

Report To: Education & Communities Committee
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Report By: Corporate Director: Education Communities & Organisational Development
Report No: EDUCOM/81/14/MP

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Subject: Enhancing Community Engagement

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1 Advise Committee of the findings and proposals arising from a series of workshops, which took place in March 2014, involving officers, elected members and community organisations.
- 1.2 Seek approval for implementation plans to progress actions to enhance community engagement.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In March 2014, a series of workshops involving officers, elected members and community organisations identified a number of actions which would enhance community engagement in Inverclyde.
- 2.2 On 9 May 2014, the Alliance Programme Board noted the findings from these workshops and approved a number of proposals for enhancing community engagement.
- 2.3 On 21 August, the Corporate Management Team considered the findings and agreed proposals from the two officer workshops which are specific to Inverclyde Council.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 3.1 Note the findings and proposals arising from the series of workshops which took place in March 2014.
- 3.2 Approve implementation plans to progress actions to enhance community engagement.

Patricia Cassidy
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Scottish Government Guidance requires community planning partners to demonstrate that:

- Activity on community engagement is properly planned, resourced and integrated across partners;
- The quality and impact of community engagement is measured and reported on;
- Building the capacity of communities to engage and deliver for themselves is properly planned, resourced and integrated across partners; and
- Workforce development within and across partners ensures that key staff have the skills and knowledge required to engage effectively with communities.

The SOA Improvement Plan tasks the Community Engagement and Capacity Building Network (CE/CCBN) with improving practice and developing more examples of SOA partners working together to engage communities. The series of workshops referred to at 2.1 above forms part of the CE/CCBN Improvement Plan.

Community engagement is also a focus of Council Best Value Audits and the audits of Community Planning Partnerships. There is an Audit Scotland best value toolkit which supports Community Engagement.

4.2 In January 2014 Committee approved the following series of actions to enhance the effectiveness of Community Councils in particular, and community organisations generally:

- Focus on areas with no Community Council
- Focus on Community Councils with an imbalance of co-opted members
- Action should any areas remain without a Community Council
- Supporting services to engage
- Supporting Alliance Partners to engage
- Establish an Elected Member champion
- Working with other representative organisations
- Re-establish a forum of Community Councils
- Training and support for Community Councils
- Training and support for Elected Members.

The series of workshops referred to at 2.1 was planned to progress these actions.

4.3 The series of workshops comprised:

w/c 10 March	elected member workshop
w/c 17 March	3 evening events for community representatives
w/c 17 March	2 officer workshops
27 March	all stakeholders event

11 elected members, 33 community members and 45 officers participated in one or more of the events.

These workshops covered:

- existing engagement structures within Inverclyde Alliance and Inverclyde Council
- the Standards for Community Engagement
- developing asset based approaches, prevention and early intervention
- handling complaints/concerns raised at community meetings
- the identification of improvement actions and priorities.

- 4.4 The workshops were interactive and the views and ideas of participants in the elected members, officer and community workshops were collated and analysed for consideration at the 'all stakeholder event'. At this event, participants were asked to identify roles and tasks in progressing the improvement actions identified.

The views and ideas arising from these discussions are summarised in Annexe 1.

4.5 **Officer workshops**

Officers were asked how they currently engage the communities they serve and to reflect on how community engagement could be improved. The findings from this exercise are summarised in Annexe 2 (a). Following a short input on asset based approaches, officers were asked how they would go about adopting an asset based approach to developing and delivering their service. Officers indicated that they understood the benefits of taking an asset based approach but felt they needed more leadership and direction to take this forward, as well as training and support. This is also reflected in Annexe 2 (a).

Officers were also asked to discuss the range of methods they currently use to engage with communities and to identify improvement/development actions. See Annexe 2 (c).

- 4.6 On 12 May 2014, the Scottish Government issued Guidance for Local Authorities on the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013. Guidance related to Regulation 3 – Duty to involve and consult - makes reference to the emphasis given by the Christie Commission to the need for 'public services to work harder to involve people everywhere in the redesign and reshaping of their activities'. The Guidance also notes the expectation that all involvement and consultation is 'carried out in line with the CLD values and principles and with the National Standards for Community Engagement.'

Although this Guidance postdates the community engagement events, progressing the proposals contained within this report will assist the Council to demonstrate compliance with these Regulations.

The CLD Service, on behalf of the CLD Partners, has made a successful application to Education Scotland's Innovation and Improvement Fund for £9,900. This includes additional resources to the value of £5,000 to co-produce the 3 year plan for CLD in Inverclyde. See Annexe 5.

5.0 **PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 During the Officer Workshops, the value of an officer network was explored and welcomed as key to joint planning for community engagement across the Council. There was general support for a Corporate Network which would interlink with the Alliance CE/CCB Network as appropriate. This Corporate Network, chaired by the CLD Service Manager, would be tasked with progressing the improvement actions identified in Annexe 2 (a). Annexe 2 (b) provides proposed membership of the Corporate Engagement Network.
- 5.2 On 9 May 2014 the Alliance Programme Board approved proposals to enhance community engagement based on the discussions summarised at Annexe 1. An Action Plan for Inverclyde Council to progress these agreed actions is proposed at Annexe 4. The Programme Board also requested the CE/CCB Network to report back to their next meeting with proposals for undertaking a budget consultation across the partners, specifically outlining how we would engage with the community.
- 5.3 The CLD Service has responsibility for facilitating the implementation of the CLD Strategic Guidance, assisting the Council to comply with the CLD Regulations (Scotland) 2013, as well as delivering community capacity building programmes through its Community Work Team.

With respect to the implementation of the CLD Strategic Guidance and the CLD Regulations, this is progressed through the CLD Strategic Implementation Group chaired by the Corporate Director: Education, Communities & OD and 3 CLD Sub-groups for Adult Learning and Literacies, Community Engagement and Capacity Building (CE/CCB Network) and Youth Work.

Annexe 4 outlines the proposed role for the CLD Community Work Team in delivering the improvement actions identified at the community events.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications - One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

6.2 Human Resources:

None

6.3 Legal:

None

6.4 Equalities:

Engaging with individuals and groups with protected characteristics will be integral to all planning processes. The more effective use of Equality Impact Assessments has been identified as a task to be progressed through joint working between the Officer Network and the Corporate Equalities Group.

6.5 Repopulation:

By enhancing the engagement and participation of all sectors of the population, the area will retain and attract more people to live and work in Inverclyde.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 See Annexe 2 below.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (Scottish Government 2012)
Guidance for Local Authorities on the Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013.
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill (2014)

Annexe 1

The views and ideas arising from discussion at the 'all stakeholder' event were categorised under the headings below.

More people ... fewer meetings more action

More people will get involved if ...

- We change perceptions of what being involved in your community means.
- We use a variety of media to engage them and seek their views.
- We make more use of community events.
- We are inclusive in everything we do.

More people will stay involved if ...

- We review the range of meetings and take action to reduce number of meetings for activists to attend.
- We recognise that people are often only interested in particular issues and are not necessarily committed to wider issues – therefore need to explore mechanisms to deal with this.
- We look into using Community Councils and FITRA to lobby and represent communities on wider issues – with issues and actions being fed into these groups from other groups.

Taking the complaining out of engaging

Actions to help this happen include:

- Making sure everyone knows the difference between a community issue and a complaint.
- Check individuals have followed correct procedures before raising with the community council, community group or elected member.
- Community organisations and elected members clarify their protocols and processes through which issues are brought to them and how they will deal with them.
- Check issues are of widespread concern, be specific about the extent of the issue.

Building on community strengths

Actions to help this happen include:

- Sharing practice, achievements and experience across groups
- Agencies listen – open to new things/change
- Better working in partnership.

What else did people say???

Other points that were raised at the workshops which will also be followed through include:

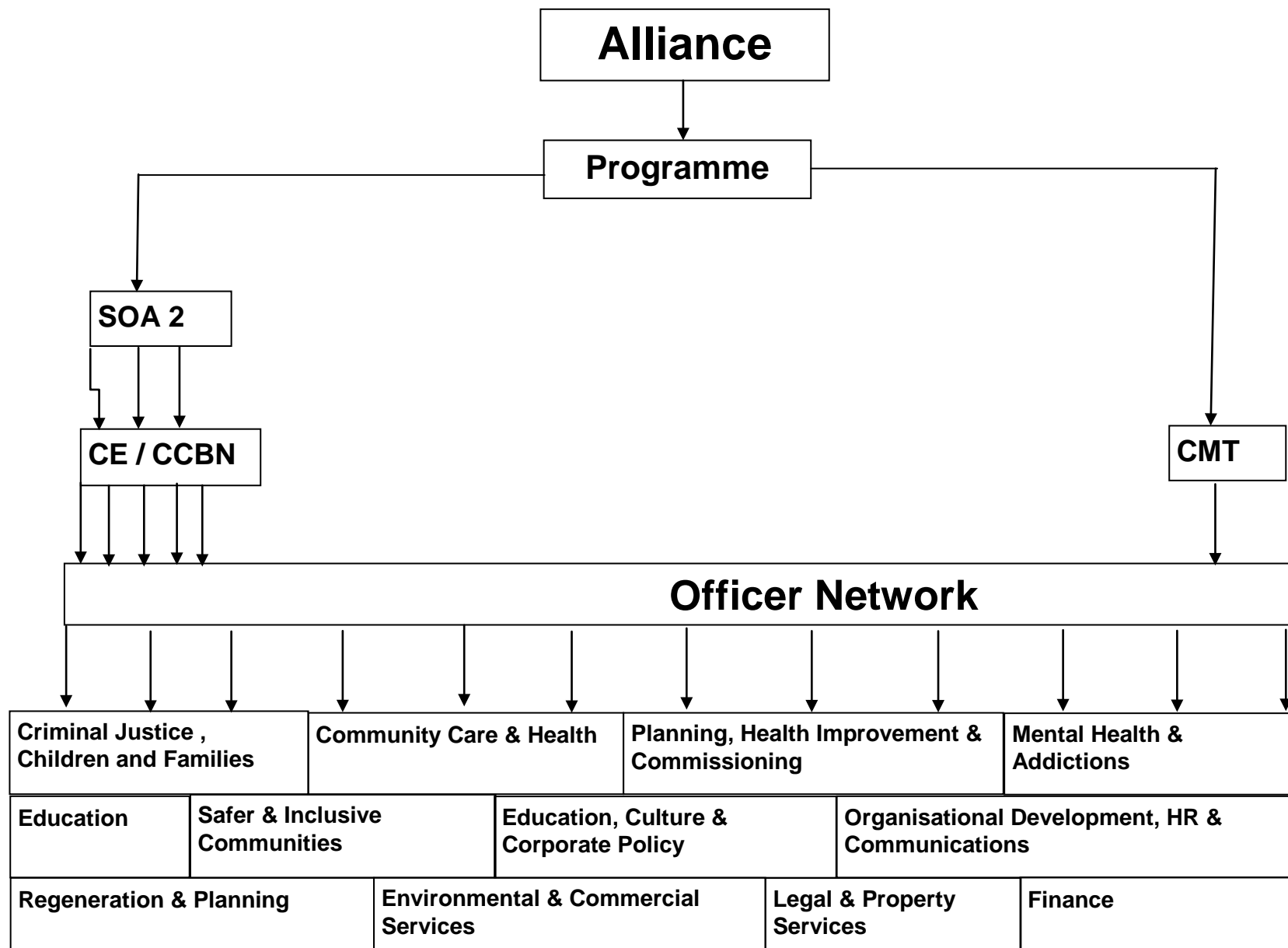
- Training for communities
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Communities need to get better at recognising their own abilities
- Better information sharing across all parties
- Training for officers
- Keeping a register of consultations
- More joined up planning of community engagement and capacity building.

Annexe 2 (a)

Officer proposals to improve community engagement

Better corporate working	Designated lead
Shared local intelligence	Data sharing group- Miriam McKenna
Share good practice- benchmarking	Officer network
Define interface more clearly	Officer network
Better co-ordination of CE	Officer Network – CE/CCBN
Better sharing of resources and planning	Officer Network – CE/CCBN
<i>Taking forward asset based approaches*</i>	<i>Officer Network – CE/CCBN</i>
Corporate approach to demonstrating how engagement is valued and people have influenced services	CMT – Officer Network
Operational tasks	
More effective use of EQIAs	Corporate Equalities Group
Better mechanisms to feedback	Nominated officer - officer network
Include communities at earliest stage	Nominated officer - officer network
Only consult when there is genuine opportunity for change	Nominated officer - officer network
Be clear about parameters – don't raise false expectations	Nominated officer - officer network
Use plain English	Corporate Communications
Recognise/act on barriers to engagement	Nominated officer - officer network
Issues	
How do we target people not currently accessing services/engaged?	Officer Network – CE/CCBN
How to support communities to engage/take action if that is not your main job?	Officer Network – CLD Service
How do we involve the community in improving our communications – website etc?	Officer Network – CLD Service

* Officers understood the benefits of asset based approaches but were unclear how to progress this within their service. They felt they needed more leadership and direction to take this forward, as well as training and support.



Annexe 2 (c)

Proposals to improve methodology for community engagement

General

Choose appropriate medium – may need to vary for specific groups
Be more joined up and avoid duplication of contact across services, leads to 'community fatigue' and apathy to requests for community views
Avoid jargon

Communication Technology - E-surveys, social media, citizens panel

Important to choose appropriate medium for target audience
Important to engage community in development of surveys
Explore on line collective decision making methods as these catch those not interested in coming to meetings

Face to face – focus groups, information sessions, public meetings

Once information goes out, important to follow-up, making sure people have understood
Have clear agenda, what is open to discussion and change
Plan ahead to make the process interactive and well-facilitated and recorded, break into smaller groups for discussion if a number of people present eg at public meeting
Need to make sure the people there are representative
Timing important to ensure we reach target audience
Value in piggybacking on existing forums and events when people come together
Important to feedback and follow up with action

Written materials – surveys, leaflets, evaluation forms, In View magazine

Important to follow up with action

Plasma screens, screen savers

More joined up/planned use of plasma screen in GP surgeries, schools etc

Annexe 3

Action Plan to progress proposals agreed at Alliance Programme Board 9 May 2014

Proposal	Action required
Individual partners review community engagement/capacity building activity and, where appropriate, the complaints procedures within their own agency in the light of the views and ideas outlined in Annexe 1	Establish officer network. Task Officer Network to complete review by December 2014.
Individual partners confirm their representation on the CE/CCB Network and ensure their representative(s) are supported and have clear lines of communication and responsibility within their agency.	Confirm current representation and seek representation from Regeneration & Resources Directorate. Confirm communication mechanisms for each representative.
Jointly plan and resource community engagement and capacity building (through CE/CCBN)	Support and resource representatives on CE/CCBN to progress planning and implementation
Put in place mechanisms to monitor and measure the impact of community engagement and capacity building (through CE/CCBN)	Task Officer Network to put in place measures for Council services.

Annexe 4 The role of the CLD Service

More people ... fewer meetings more action

More people will get involved if ...

Improvement action	CLD Support
We change perceptions of what being involved in your community means.	Capacity building support to develop new ways of involving community members in activities of community groups.
We use a variety of media to engage them and seek their views.	Facilitate access to support for setting up websites, developing use of social media etc.
We make more use of community events.	Support to maximise impact of community events on involving new community members, seeking views/undertaking surveys and facilitating access to services. (Linked to GTVO/other funded activity)
We are inclusive in everything we do	Support community organisations to recognise and address behaviours which act as barriers to broader participation

More people will stay involved if

Improvement action	CLD Support
We review the range of meetings and take action to reduce number of meetings for activists to attend.	Work towards creating an infrastructure which brings together community organisations with a common geographic base and purpose*
We recognise that people are often only interested in particular issues and are not necessarily committed to wider issues – therefore need to explore mechanisms to deal with this.	Infrastructure to accommodate different range and levels of interest and commitment
We look into using Community Councils and FITRA to lobby and represent communities on wider issues – with issues and actions being fed into these groups from other groups.	Support the establishment of a Forum of Community Councils and Community Associations as overarching mechanism within infrastructure

* Note:

There is potential to link this to Programme Board discussions around locality planning and the proposal to bring communities together to consider:

- the investment and assets in their area
- community assets and community needs
- community views on forthcoming budget decisions.

Taking the complaining out of engaging

Improvement action	CLD Support
Making sure everyone knows the difference between a community issue and a complaint.	Facilitate stakeholders to develop protocols and procedures and to share these with each other
Check individuals have followed correct procedures before raising with the community council, community group or elected member.	Encourage all stakeholders to 'hold the line'

Community organisations and elected members clarify their protocols and processes through which issues are brought to them and how they will deal with them.	Include in protocols and procedures above
Check issues are of widespread concern, be specific about the extent of the issue.	Facilitate stakeholders to differentiate their approach according to whether issue is a 'customer complaint' from individuals or of genuine community concern.

Building on community strengths

Improvement action	CLD Support
Sharing practice, achievements and experience across groups	Convene annual community celebrations
Agencies listen – open to new things/change	Support agencies to develop their skills and understanding in respect of asset based approaches (through CE/CCB Network)
Better working in partnership.	Support agencies to jointly plan and evaluate community engagement and the development of asset based approaches.

What else did people say?

Improvement action	CLD Support
Training for communities	Further develop training for Community Councils and Community Associations
Don't make promises you can't keep	Support Partners and Community Organisations to be clear about their deliverables
Communities need to get better at recognising their own abilities	Link community celebrations and building community strengths above
Better information sharing across all parties	Take on dissemination role between Council and community organisation where appropriate
Training for officers	Develop training programmes in collaboration with Corporate and CE/CCB Networks
Keeping a register of consultations	Facilitate through CE/CCB Network
More joined up planning of community engagement and capacity building	Facilitate through Corporate and CE/CCB Network

Annexe 5

A co-produced plan for CLD in Inverclyde

The Strategy and Implementation Plan for CLD in Inverclyde 2014-2018 recognises CLD as having particular strengths in supporting Inverclyde Alliance (CPP) in making a 'decisive shift towards prevention' and identifies partnership working as key to delivering CLD outcomes. A Co-production Conference held in March 2013 and a series of community engagement events held in March 2014 identified further actions which would strengthen preventative work and progress partnership working. In June 2014, following an audit of progress to date in securing compliance with the 'The Requirements for CLD (Scotland) Regulations 2013: Guidance for Local Authorities' a number of areas for focused attention were identified. The activities proposed in this application address the needs identified in these different contexts.

A co-produced plan for CLD in Inverclyde will be achieved using the following steps:

- (1) Collation of results from needs assessment activities to date and mapping of community strengths.
- (2) Sharing with communities on a locality basis of the collated information, updating and amending in response to their feedback.
- (3) Sharing collated information (updated with further community input) with other relevant partnerships in the context of the Delivery Groups aligned to each outcome in the Single Outcome Agreement for Inverclyde. This includes the Best Start in Life Delivery Group which covers Curriculum for Excellence.
- (4) All stakeholder day bringing together all Partners, including the community and the voluntary sector, to review the needs identified, confirm the target groups and consider the degree to which needs are already being met. This event will be led by an external facilitator experienced in taking asset based approaches to planning across partnerships.
- (5) A report of this event will be disseminated and used as the basis of a further sequence of discussions to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes 'adequate and efficient' CLD provision. This understanding will then be used to draft the 3 year plan for CLD, detailing local authority and partner provision, what needs will not be met as well as the anticipated outcomes and impact of the provision and how this will be evaluated.

As above, these discussions will take place in local communities as well as in the context of the SOA Delivery Groups.

- (6) The outcomes of these discussions will then be fed into a second all stakeholder day where the detail of the plan will be finalised. This will also be led by an external facilitator who will ensure that the principles of co-production are embedded within the process.

Principles of co-production

- *Assets: transforming the perception of people from passive recipients of services and burdens on the system into one where they are equal partners in designing and delivering services
 - *Building on people's existing capabilities: altering the delivery model of public services from a deficit approach to one that provides opportunities to recognise and grow people's capabilities, and actively support them to put them to use at an individual and community level
 - *Peer support networks: engaging peer and personal networks alongside professionals as the best way of transferring knowledge
 - *Reciprocity and mutuality: offering people a range of incentives to engage which enable us to work in reciprocal relationships with professionals and with each other, where there are mutual responsibilities and expectations
 - *Blurring distinctions: removing the distinction between professionals and recipients, and between producers and consumers of services
 - *Facilitating rather than delivering: enabling public service agencies to become catalysts and facilitators rather than central providers themselves
- New Economics Foundation 2009

Budget

Facilitator for 2 'all stakeholder' events	£3,000
Catering etc for above events	£2,000