax staff; and
- Progress of the Council Tax Business Plan.

Following further discussion, the Manager of Exchequer was heard in response to Members' questions and following a personal request for information from a community representative. He invited the individual to provide further details following the meeting to enable the matter to be investigated further.

Mary Holt, Acting Section Head - Welfare Rights and Money Advice, was also in attendance and outlined ways to help the public cope with the credit crunch by maximising benefits. She also advised that her section offered assistance with debt management.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note that 33% of residents in West Dunbartonshire receive some form of benefit;
- (b) to note that a Money Adviser would be in post from the beginning of May and would train corporate debt staff in basic money advice;
- (c) to note that relationships between the Citizens' Advice Service and Council Tax staff were much better and more compromises were being reached;
- (d) to note, following an enquiry from Anne MacDougall, Clydebank Crime Prevention Panel, that direct debits for council tax payments can be arranged over the telephone.

A-Z SIGNPOST TO SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting information on a Guide to Council Services which had been produced in response to requests from disabled people for more information on the services they required.

The Policy Officer (Disability and Access) was heard in further explanation and in response to Members' questions.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to consider the guide to services and make any recommendations on how future editions could be improved to meet the needs of the disabled community;
- (2) to add the Independent Resource Centre for future editions; and
- (3) to note that the Policy Officer (Disability and Access) and his team were to be congratulated on an excellent publication.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE – EVALUATION

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing information on the Community Participation Committee outputs over the last year and inviting community members to respond to an evaluation questionnaire.

The Policy Officer – Community and Consultation was heard in further explanation and following discussion the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the evaluation detailed in Appendix 1 to the report was aimed at the Community Representatives on the Committee;
- (2) to note that, following discussion, Elected Members would also be issued with an evaluation;
- (3) to note that, following a request from June Todd, M.B.E. Clydebank Community Forum, a copy of the Elected Members' questionnaire would be issued to Committee Members, and
- (4) to note the comments from the Chair, Councillor Brown, that feedback received from this evaluation would be used to develop the Committee.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Chair, Councillor Brown, reminded Committee members that it would be helpful if they could provide information for the Community News item in advance of meetings on an on-going basis.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FROM COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Following discussion, the Committee agreed to note that the undernoted topics would be added to the list of current topics for future agendas:-

Current topics:-

- Housing – Strategic Delivery Plans

- Clydebank Crime Prevention Panel
- Clydebank Rebuilt
- Update on Regeneration of the Schools' Estate
- Fairtrade
- Regular update on Recycling and Waste Minimisation
- Future Development on Strathleven Corridor
- Council Tax Presentation (annually)
- An update on Addiction Services and in particular whether funding is internal or external
- Alexandria Health Centre (Keith Redpath)

Newly Added Topics:-

- Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership
- Costs incurred as a direct consequence of charging for special uplifts
- Clydebank Women's Aid

Having heard from the Policy Officer - Community and Consultation, the Committee agreed to note, that following consultation with the Community Representatives, the first, second and third preferences for items to appear on future agendas were as undernoted:-

1. Housing – Strategic Delivery Plans
2. Clydebank Crime Prevention Panel
3. Clydebank Rebuilt

Following discussion, it was agreed that the undernoted topics should also be included on the list of items for future agendas:-

- Shopmobility
- Integration of Social Work and Health Services
- Community Forums
- Community Planning Partnership

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that there were no Open Forum questions.

The meeting closed at 3.25 p.m.