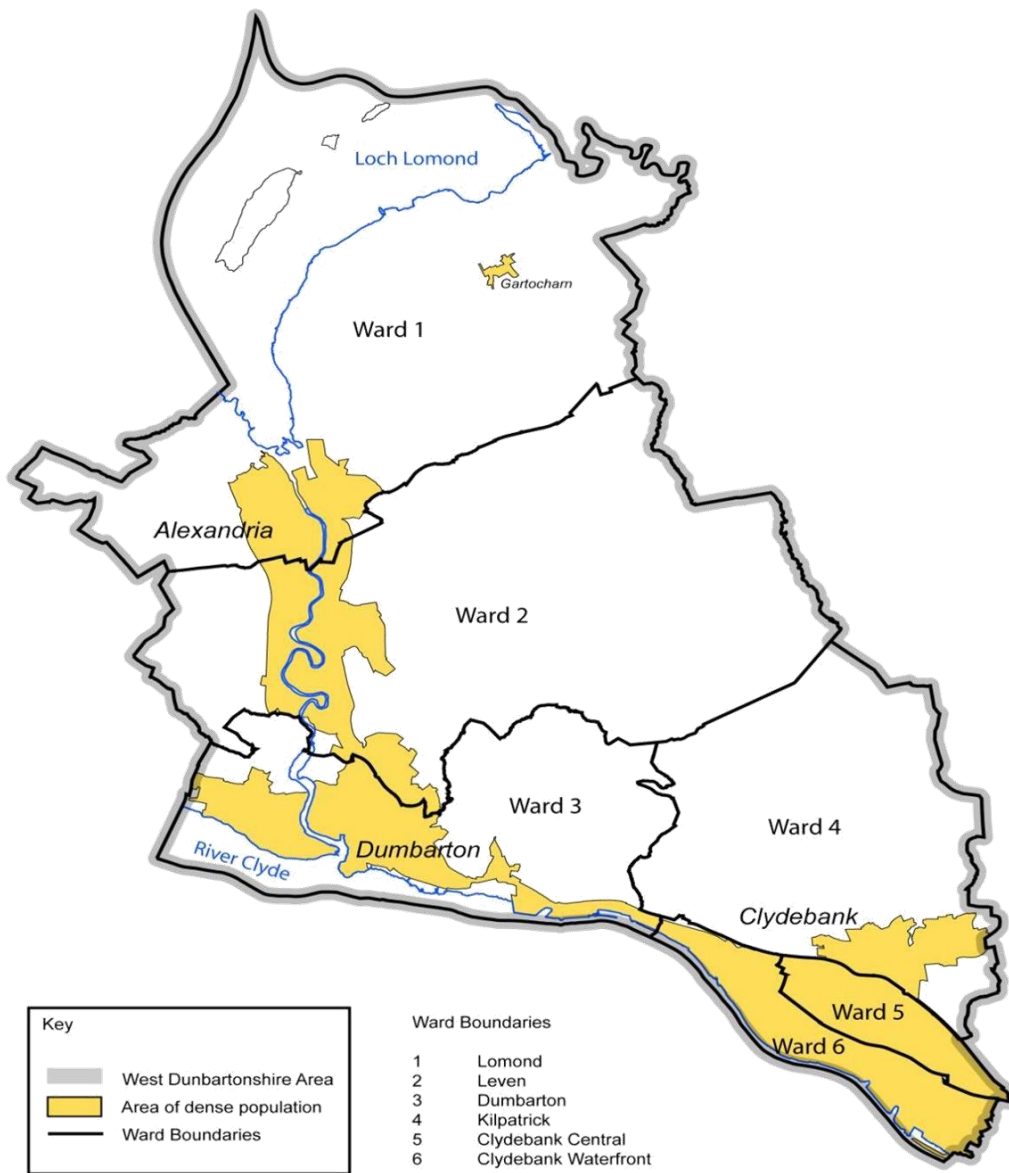


Communities Team
Community Development Annual Report
2022-23

West Dunbartonshire 3 Year Community Learning and
Development Plan 2021-2024

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West Dunbartonshire Multi Member Ward Map



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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. West Dunbartonshire Community Development and Empowerment.....	3
3. Communities Team Key Achievements.....	9
4. Progress.....	13
5. Forward Plans	14
Community Development.....	14
6. Summary.....	15

1. Introduction

West Dunbartonshire Council's vision is to deliver services which, 'build on the strengths and resilience of our neighbourhoods and support all residents to fulfil their individual potential, and that of their communities.' Community Learning and Development (CLD) plays a central part in ensuring individuals of all ages, families and communities reach their potential through lifelong learning, mutual self-help, and community organisation. Importantly, CLD centres on developing and providing support and access to opportunities that are community-led; built around people's aspirations; and help to bring about positive change in communities and lives.

A review of population data provided by the Health and Social Care partnership and West Dunbartonshire Council's socio-economic profile illustrate that some people in West Dunbartonshire are living in and experiencing significantly difficult circumstances. This is due in some part to limited access to opportunities and is driven by several factors. These include higher than average levels of poverty and disadvantage.

Community Development seeks to empower people and communities in West Dunbartonshire by helping build their capacity thus supporting effective community participation and developing strong, well-organised community based organisations to challenge inequality at a local level.

Our CLD services aim through partnership working to improve individual and community resilience through community development. This community based work empowers people to become active in their community and to participate in issues that affect them. By focussing on geographic locations experiencing the highest levels of deprivation the Communities Team can promote and support opportunities for people to engage, develop skills and confidence to participate more fully in community life. The team undertake a regular process of review and self-evaluation that informs future practice. This is supported by listening and responding to the needs of the communities that if then reflected through delivery.

As a result of our ambitions and partnership working; our efforts and expertise; and our approach we will:

'Lead and deliver high quality community learning and development services which are responsive to the needs of local citizens and realise the aspirations of our communities.'

CLD staff in West Dunbartonshire work collectively to support learning activities that focus on: Adult Learning, Youth Work and Community Development. This is the 2022-23 Annual Report for the Community Development / Empowerment aspect of West Dunbartonshire's Community Learning and Development Plan.

Community Development and Empowerment in West Dunbartonshire

Community Development / Empowerment provision in West Dunbartonshire is primarily delivered by the Communities Team and focusses on leading the community empowerment agenda, community capacity building and participatory budgeting. The Community Empowerment Project Board, Chaired by Chief Officer for Citizen, Culture and Facilities, provides oversight and direction for the empowerment agenda.

The Team also draws on support from several partner organisations within and beyond the Council to provide access to opportunities that are designed to bring about positive change in people's lives.

Key to the Team's success, along with their own direct delivery, is the strategic overview and co-ordination of activities achieved through the Empowered Delivery Improvement group (DIG). DIGs are part of the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire's (CPWD's) strategic approach as set out in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017 – 2027. The Empowered DIG has representation from key organisations with an interest in promoting individual and community resilience, community development, local democracy and volunteering opportunities and aims to create and support a shared vision of empowerment across West Dunbartonshire.

The Communities Team has faced several significant challenges in the past years. This included the need to support communities as they recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This follows the team's involvement in the development of the Crisis Support Service and front-line Volunteer Management Service during 2020/21 and into 2021/22.

This work focused on supporting communities and community groups to emerge from the pandemic and continue or re-start their face-to-face interactions. This process of re-building confidence, skills and social networks is crucial to support empowered and active communities.

More recently the team has responded to the cost of living crisis and the impact of food and fuel poverty through the delivery of a number of community based projects that includes supporting emerging warm hubs and food pantries.

2. West Dunbartonshire Community Development and Empowerment

The Communities Team is responsible for leading on the Council's community empowerment agenda. The Team structure has been defined by the Council's Community Empowerment Strategy and now has the following structure:

- Communication and Standards Team
- Community Development Team
- Participatory Budgeting (PB), Finance and Income Generation Team

CLD programmes and activities are developed in dialogue with communities and participants, working particularly with those excluded from participation in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. As CLD practitioners, the Team strives to maximise the impact of our provision by focussing our activities on people and communities who are most marginalised, those furthest from participating and experiencing disadvantage.

Communications and Standards

The Communications and Standards team is responsible for the roll-out and overall delivery of the Community Empowerment Strategy. This team has the remit to provide ongoing support and development to Community Councils.

This involves working closely with the existing cohort of Community Councils and with communities not represented by a Community Council to build capacity and appetite for establishing one. It has responsibility for training and awareness raising and ensuring all aspects of the Community Empowerment legislation is adhered to.

In light of the impact Covid 19 had on communities the Community Empowerment Project Board reviewed the agreed Action Plan to ensure the focus was on supporting those most in need through our CLD activities. The result was the addition of a 7th theme focussing on and in response to the report from the Social Renewal Advisory Board, 'If Not Now, When?' The additional theme focused on Social Renewal and Participation and provided direction for delivery through 2022/23.

The team also continue to support the development of a replacement group(s) following the decision by Community Alliance (CA) members to disband the group. The CA was a strategic community engagement group responsible for representing communities at the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Board. In agreement with CA members the Communities Team has been actively engaging local people in a discussion around the best way to participate and engage with CPWD. The findings can be seen in the [Communication Plan Survey Results 2022](#).

Community Development

The Community Development team is at the forefront of the empowerment vision and ensures a programme of community capacity building, guidance and development opportunities for aspiring, new and existing community groups. It actively seeks out early opportunities for individuals and groups to become active participants in community life.

During 2022 – 23 the team supported a range of community organisations:

- Dumbarton Rock Community (DRC) are a peer-led recovery group for people affected by drug and alcohol issues. The Communities Team worked with the members to help them establish a structure, committee and policies to support the delivery of their service. This included committee skills training and on-going support to put their learning into practice. The impact of this work has enabled DRC to continue to hold a drop in service every Friday out of the Concord Centre in Dumbarton. This provides valuable social contact and support services to their community and wider. Lunch, a food pantry and alternative therapies are available on Friday. The Communities Team continue to attend this to engage with the members and the wider community.
- Dumbarton West Community Action Group is a local community group whose members are drawn from the neighbourhoods of Castlehill, Brucehill and Westcliffe. The group was established to enable a collective community voice to be raised in an area with high levels of deprivation. The Communities Team, in partnership with the Corra Foundation, supports their activities and their efforts to engage with the local community on local issues. The group has made considerable progress by developing skills and confidence and this is evident as they are now leading on the development of a Local Place Plan. Members have organised and hosted several community events that allow their neighbours to have their voices heard through the process.
- The Climate Change Community Forum (CCCF) was established to ensure the voice of local people could contribute and feed into WDC's Climate Change Strategy. The Communities Team has facilitated the formation of the group and will continue to support the group to ensure that climate action taken by the Council is something done with the community, not to the community. While in its infancy, the group has met once to discuss issues and concerns. These were all noted and passed onto the new Climate Change and Energy Coordinator, Rachel Moir to consider and feedback to the group.
- Recycle Room's Thrive Programme: following a Community Soup event the Communities Team organised volunteering support to the Recycle Room, an organisation which had suffered extensive water damage to its building and contents. The team then facilitated a meeting with a WDC Working4U employability program to discuss opportunities for young people to volunteer with Recycle Rooms. The young people on the program were then given a volunteering placement within the Recycle Room supporting them to develop skills and increase their confidence by providing a valuable service to the community.
- Flourishing Faifley's First Aid & Food Hygiene Training: the team supported the group by sourcing and paying for training to empower Flourishing Faifley to deliver much needed school holiday support to the local community. The impact of this training significantly increased the skills of the group, negated the need to pay for an on-site first aider during events and also enabled the group to cater for their own events.

- Supporting Faifley Community Council to host a public meeting: the team supported the CC to secure a venue, design flyers and operate the necessary IT to enable a successful event. The purpose was to encourage local people to engage with the developers of the Faifley Community Campus in a safe and comfortable environment. The impact was a well-attended meeting where people could find out more information and where the CC could raise awareness of their work and build their capacity.
- Community Surgeries. After Covid restrictions were lifted it became obvious that there was still some resistance from communities to meet in numbers and come together. Some community groups never restarted after a long period of enforced inactivity and a longer period when community meeting places were unavailable. Following conversations with community members and feedback from a communications survey, Community Surgeries were identified as a way of offering people a consistent and regular place to meet both with our team and engage with or raise issues about wider community services. There are 4 surgery dates each month. These are at Dalmuir Barclay Church, Clydebank, The Concord Centre, Dumbarton, Centre 81 in Whitecrook and Lomond Parish Church, Balloch held places where people come together.

Participatory Budgeting (PB), Finance and Income Generation

Mainstreaming

The Communities Team continues to focus on embedding a culture of Participatory Budgeting mainstreaming across the organisation and communities. The PB, Finance and Income Generation team lead this area of work.

This involved actively supporting other service areas to develop and implement participative processes to ensure local citizens have the opportunity to influence and direct a percentage of the Council's annual budget, in line with the Community Choices 1% Framework Agreement.

During 2022/23 the team collaborated with colleagues in HSCP and Greenspace to develop an approach to mainstreaming PB. The pilot project, *Your Community, Your Choice*, was an idea generation model allowing the communities across Clydebank to participate throughout by generating ideas on how to improve opportunities for outside activity/health through idea generation.

Work began to design a PB pilot process in August 2021. Greenspace and HSCP volunteered a budget of £50,000 each and the area that was identified for the pilot to take place was Clydebank.

In January 2021 the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) undertook a survey to find out what challenges the community had faced during the pandemic and what their experience had been of using health and social care services during COVID19. The survey sought to identify respondent's views on what they thought the HSCP should be doing to support people to maintain or increase their activity levels. The **top two** options were;

1. Work with partners to improve greenspace.
2. Work with partners to improve walking and cycling routes.

Early engagement work was undertaken by members of the Communities Team to raise initial awareness of PB mainstreaming. This included a survey monkey which was promoted widely via social media, through partners and contacts.

A series of focus groups were then held with some of the people who had responded to the survey. The aim of the focus groups was to ask for opinions on the process for Your Community: Your Choice, discuss application and guidance forms and take on board any changes that the participants felt was needed.

It was also at this stage that work began to recruit Budget Delegates. Budget Delegates were involved throughout the process as a sounding board for all decisions and were involved in the screening of all Ideas.

Applications opened on 28th November and were initially open for a period of 4 weeks, however after some feedback from members of the community this was extended for a further 9 weeks. Take up was initially slow, therefore a decision was made to extend the deadline again meaning that in total, application period was open for 13 weeks.

10 drop in sessions over the space of 2 weeks were held across Clydebank in a number of different community based locations such as libraries and CE Centres. These drop in sessions were supported by Greenspace and promoted widely across Council social media platforms and by posters which were displayed around Clydebank. Ballot boxes and copies of the application & guidance were also left in community locations to encourage those without access to the online form to submit an Idea. 13 Ideas in total were submitted.

Voting was done via two online platforms; Consul and YoungScot. The decision was taken to use the YoungScot platform as residents must be over 16 to sign up to MyAccount/ Consul. Sign up to Consul was promoted widely in the lead up to the vote opening, over a course of 3 weeks.

258 people voted on Consul which resulted in one project being funded and 1 project being partly funded.

Overall, Your Community: Your Choice pilot allowed residents to support their communities by directing the funding allocations. It also addressed some of the main strategic priorities by empowering communities to influence the decision making process.

The pilot project also gave WDC the chance to improve and build on the relationship with its residents; communication channels have been opened up and the Communities' Team, along with other services, have been able to work closely with residents to allocate funding. Involving residents in different stages of the process increases capacity within communities and teaches new skills. It has also allowed for the council to engage with individuals who may not otherwise be involved.

Community Budgeting

As key aspect of empowered communities is the increase in local democracy and participation. West Dunbartonshire Council has successfully delivered six phases of Community Budgeting (CB), a grant-giving model of Participatory Budgeting. Phase 6 was delivered during 2022/23 and is detailed further later in this report.

As with every phase of CB delivered the evaluation process provided opportunities to improve the experience for participants. This requires the team to undertake

engagement with previous applicants and community groups through the development phase of each project to ensure that everyone was supported to participate.

Phase 6 of Community Budgeting was directed towards improving opportunities for young people in West Dunbartonshire. This was to reflect policy around young people including the Rights of the Child, WDC's Empowerment Strategy and our policy on Citizenship for Young People.

Following on from Phase 5, it was mostly an online experience. This meant that all stages of the process were done using the WDC website and voting platform Consul / YoungScot voting site although drop in sessions were held in community locations across the authority to support groups to complete applications and also to support people to vote.

Phase 6 involved a focus group of young people from a number of different community groups in the design of the process. The focus group had the chance to discuss the proposed process and timeline as well as the application and guidance documents. Some of the changes we made after feedback from the group included;

- We added 3 new priorities to the guidance notes; Mental Health & Wellbeing, Addressing Health & Environment Issues and Increasing Awareness of Mental Health in Education Settings.
- Information is in an accessible format & available in other languages on request

In order to offer as much support as possible to residents and address any issues with completing an application or voting online, drop in sessions were arranged in a number of community based locations. 7 drop in sessions were held when applications were opened and a further 6 were held when voting was opened. Drop-ins were promoted widely via social media, emails, posters and on the Council website and voting website.

Applications were opened to groups with a constitution for amounts up to £5000 and for groups without a constitution for amounts up to £500. Applications were opened for a period of 8.5 weeks from October to December 2022.

During the voting process, over 900 people signed up.

An initial evaluation survey was sent out to all applicants and the wider community database to gauge how the process went. Feedback has shown that sign up to Consul is still a barrier to accessing voting, therefore we may have to look at this alongside COSLA to find a solution to this.

In total, 53 applications were received, 42 applications went forward to voting and 35 groups were funded amounting to £155,000.

West Dunbartonshire Community Alliance

The Your Community (YC) approach has been well established across West Dunbartonshire as a neighbourhood based approach to service design and delivery to support communities to become more resilient, thriving and aspirational. Over recent years and since Covid 19 the focus of the team has very much been supporting communities to emerge, strengthen and grow from the pandemic. The

YC partnership approach promotes opportunities for local democracy, collaboration and the Council's wider community empowerment agenda.

The structure of the model has been streamlined with all work being reported directly to the Community Empowerment Project Board and through the Empowered DIG to CPWD Management Board.

The Community Alliance (CA) had been the key conduit for dialogue between the communities of West Dunbartonshire and the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Board for some time however the group struggled to continue through the pandemic. Since their decision to disband the Communities Team have been undertaking engagement across the authority to understand the appetite for a replacement group or groups or to understand how people want to engage with community planning. The full findings of the work can be found in the [Community Empowerment Communications Plan August 2022](#).

The development of the Communications Plan engaged 394 respondents with 40% of respondents aged between 12-24 years old. The key findings noted was a lack of awareness of Community Planning in West Dunbartonshire and that people were keen to engage on local issues. People also preferred to meet in person, although a high percentage of young people were keen to have an on-line debate function.

There was no appetite to engage in existing formal CPWD structures as a replacement for the Community Alliance.

The survey also noted Survey highlights 5 areas with minimal response rate that highlights a need for the team to focus their work on these areas in the future.

The data collected through this process was presented to the Community Empowerment Project Board (CEPB) in January 2022/23 for discussion. And a future paper will be developed for discussion at CPWD Management Board for consideration of the data and an appropriate response.

3. Communities Team Key Achievements

The Communities Team collates reports and supporting evidence on each of our areas of work. These are used for reporting to Community Empowerment Project Board, Participatory Budgeting Steering Group, to CPWD through the Empowered DIG and to the Recovery and Renewal Board.

As well as including a description of the programme and its content, the reports also describe progress, with notable outcomes and any challenges. These reports/case studies have been used as a basis for illustrating our key achievements. Below is a summary of some of the key achievements from 2022/23.

Community Soups

Responding to West Dunbartonshire Council's Community Empowerment Strategy the Community Soup model has been a successful tool to increase participation in local democratic processes and to develop skills and confidence of those that take part. It is designed around the coming together of local people to enjoy a light meal, good conversation and to support local community projects.

During 22/23 the Communities Team hosted four Community Soup events; 29 groups presented and eleven received funding for their projects. In every occasion, capacity building was essential to in the development of each event and also to support with applications and presentations.

Community Soup events support the development of small community-based projects that aim to improve the quality of life in local areas. Dumbarton West, Dalmuir & Mountblow and the Vale of Leven were the focus areas for three and a fourth Soup event focused on benefitting young people.

Although the three areas were identified as areas of multiple deprivation, the choices of where to hold events was dependent on other considerations as well. Post-Covid meant there were limited facilities which could independently cater for an event with food, technical resources, accessibility etc., and therefore venues had to meet certain criteria.

Benefits and impact:

- Raise awareness and promote active participation
- Create networking opportunities for groups
- Support groups with capacity building
- £500 funding available to winning group to deliver a local project

"Daniel's Wish are delighted to have won the community soup tonight! Thank you to everyone who came along to support us, special thanks to Nicola Norrie for presenting our pitch and to Missy and Iain for telling everyone why we should win! So so proud of you guys!" Kirsty, Daniel's Wish.



To further the roll-out of community soups the team will develop a toolkit to empower communities to host their own Soup event. This will be undertaken with feedback and input from previous participants.

Participatory Budgeting / Community Budgeting

The year 22/23 saw the development of Community Budgeting Phase 6 that was focused on young people, both through development of the project and outcomes.

CB has been a bold and ambitious approach that contributes towards the Council's strategic outcomes. It has been successful at increasing levels of engagement with residents, increasing participation and involving them in the allocation of a proportion of the budget.

Community Budgeting Phase 6 followed on from the success of the fully digital Phase 5. Each phase of CB is evaluated and supports continuous improvement. In this regard community involvement has been crucial in the planning and design of each phase and is now an integral part of the process.

CB Phase 6 focused on Young People in West Dunbartonshire to align with the strategic plan outcomes. This also reflected West Dunbartonshire's CLD Plan 2021-2024, Community Empowerment Strategy, UN Convention on Rights of the Child, and Getting it Right for every Child (GIRFEC).

It was important to ensure and maintain a level of community involvement in Phase 6, specifically from young people. This took the form of a focus group made up of young people from a number of community groups including Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament and West Dunbartonshire Youth Council.

The focus group had the chance to discuss the proposed process and timeline as well as the application and guidance documents. We also looked at the platforms which would be used for voting, these were, our council platform Consul and we also

partnered with Young Scot and were able to have a voting platform for our Young People to vote using their Young Scot cards on their website.

In order to offer as much support as possible to residents and communities and also address any issues with completing an application or voting online a number of measures were taken:

- Drop in sessions were arranged in a number of community based locations.
- 7 drop in sessions were held during the application stage and a further 6 were held when voting was opened.
- Drop in sessions were promoted widely via social media, emails and posters on the Council website and on the voting websites. Unfortunately, these sessions were not well attended and only a total of 10 representatives from community groups attended across the full 13 sessions
- The Team redeveloped the Consul platform to include a step-by-step guide on how to sign up and vote.
- Direct links to the Consul Web page, Young Scot Platform and drop in sessions were promoted via social media.
- Weekly emails to the community database and CB applicants were sent for the 8.5 weeks that voting was opened.
- Project workers made visits to any community groups who needed assistance.

The project successfully concluded with 53 applications received, of that 42 groups progressed to the voting stage. At each step young people were involved. There were 35 projects that received funding with a total of £155,000 being distributed based on the voting decisions of young people. Over 900 people engaged in the voting process. Crucially a number of young people increased their understanding of PB, gained skills and developed confidence through the process.

“I would like to point out that The Communities Team were extremely helpful during the voting process. And also thank you for the funding, which keeps our much needed project running for another year!” CB6 participant.

Project Evaluation

To support continuous improvement each phase is evaluated with the support of participants. Some participants received support from the team to complete the evaluation process.

The evaluation asked the following questions were asked:

1. The process for Community Budgeting 6 was mostly online, did this present any difficulties for you or your group?
2. If you voted for a project, did you find the voting site easy to use?
3. During the course of Community Budgeting Phase 6, a number of drop in sessions were held across the authority to support the application and voting process. Did you find these drop in sessions useful?

The key findings from the evaluation focused on the voting site. Responses showed that the voting site still presents a level of difficulty for some groups and individuals, specifically the sign up process.

Since the evaluation, this has been discussed with COSLA and our site now includes the option to sign in to Consul with an existing Facebook, Twitter or Google account. The aim is to make access to the voting easier by removing the multiple step sign up process for those with social media accounts.

Feedback has also shown that there is an appetite for a return to pre-Covid style events, where people can find out about projects and cast their votes in person.

The Communities Team host a CB project every second year. Phase 7 is due to be delivered during 2024/24 and will reflect the lessons learned.



4. Progress

Performance Indicators

The Communities Team establishes targets for several key progress indicators each year. The targets are based on the resources available, previous experience of delivery and anticipated demand expressed through consultation.

The indicators provide an illustration of the contribution that the Team makes to West Dunbartonshire council's aims for empowering local residents. The data is collected quarterly by the Team and forms part of their record of activities. The data is based on the WDC financial year, rather than the academic year.

Table 1: Community Development Progress Indicators – financial year

Community Development Key Progress Indicators	2022/3 Target	2022/3 Actual
Number of community groups receiving capacity building support through CLD activity	20	92
Number of adults and young people taking part in influence and engagement activity through CLD – (including community planning / participatory budgeting / local and national consultations / co-production and influencing service design).	200	900
Number of adults and young people reached and engaged with through one off promotional events / drop-ins / community events / engagements / etc.	0	376

The progress indicators provide a clear illustration of a productive year for the Team.

5. Forward Plans

Community Planning West Dunbartonshire

The planned restructure will see the responsibility for supporting Community Planning West Dunbartonshire (CPWD) come under the remit of the Communities Team. This will present a significant opportunity for securing improvements through leadership and direction.

Community Development

The Communities Team is due to be subject to a restructure during the coming year (2023/24) in response to the required budget savings. This restructure will include the Youth Learning Team that currently sits within Working 4U. The restructure will see a number of personnel leaving the organisation.

The team has secured external funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Programme. This will see a focus on community development around increased participation in communities (gardens and community soups), an increased focus on supporting the development of food pantries and a focus on increasing awareness of mainstreaming participatory budgeting across the organisation.

Table 2: Community Development Progress Indicators 2023/24

Community Development Key Progress Indicators	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Actual
Number of community groups receiving capacity building support through CLD activity	40	
Number of adults and young people taking part in influence and engagement activity through CLD – (including community planning / participatory budgeting / local and national consultations / co-production and influencing service design).	200	
Number of partnership events hosted by the Communities Team	12	

6. Summary

The coming years for the Communities Team will be challenging as we respond to the need to reduce our team while remaining focused on the needs of communities that are under increasing pressure from the cost of living crisis and the continued recovery from the pandemic.

The team will take advantage of the opportunity for increased collaboration and partnership working as the Youth Learning and Communities Teams combine. This process will be kept under review and the team will be engaged in development sessions throughout the year.

The increased influence and participation through the CPWD Management Board and Community Planning Executive Group (CPEG) does present significant improvement opportunities and will be a focus for the coming year.

Throughout 2022/23 the team focused on the delivery of services across the authority and exceeded the targets set. This report provides details about the range of projects delivered and people supported, this includes:

- 92 community groups receiving capacity building support
- Over 900 adults and young people taking part in influence and engagement activity through CLD activity
- 376 adults and young people reached and engaged with through one off promotional events / drop-ins / community events / engagements / etc.
- 13 partnership events hosted by the Communities Team

The focus for 2023/24 will be to deliver meaningful community development work that responds to the UKSP funding secured. To respond to the needs of the community by supporting food banks and food pantries and through delivery of the Period Positive project. All of these present opportunities for increased community development to ensure effective delivery and increased participation