

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Executive

Community Participation Committee: Wednesday 15 November, 2006

Subject: Senior Managers Network – Consultation and Community Engagement

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs the Committee of a recent presentation to the Council's Senior Managers Network, up-dating managers on consultation and community engagement developments.

2. Background

- 2.1** Following a Senior Managers Network event in May 2005, the Council set up a Consultation Network and a method for recording consultation activity. The Network subsequently produced WDC's Consultation Strategy which was approved Council in June 2006.
- 2.3** These developments, and those described below, progress recommendations from a previous Best Value Review of External Communication/Consultation with a view to better co-ordinating consultation activity and promoting good practice.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** At the Senior Managers Network on 26 September, 2006, managers received a presentation up-dating them on consultation developments including:
- *Introduction to Consultation* – a good practice presentation to help train and support employees who carry out consultation and engage with the community. Managers heard that this will be provided for as many relevant employees as possible through a range of existing mechanisms such as briefing and training slots and best value review teams. The presentation is being customised for maximum relevance to different services.
 - *Consultation Intranet* – a system for recording consultations which will provide a central record of the topics and outcomes of consultation activity. This will support the planning of future consultation and sharing good practice. An electronic form takes the user through a range of questions. The forms generate a database which can be queried to provide a range of information such as consultations by department, time and subject.
 - *West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel* – managers received an update on the way the Panel works, the best use of this type of tool and the recent uses of it.

- *National Standards for Community Engagement* – managers were made aware of these and informed about training for employees and the development of local guidance to support implementation of these standards.
- *Communicating Effectively* – managers received information about the WDC guidance on communicating with people from minority ethnic groups and with disabled people. This guidance has been adopted by the Community Planning Partnership

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 A budget bid for £12,000 has been made for 07-08 (approved by Council in June 2006) to cover the following:

- (a) three days customised training delivered by the Consultation Institute in West Dunbartonshire (for up to 20 people each day). The Consultation Institute is recognised and endorsed by COSLA;
- (b) the cost of corporate membership of the Institute with a range of membership benefits including information and research and
- (c) training for up to six consultation network officers to do the three courses which lead to the Consultation Institute Certificate of Professional Development

6. Conclusions

6.1 The above information demonstrates some of the developments in relation to consultation and community engagement and our efforts to continue to embed good practice in our organisation.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is invited to note this information and to ask questions and make comments and suggestions in relation to these developments.

David McMillan
Chief Executive
1 November, 2006

Person to Contact: Anne Clegg, Policy Unit, WDC, tel. 01389 737177

Background Papers: CPC 19/04/06, WDC Consultation Strategy and Draft Policy and Procedures; CPC 17/08/05, Feedback on Senior Management Network on Community Involvement and Consultation and Proposed Action

Wards Affected: All