

To: Communities, Housing and Planning Board

On: 12th March 2019

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Community Empowerment Fund

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Communities, Housing and Planning Board for the award of grants in the fourth round of the Community Empowerment Fund.
- 1.2 The key objective of the fund is to support community organisations to acquire and develop community assets. The fund aims to support and develop community organisations, with a specific focus on assisting those organisations that wish to acquire and develop community assets.
- 1.3 Three new applications were received through this round. It is recommended that two of the applications are deferred to enable further discussion with the applicants on the initiatives being developed. Further, it is recommended that funding is not approved in respect of one further application, as it has been assessed as not meeting the agreed criteria of the Community Empowerment Fund.
- 1.4 The next deadline for applications is 27 March 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the board approves the recommendations made in relation to the three applications received in this funding round, as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 2 March 2018, Council agreed to commit £1.5 million (£0.5million in revenue and £1million in capital) to establish a Community Empowerment Fund that will be used to support community asset transfers, by providing up-front investment in the condition of assets prior to transfer. It should be noted that the £1.5million represents a one-off investment fund.
- 3.2 On 20th June 2018, Leadership Board agreed the key objectives and criteria of the fund, and agreed that applications to the Community Empowerment Fund be submitted to the Communities, Housing and Planning Board for final approval.
- 3.3 The key objectives of the fund are to support and develop community organisations with a specific focus on assisting those organisations that wish to acquire and develop community assets in three ways:
- **Project:** Support the development of the Business Plan for an asset
 - **Organisation:** Develop the organisational capacity to manage and develop an asset
 - **Property:** Upfront investment in assets prior to or after transfer
- 3.4 The fund is comprised of £0.5million in revenue funding and £1million in capital funding. As such, it is anticipated that revenue funding will support applications to develop the project or organisation, and the capital funding will be used to support property costs.
- 3.5 It is important applicants to the fund are able to demonstrate the following:
- Able to demonstrate positive impact for local communities
 - The community are involved in the design and delivery of the project

- Good working relationships and partnership with others
- The project is financially sustainable
- Strategic fit with the fund objectives and criteria
- Value for money and leverage of additional funding and/or resources

3.6 The award of funding from the Community Empowerment Fund does not commit the Council to a particular outcome as part of the Asset Transfer process, which will be subject to a separate decision making process through relevant governance arrangements.

4. Summary of applications

4.1 Three applications were received by the deadline date of 16 January 2019. The total value of requested grants through this round is £44,020.

4.2 A cross-service panel of officers has been established to review and assess the applications against the agreed objectives and criteria outlined at Section 3.2 and 3.3 of this report.

4.3 In terms of the 3 applications received the officer recommendation is:

- Two applications are deferred for further discussion and development with the applicants
- One application does not proceed as it does not meet the agreed fund criteria.

4.4 A summary of the applications and recommendations can be found at Appendix 1.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - Council approved the allocation of £1.5million to establish the Community Empowerment Fund in March 2018.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – Not applicable

3. **Community/Council Planning –**

The Renfrewshire Community Plan 2017-2027 states “There are new opportunities for communities to use, manage or take ownership of public sector assets and also to participate in the planning and delivery of services through the Community Empowerment Act. Over the last

few years, there are over a dozen examples of community groups that have taken over public sector buildings or land in Renfrewshire, and more community groups are now thinking about assets and participation requests. As a partnership, we are committed to supporting this wherever we can.”

The Renfrewshire Council Plan also has a number of relevant priorities as part of the ‘Building strong, safe and resilient communities’ outcome. These include:

- Strengthening existing community networks and empowering local people to become more involved in their area and the services delivered there.
- Working with communities to support the regeneration of some of our most disadvantaged areas.
- Ensuring all towns and villages in Renfrewshire are better connected and able to participate in social, cultural or economic activities across the Renfrewshire area.

4. **Legal-** The establishment of this fund supports the delivery of a number of the Council’s obligations as part of the Community Empowerment Act 2015.
5. **Property/Assets** - The development of this fund will support Asset Transfer, and support the Council to meet its obligations as part of the Community Empowerment Act.
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - It is anticipated that the fund will have a positive impact on equality and human rights, and applications for the fund will be assessed to ensure they take relevant equalities implications into account.
8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** – None
10. **Risk** – None
11. **Privacy Impact** – None
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1 – None

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Appendix 1: Community Empowerment Fund – Round Four – Recommendations for Communities, Housing and Planning Board

Applicant	Project description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
New Tannahill Centre (New Application)	Seeking £10,000 funding as a contribution towards the second stage of a feasibility study in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the Tannahill Centre , including the move from a long term lease to full ownership. The two stages of the feasibility study will take place between March 2019 and March 2020. The first stage is funded by the Scottish Government. The second stage of the feasibility study will commission a design scheme/consultants to develop a plan to secure funding and apply for asset transfer to secure a sustainable long-term solution regarding management of the Tannahill Centre.	£10,000	Defer the application to seek clarification on aspects of the proposal in order that the application be reconsidered at a future Board.	Further discussion and clarification on the proposal is required.	Paisley
Woodlands Community Bowling Club (New Application)	Seeking £25,320 to conduct building repairs to replace/upgrade facilities that have deteriorated over time. Repairs are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resurfacing of access roadway • Replacement of main hall windows • Resealing/finishing of main hall ceiling • Replacement of disabled toilet • Legal fees 	£25,320	Award not to be made.	The application does not meet the criteria of the Community Empowerment Fund.	Linwood
Aspire Community Solutions (New Application)	Seeking £8,700 to develop a business case for the potential development of Whitehaugh Barracks as a mixed-use facility to be used for employability, training, office and community space.	£8,700	Defer the application to seek clarification on aspects of the proposal in order that the application be reconsidered at a future Board.	Further discussion and clarification on the proposal is required.	Paisley