

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 27 February 2008

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership – Key Developments

1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides Council with an update on key developments within West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, (CPP). Progress and key issues are reported to West Dunbartonshire Council on a quarterly basis – following CPP board meetings. The most recent Board meeting took place on 11 February 2008, and a special meeting to discuss the budget for 2008/09 took place on 14 January 2008.

2. Background

2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to lead Community Planning in the area. West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership was established in its current form at the beginning of 2005. The Partnership comprises a range of statutory agencies and voluntary and community sector representatives. It has an overarching strategic planning remit in West Dunbartonshire, and aims to ensure that developments are co-ordinated to provide the best possible services and the most effective use of resources.

2.2 A new Community Plan for West Dunbartonshire was adopted in June 2007. (This in turn has informed the development of the Council's Corporate Plan, and should also set the framework for the plans of all other partner agencies.) In general, the role of Community Planning is to focus on the wider strategic approach by all partners, and the most effective use of partner mainstream budgets, however historically, there have been, in addition, a number of specific funding mechanisms which have supported partnership working.

2.3 Over recent years, the funding streams administered through the CPP have included:-

- The Community Regeneration Fund (CRF), which was £13.3 million, on a tapering basis, over the 3 years from 2005/06 to 2007/08, (with the greatest proportion (80%) allocated services in the most disadvantaged areas of West Dunbartonshire, (approximately the worst 17% as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation – SIMD). The detail of this has been set out and monitored through the Regeneration Outcome Agreement (ROA).
- The Community Voices Programme (CVP) which was £0.258m over the 3 years from 2005/06 to 2007/08.
- Financial Inclusion Funding of £1.2m

- Workforce Plus funding of £0.84m and NEET funding (Not in Employment, Education or Training) of £0.8m all over the 2 years 2006/07 to 2007/08.

The details of these were set out in the various action plans approved by the previous Scottish Executive.

The new Scottish Government has now taken action to combine these funds, (along with some other funding streams), into the Fairer Scotland Fund, (FSF). This includes the funds mentioned above, and also some elements of funds such as 'Working for Families' and the 'Changing Children's Services Fund'.

2.4 The allocations for West Dunbartonshire for the next 3 years are:-

2008/09	£5.946m	Minus £2.25m from 2007/08
2009/10	£5.507m	Minus £439k from 2008/09
2010/11	£5.067m	Minus £440k from 2009/10

The reduction in the 1st year appears particularly significant because of previous 'carry forward' arrangements, which allowed the funding to be evenly spread, rather than tapered. This initial reduction was expected, and appropriate plans were put in place to manage the reduction. Nevertheless, the ongoing reductions present significant challenges for the CPP, although there is also some greater flexibility in terms of the reduction of 'ring fencing'.

2.5 The CPP is working on a range of issues which are outlined in paragraph 3. The decisions on budgets for 2008/09 and beyond are among the most important points for noting.

3. Main Issues

Structures and Staffing

3.1 The Partnership currently has 3 main tiers of operation, the Board, which is responsible for the strategic direction; the Partnership Development Group, which is responsible for making recommendations to the Board on key issues and implementing strategic decisions; and the Thematic Groups, which have responsibilities for specific areas of activity.

3.2 In 2006 it was recognised that the governance structures of the CPP required further development. These structures have undergone an initial review, and general proposals for revised structures were agreed by the Board in June 2007. The specific commitments required from partners and the working arrangements of the CPP were set out in a Partnership Agreement, which received final approval in December 2007. Nevertheless, it has been recognised that the strategic role of the Board requires further refinement, (linked with the development of opportunities for greater community involvement through a system of Community Forums).

- 3.3** In addition, given the previous uncertainty about funding in 2008/09 and beyond, the August meeting of the Board agreed that no new posts in the core staffing of the CPP should be created, or vacant posts filled. The aim of this was to ensure that the CPP was in the best position to review its staffing requirements both in line with new funding arrangements, and in relation to the delivery of the new Community Plan. This funding information is now available, as noted in paragraph 2.4 above.
- 3.4** The issues of structures and staffing will now be considered in detail in a fuller, independent review. This has been approved by the Executive Group of the CPP Board, to ensure that the Partnership is best placed both to deliver strategic outcomes for West Dunbartonshire, (particularly in relation to the new Community Plan), and to maximise the potential of the new funding arrangements. This review will take place in February / March, with a draft report to the CPP Executive Group at the end of March, and a report to the Board in April. The implementation of the results of this review will be funded from the amount set aside for core support costs in the budget agreed on 14 January 2008.

Current Funding Issues

- 3.5** Budget for 2008/09 - Following the announcement of funding by the Scottish Government, the CPP Board met on 14 January to approve the budget for 2008/09. Full details of the budget are available as a background paper. Appropriate provision in relation to Council services has also been included in the Council budget agreed on 14 February 2008. In general, most projects previously supported by the CRF have experienced a cut in funding. A small number, (including the Healthy Living Initiative), have come to an end, or will cease to receive funding from this source. As far as possible, the reductions were developed in discussion with projects, and in some cases, elements of services were mainstreamed by the appropriate partner, (e.g. some elements of the Pupil and Family Support Service have been mainstreamed by the Council). Proposals for 2008/09 include a review of all youth related services, to ensure effective co-ordination and identify any possible duplication. This review will report in March 2008, and the Board has agreed to maintain all current youth funding at 2007/08 levels for the 1st 3 months of 2008/09 to allow the findings of the review to be implemented, without endangering valued services in the short term. This will mean the use of £52k from the small 'unallocated balance' of £436k in the 2008/09 fund. Detailed plans for the remainder of the unallocated balance are currently in development, but as this amount will not be available in the 2 succeeding years, the focus will be on 'one off' or capital expenditure, which will support the priorities of the CPP, but which will not have ongoing revenue implications.
- 3.6** Remaining Budget Spend 2007/08 – As required by Government, the CPP is on target to achieve full spend of 2007/08 budgets by the end of March 2008. The Board has agreed full allocation of this sum, with the current spend being closely monitored by the Partnership Development Group. Delegated powers are in place to approve any final amendments. Any slippage which occurs will be addressed by use of a reserve list. Contingency arrangements have been

agreed to cover the costs associated with the ending of any projects. All funding streams are monitored by the West Dunbartonshire Council Head of Finance. Joint monitoring reports are prepared by the Head of Finance, in conjunction with the Partnership Manager, and are presented to each meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board and the Partnership Development Group. At a Council level, the impact of funding decisions is monitored by a senior officers' group, with key issues reported to Council on a quarterly basis.

Key Themes of the CPP

- 3.7** *Getting People Back Into Work:* The Business Growth and Employability Strategy Group, (BG&ESG), plays a key role in developing the worklessness agenda. Local and national research shows that many people experience complex barriers to employment. The BG&ESG has been working with Job Centre Plus to design and deliver additional services which will continue to support people once they enter employment. Recent activity has focussed on the development of a bid for European Structural Funds, which, if successful, will greatly enhance the resources currently directed at this area of work. Council staff in the External Funding Team have played a central role in the development of this bid. A final presentation is being made to the European Funders on 14 February, and the announcement of the successful areas will be made in March. Further details of this activity are available in the CPP Board papers for 11 February 2008.
- 3.8** *Safe, Attractive Communities:* - The Community Safety Partnership addresses this theme in a Community Planning context. The successful initiatives reported in the last report to Council are continuing, and new developments include the deployment of a CCTV Bus, (as reported to Council by Chief Superintendent Mitch Rodger at the January meeting). Staffing arrangements to support community safety activity are currently under review, to consider opportunities for co-ordination with the Council's arrangements for anti social behaviour.
- 3.9** *Health Improvement:* - The Health Improvement Strategy Group, (HISG), is driving the Joint Health Improvement Planning agenda, with an overarching focus on reducing health inequalities. The four priority topics which have been agreed are alcohol, tobacco, nutrition and physical activity. Focusing on these four priorities, the HISG is developing a new outcome-focused Joint Health Improvement Plan (JHIP) in line with recommendation from recent West Dunbartonshire Health Needs Assessment. This new JHIP will be produced by March 2008 and will provide a clear strategic steer, underlying principles, and an overarching set of actions. This will also link with the new Single Outcome Agreement approach.

3.10 *Communities*: - The work with communities is currently focussing on the development of Community Forums, which, it is envisaged, will have a key role in providing local area input to the Community Planning processes. Two meetings have now been held in each of the 3 geographical areas, and a considerable degree of interest has been generated. This will be built into the review of structures currently underway.

3.11 *Monitoring the activity of the CPP*: - Previously, much of the reporting of CPP activity to Government was via Communities Scotland. Under the revised arrangements, mechanisms have been agreed by the Board to monitor progress on the new Community Plan. In addition, the new Single Outcome Agreement, (SOA), approach has a clear focus on Community Planning and individual partners. The development of the Council's approach to the SOA has ensured the full involvement of Community Planning from the start of the process. In this, we are currently one of a minority of local authorities who have taken this early initiative.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 The immediate personnel issues relate to the decision not to fill core staff vacancies until the outcome of the structure and staffing review is known.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The financial implications relate to the CRF and the new funding arrangements, and the position noted in paragraphs 2.4, 3.5 and 3.6.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 The risks are associated with:-

- any failure to ensure the minimum spend from the Community Regeneration Fund and other funding streams
- any failure to ensure the longer term sustainability of the CPP
- addressing the gap between current (2007/08), and future funding levels.

6.2 The report outlines the arrangements which are in place to address these risks.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The CPP is continuing to develop on a number of fronts, details of the main issues are summarised in paragraph 3. Further detail, (Board and PDG papers, minutes etc), are available on the CPP website or from the Community Planning office.

The key issues include:-

- Ensuring effective final spend from the CRF and other funding streams
- Ensuring the implementation of the decisions on 2008/09 funding from the Fairer Scotland Fund

- The review of structures and core staffing
- The implementation of the new Community Plan and the monitoring arrangements which will include the new SOA
- The development of the approach to worklessness and the outcome of the bid for European Structural Funds
- The longer term sustainability of the CPP

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** Members are requested to consider the information in this report, and to request further detail if required.

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Date: 19 February 2008

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Background Papers: Fairer Scotland Fund Budget Agreement – Report to Special CPP Board 14.1.08
Workforce Plus / European Funding – CPP Board Papers 11.2.08
General Board Papers 14.1.08 and 11.2.08

Wards Affected: All Council Wards.