
To: Leadership Board

On: 1 December 2021

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Strategic Partnership Agreement – Active Communities

1. Summary

- 1.1 Partnership working is key to the delivery of the Community Plan and also to our Council Plan, and has been critical to the local response to the COVID pandemic. A range of activities are underway across the Council to support greater collaboration and engagement with local community groups and organisations, by redefining the relationships that have developed over time and working more closely together on shared priorities.
- 1.2 Prior to the pandemic and in support of specific work being undertaken locally, a Strategic Partnership Agreement was agreed with Active Communities, and approved by Leadership Board in February 2020. Elected members will be aware that Active Communities have received funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, Town Centre Regeneration funding and Regeneration Capital Grant Funding to support the development of a new community led health and wellbeing hub in Johnstone.
- 1.3 The Strategic Partnership Agreement now requires to be updated to reflect progress made to date as well as new and emerging areas of work.

- 1.4 The updated Strategic Partnership Agreement is attached at Appendix 1 for approval. The lead officer for the agreement within the Council is the Head of Policy and Commissioning.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members approve the updated Strategic Partnership Agreement in relation to Active Communities.
- 2.2 It is recommended that members delegate authority to the Head of Policy and Commissioning to review and update the Strategic Partnership Agreement as required, in consultation with the Council Leader.
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3. Background

- 3.1 “Our Renfrewshire” – Renfrewshire’s Community Plan for 2017-2027 sets out a vision for Renfrewshire of “working together to make Renfrewshire a fairer, more inclusive place where all our people, communities and businesses thrive”.
- 3.2 Partnership working is key to the delivery of the community plan, and to achieving the outcomes which all partners have agreed to target in Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire has a strong and resilient community sector, with a range of organisations delivering services and supports with public sector agencies. Close partnership working across local communities was critical to the response to the pandemic and continues to be so as we move forward beyond related restrictions and respond to the impact of the restrictions.
- 3.3 Strategic Partnership Agreements have been developed with community organisations as the next step of this work, recognising the shared commitment to strengthen collaborative and partnership working, supporting mutual learning and identifying opportunities for further collaboration where appropriate.
- 3.4 Strategic Partnership Agreements reinforce the commitment to partnership working – they are not legally binding in nature and are non-exclusive in nature, allowing both parties to step back from the agreement if appropriate.

- 3.5 Section 4 of this report provides an overview of the Strategic Partnership Agreement in relation to Active Communities which has recently been reviewed in light of recent developments and the pandemic itself.

4 Strategic Partnership Agreement – Active Communities

- 4.1 Within the Strategic Partnership Agreement there are several key areas where it has been identified that Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council would benefit from a collaborative relationship:

- **Asset Transfer of the former police station in Johnstone**

Active Communities aims to consolidate all administrative and executive work and most of the day to day activity within this one building, allowing economies to be achieved as well as much better coordination of service under a holistic approach. This project is supported by the Scottish Land Fund, Town Centre Strategy Funding, as well as Regeneration Capital Grant Funding.

- **Social Renewal and tackling poverty and inequality**

It is recognised that Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council both have a key shared priority around social renewal and tackling poverty and inequalities, and there are a number of emerging areas where ongoing partnership working would be beneficial. Partnership projects currently underway in this area include:

- Johnstone Community Pantry
- Hearty Lives Community Health Peer Education Project
- Empowering Parents Empowering Communities
- Equally Safe

- **Economic Development**

Active Communities will work with Economic Development to host Start up Street Johnstone, providing space in our newly refurbished business units. Business support provided will add value, benefit, and offer sustainability to new and early-stages businesses. Active Communities will have a mutually supportive approach and jointly look at funding and resources to build in additional mentoring, training, therapy and support. There will be an opportunity for the businesses to access to additional facilities on site and a platform for practical work experience.

- 4.2 As outlined above, the initial partnership agreement was developed in February 2020 and has been reviewed in light of recent progress. It is proposed that going forward, any proposed minor amendments to the Strategic Partnership Agreements are reviewed and agreed by the Head of Policy and Commissioning in consultation with the Council Leader.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – applications for Council funding are independent to the Strategic Partnership Agreement and subject to board approval.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none.
3. **Community Planning** – Strategic Partnership Agreements with community organisations support a drive to redefine the Council's relationships with community groups and organisations, in order to achieve shared outcomes and objectives.
4. **Legal** - none.
5. **Property/Assets** – none.
6. **Information Technology** – none.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – none.
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** – none.
9. **Procurement** – none.
10. **Risk** - none.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
12. **COSLA** - none.
13. **Climate Risk** - none

Author *Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Commissioning*

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

FOREWORD

Renfrewshire Council seeks to strengthen continually its relationship with key strategic partners in order to be effective in delivering services that have the maximum positive impact for Renfrewshire residents.

Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council are key organisations within the Renfrewshire area. As key partners and neighbours we are committed to supporting each other achieve our strategic objectives and we have identified key areas where close collaboration will deliver significant mutual benefit for our two organisations.

This Strategic Partnership Agreement provides a framework for Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council to develop innovative, collaborative working that takes full advantage of each other's strengths and delivers real benefit for Renfrewshire communities.

This Partnership Agreement is reviewed on a regular basis, with the most recent update undertaken in November 2021.

1 PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council share a common objective of supporting the wellness and resilience of our communities and each is committed to working collaboratively and co-productively with the other to support the achievement of their respective agreed strategic objectives.

This Strategic Partnership Agreement sets out how Active Communities and the Council will engage and strengthen their relationship, support mutual learning, and focus efforts on supporting the high priority areas that are common to both organisations' strategic objectives.

This agreement is a statement of intent, which provides a framework for further engagement on a range of specific initiatives which have been identified by Active Communities, as well as those that may arise going forward.

This Agreement defines a partnering approach and the broad governance arrangements required to support an effective and supportive relationship. This agreement, along with any subsequent versions of it and any appendices added to it, do not create obligations on either party, and separate, formal, written contracts will be required for any binding agreements between both parties. The agreement is non exclusive in nature, with both parties being free to enter into agreements with other organisations as required.

Although it does not contractually or legally commit either party to the allocation or investment of resource, it is entered into in the spirit of working together in collaboration and partnership, in pursuit of common purpose objectives. As such, this agreement sets in place and states intentions by both parties, to move forward in delivery of specific joint initiatives and collaborative partnership working.

Appendix 1 highlights the key priorities for partnership working which have been identified by Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council. In particular these relate to the ongoing work to complete the health, wellbeing and enterprise hub on the site of the former Johnstone Police station, and also in relation to proposed work around community resilience linked to Renfrewshire's Social Renewal Plan.

Appendix 1 highlights planned engagement and joint working in relation to the development of the health, wellbeing and enterprise hub on the site of the former Johnstone Police Station. Additional appendices to this Agreement may be added, as required, to reflect any new arrangements agreed between the parties in support of this Agreement.

2. BACKGROUND

This Agreement is made between Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council (the Council).

Active Communities is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee founded in 2009. It is managed by its board of voluntary trustees.

Active Communities strategic aims are:

1. To inspire communities in Renfrewshire and surrounding areas to create a culture of physical activity, health and wellbeing
2. To work with local communities and partners to reduce health and social inequalities
3. To use sport and physical activity as a vehicle to teach valuable life skills and social skills
4. To Champion the use of a community led approach and influence our partners to use this successful approach
5. To build the capacity of local communities to ensure activities are sustainable
6. To support, motivate and enable our staff and volunteers to reach their full potential
7. To harness the energy and commitment of partner agencies to work with us
8. To develop an effective, efficient and sustainable business

Renfrewshire Council wants to support communities in Renfrewshire to thrive by involving them in local decision-making and listening to, working with and empowering them to transform their local areas.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 aims to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services.

The Council already offers a variety of funds and grants, including the Community Empowerment Fund and the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Village Investment Fund, which are designed to help communities, putting the people who know them best at the centre of projects that will make a difference. It supports communities to take ownership of land and buildings in their areas through Community Asset Transfer.

In addition to this, the Council is committed to improving the way in which it works with community-based organisations and both organisations view this Agreement as a beneficial mechanism to support mutual learning and ongoing improvement in partnership working.

Both organisations recognise the value to be gained from effective and efficient collaboration and co-production. The Council recognises that its large scale, complex organisational structure and decision-making processes can create challenges for effective engagement with smaller organisations.

The Council is committed to improving the way in which it works with community based organisations and both organisations view this Agreement as a beneficial mechanism to support mutual learning and ongoing improvement in collaborative and partnership working.

Active Communities and the Council will share learning with other Community organisations and networks.

Going forward, both organisations wish to strengthen collaboration and co-production by streamlining contact arrangements and ensuring that their resources are focused on those areas of strongest common strategic interest.

3 FOCUS AREAS FOR COLLABORATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

The focus areas for this SPA are outlined in the table below:

ACTIVE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
<p>1: Develop a community led health, wellbeing and enterprise hub in Johnstone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing health and social inequalities and ensuring opportunities for all • Improving mental health, wellbeing and physical activity by delivering a range of wellbeing programmes within the centre • Enhancing community resilience and community capacity building including offering employment and training opportunities, office space and business start up support • Increasing social capital and reducing isolation • Developing a stronger more sustainable organisation 	<p>The Council's priorities are set out in two key plans highlighted below. In addition, significant work has been undertaken with partners to develop the local response to COVID. Key priorities have been identified and are being progressed through a Social Renewal Plan and an Economic Recovery Plan, which are closely interlinked</p> <p>Council Plan</p> <p>Building strong, safe and resilient communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering communities • Supporting vulnerable people • Delivering community based services <p>Tackling Inequality, ensuring opportunities for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing health inequalities • Improving mental health and wellbeing • Promoting active lifestyles <p>Community Plan</p>
<p>2. Hearty Lives Youth Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing youth work and a youth space 	<p>Our Renfrewshire is well: supporting the wellness and resilience of our citizens and communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling communities to have their voice heard, and influence the places and services that affect them

- Empowering young people to take ownership for their health and wellbeing
- Increasing health and wellbeing opportunities for young people in their local community
- Improving confidence and self-esteem
- Providing opportunities for young people to be more involved in their local community
- Providing opportunities to achieve new skills, awards and qualifications and a pathway to further education or employment

- Promoting wellbeing and good mental health, particularly in young people / Promoting healthy lifestyles that support both physical and mental health
- Developing strong community-based services that respond to local need

Our Renfrewshire is fair: addressing the inequalities that limit life chances

- Tackling health inequalities and narrowing the gaps in healthy life expectancy
- Ensuring that people currently facing disadvantage get access to opportunities to improve their health, skills and income

3. Establishment of a Johnstone Community food Pantry

- Develop a model of community food provision which promotes dignity and resilience
- Provide volunteering and training opportunities linked to the pantry, the community kitchen and the community garden.
- Providing opportunities for people to be more involved in their local community
- Providing opportunities to achieve new skills, awards and qualifications and a pathway to further education or employment

Social Renewal Plan sets out the high-level actions that need to be taken forward by all partners as we move forward from the pandemic and support recovery across Renfrewshire's communities, with a joint partnership focus on **tackling inequality and improving wellbeing**.

- Addressing Income, Poverty and financial security

4. Development of volunteering and training opportunities

- Deliver the EPEC course to local parents in the community
- Providing opportunities for people to be more involved in their local community
- Providing opportunities to achieve new skills, awards and qualifications and a pathway to further education or employment

- Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. EPEC sits under priority 2 of the strategy which is: Support your **relationships** to make them stronger and safer, protect your wellbeing, and build 'belonging' Priority 2.1 **Support your family relationships:** impact positive MHWB of children and young people by investing in parenting supports that include peer led courses and interventions.
- The strategy sits under the Children's Services Partnership Plan which sits under the Council Plan and cuts across a number of strategic priorities in both.
- Where the Council Plan and strategic priorities: **Priority 2** - Building strong, safe and resilient communities; and **Priority 3** - Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

5. MVP

Through involvement in the Young and Equally Safe in Renfrewshire Project led by Youth Services in partnership with Children's Services we will work to build on the good practice and skills base in Renfrewshire over the past 7-years of MVP delivery in secondary schools.

- Providing youth work and a youth space
- Empowering young people to take ownership for their health and wellbeing
- Increasing health and wellbeing opportunities for young people in their local community
- Improving confidence and self-esteem
- Providing opportunities for young people to be more involved in their local community

- Children and Young People Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy. MVP sits under priority 2 of the strategy which is: Support your **relationships** to make them stronger and safer, protect your wellbeing, and build 'belonging' Priority 2.2. **Support your peer relationships:** The importance of relationships from peers for children and young people will be further recognised and supported
- Council Plan and strategic priorities: **Priority 2** - Building strong, safe and resilient communities; and **Priority 3** - Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all

- Providing opportunities to achieve new skills, awards and qualifications and a pathway to further education or employment

4 JOINT WORKING PRINCIPLES

Active Communities and the Council wish to use this Agreement to strengthen the relationship between the two organisations in support of their mutual objectives.

This will be achieved by adopting the following principles:

PRINCIPAL	BEHAVIOURS
CLARITY	Ensuring that the basis for collaboration is clearly articulated and understood by both partners
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCES	Seeking to understanding the specific environment and constraints faced by each partner and respecting those areas of differences.
SUPPORTIVE	Committing to be supportive of each partners' strategic objectives
EQUALITY	Working together on the basis of an equal standing
OPENNESS AND HONESTY	Commitment to communicating in an open and honest manner and constructively seeking to resolves any issues/conflicts that emerge
FAIRNESS	Seeking to maintain fairness in all dealings between partners
INFORMATIVE	Seeking to keep each other informed of important developments and initiatives
MUTUAL RESPECT FOR CONFIDENTIALITY	Both parties fully respect to keep all information about strategies, plans, developments, initiative or any other relevant information and documents and their contents confidential and that they are not shared with any third party without prior consent of either party.
BEST USE OF TIME AND RESOURCES	Ensuring that all collaborative and co-produced activities seek to make best use of partners' finite resources and expertise

FLEXIBILITY

Working together flexibly, recognising that we may need to adapt plans in these rapidly changing times due to COVID-19

5 GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The following arrangements will be put in place to oversee the implementation and development of the Agreement.

Both organisations will appoint an Agreement Sponsor which for Active Communities will be the Chair of Trustees and for the Council will be the Head of Policy and Commissioning within the Chief Executive's Service.

The sponsors will meet at least annually to review progress and agree changes to the Agreement. The Sponsors may also agree to meet as required to deal with any issues escalated from the Lead Officer discussions.

Sponsors can mutually agree to invite other representatives of their organisations to join their meetings as appropriate (e.g. other Active Communities Board members, Officers, Advisors, Council Leader, Council Chief Executive etc)

Both organisations will appoint a Lead Officer who will be responsible for co-ordinating and reviewing their organisations' input in support of the Agreement and to discuss new collaboration opportunities relevant to the agreed priority areas.

The Lead Officers for Active Communities will primarily be Susan McDonald, CEO and any other of the Active Communities Board of Trustees or staff as Active Communities see fit to assign, and for the Council it will be the Strategic Partnerships and Inequalities Manager.

The Lead Officers will meet on an agreed basis to monitor progress with any projects and collaborative initiatives underway.

Within the first six weeks from the signing date a meeting will be held to agree future agenda points and prioritise the work for the year.

Normal 'service level' requests from Active Communities will be directed to the Council through the appropriate channels and be dealt with fairly, transparently and in accordance with the Council's operational procedures.

Both organisations recognise that organisational changes may occur which require these governance arrangements to be adjusted including changes to the sponsor or lead officer which will be notified to the other party whereas any additional changes shall be made by mutual agreement. In addition, each party to the agreement will have the right to terminate or withdraw from the agreement upon giving a period of notice of one month.

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Built into this Agreement is the expectation that both the process and any associated projects will be subject to regular monitoring and an evaluation on completion that both organisations will participate in, in order to maximise lessons learned and allow both organisations to apply the learning elsewhere.

7 PERIOD OF AGREEMENT

The Agreement will run from 01 December 2021 to 31 November 2022.

This Agreement will be reviewed annually, and agreement reached on new or emerging priorities at that time.

It is the expectation of both parties that this SPA would be reviewed and then replaced by a new agreement which would reflect any changes to the priorities of both organisations at that time.

SIGNED:

Janis McDonald

(Chair)

For and on behalf of Active Communities:

Susan McDonald

(CEO)

For and on behalf of Active Communities:

Councilor Iain Nicholson

(Leader – Renfrewshire Council)

8 APPENDIX A – ACTION PLAN

Notes of Agreement:

There are three key areas where it has identified that Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council would benefit from a collaborative relationship:

- **Asset Transfer of the former police station in Johnstone**

Active Communities aims to consolidate all administrative and executive work and most of the day to day activity within this one building, allowing economies to be achieved as well as much better coordination of service under a holistic approach. This project is supported by the Scottish Land Fund, Town Centre Strategy Funding, as well as Regeneration Capital Grant Funding.

- **Social Renewal and tackling poverty and inequality**

It is recognised that Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council both have a key shared priority around social renewal and tackling poverty and inequalities, and there are a number of emerging areas where ongoing partnership working would be beneficial. Partnership projects currently underway in this area include:

- Johnstone Community Pantry
- Hearty Lives Community Health Peer Education Project
- Empowering Parents Empowering Communities
- Equally Safe

Active Communities have engaged with development work in relation to the further development of the neighbourhood hub model in Renfrewshire, and this work will continue during 2022.

- **Economic Development**

Active Communities will work with Economic Development to host Start up Street Johnstone, providing space in our newly refurbished business units. Business support provided will add value, benefit, and offer sustainability to new and early stage businesses. Active Communities will have a mutually supportive approach and jointly look at funding and resources to build in additional mentoring, training, therapy & support. There will be an opportunity for the Business's to access to additional facilities on site and a platform for practical work experience.

Economic Development and Active Communities will work in partnership on the joint development of the Start-Up Street business units and the ongoing support of the businesses that are within it. Our commitment will be to the businesses to support them to grow, develop and sustain by providing ongoing business advice and access to further support from Economic Development. Joint agreement will be reached between Economic Development and Active Communities on the choice of tenant as a rent subsidy will only be applicable if the tenant is deemed by Economic Development as an appropriate business with potential. There will be an ongoing relationship with Active Communities to use the centre as a base for services delivered by Economic Development, however, contracts for this will be negotiated as and when required.

The following are suggested ways that Active Communities and Renfrewshire Council might be able to work together to achieve mutual outcomes:

Active Communities will be able to access support, knowledge, and expertise from Council, including departmental or officer level to assist from time to time or as necessary in the pursuit of this objective.

This will be by mutual agreement, will be on a reciprocal basis and at a level deemed to be appropriate by both parties.

All information shared between Active Communities and the Council through these officer relationships, will not be shared with third parties without prior agreement.

It is anticipated this might include:

- Funding – Council officers will continue to offer support for external funding applications, using internal expertise to support any funding bids made by Active Communities. In particular, Renfrewshire Council will continue to work collaboratively with Active Communities throughout the RCGF funding process.
- Marketing and Communications – Active Communities and the Council will endeavour to ensure that all press announcements mentioning either party are shared in advance and agreed jointly as appropriate.
- Areas of expertise and contacts in areas such as procurement and planning
- Access to strategic planning forums and contacts, for example in areas such as social work, criminal justice and tackling poverty.

Financial Sustainability

It is recognised that acquiring a significant public asset represents a liability as well as an opportunity for an organisation such as Active Communities, and the financial sustainability of the organisation is a key requirement moving through this period of transition.

- Recognising Active Communities has successfully secured funding from a number of funding sources from across Renfrewshire Council, the Council will seek to provide Active Communities with information about funding decision processes and timescales, with as much notice as possible to support financial planning
- The Council will explore opportunities that may exist relating to Active Communities accommodation in its role as landlord

Partnership working

- Renfrewshire Council and Active Communities will continue to explore opportunities to work with key local partners such as Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Renfrewshire Leisure Limited. There is now a memorandum of understanding in place between Active Communities and the Health and Social Care Partnership along with a number of other third sector partners.