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**To: Economy and Jobs Policy Board**

**On: 25 May 2016**

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**Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services**

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**Heading: Community Economic Development Team**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates the Economy and Jobs Policy Board on the establishment of a community focused economic development team.
  - 1.2 The team includes three Economic Development Officers, in both new and existing roles, working as one team to increase the amount of funding and support available to third sector organisations in Renfrewshire.
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**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Note the recent formation of the Community Economic Development team.
  - 2.2. Agree that further reports will be brought forward to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board to update on progress
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**3. Background**

- 3.1. In October 2015 Renfrewshire published its Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2015-2017. The Strategy was built around the March 2015 Poverty Commission report on child poverty in Renfrewshire.

- 3.2 A number of key priorities are identified within the Strategy, including Priority 5, *Create neighbourhoods where people want to live, and can afford to live*. A related action focuses on community asset based regeneration. The Commission also recommended that this action be supplemented as follows:

*Provide additional resource within Economic Development to find innovative ways of attracting funding to the area and support community groups in developing funding bids.*

- 3.3 The Invest in Renfrewshire Social Economy Budget had previously provided finance to create a new Social Economy Officer post in 2014 as well as grant funding for the third sector. A Funding and Development Officer post was already established with the Economic Development section to support applications for grant funding across the Council and wider community.
- 3.4 Following the recommendations of the Tackling Poverty Strategy a new post was created to focus on **community economic development and funding**. The post holder started with Renfrewshire Council in March 2016 and joins with the two existing Economic Development Officers to form a community economic development team.
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#### **4. Community Economic Development Team**

- 4.1 The team will operate at community level to support the development of new economic and social initiatives and increase the amount of funding accessed by community groups, local social economy organisations and social enterprises. The team will also provide a range of development support to local groups and organisations.
- 4.2 To be successful in sourcing funding, the team will seek to engage relevant organisations, build capacity for management of projects and funds, and provide information and expertise on funding opportunities. Key activities will include:
- Production of e-alerts for specific funds
  - Develop a funding webpage
  - Delivering a series of workshops on specific funds and/or themes
  - Supporting organisations to build capacity
  - Advising on project development and appraising ideas
  - Reviewing and preparing funding applications
  - Monitoring and evaluating projects or initiatives
- 4.3 Officers will work with organisations in their communities, focusing on the local need for new services and projects, supporting their funding needs and ensuring they have the support required to apply for and manage funds. Training sessions will be delivered to a range of community based organisations to build capacity and funding workshops will be delivered which focus on specific funds and/or particular types of activity.

- 4.4 The team will focus on supporting organisations working at community level across Renfrewshire, with a particular focus on communities experiencing economic deprivation.
  - 4.5 External funding remains a challenge for community based organisations with many struggling to fund their activities each year. This results in reduced levels of activity and prevents expansion and the introduction of new initiatives.
  - 4.6 Activities will be co-ordinated with other projects delivered at community level, including other Poverty Commission initiatives. The work of the team will also link with and support the work of the LEADER team, in engaging with rural communities and LEADER eligible areas to develop new projects and secure match funding support.
  - 4.7 Further reports will be brought forward to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board to update on progress.
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## Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** – the Invest in Renfrewshire budget will support the creation of the additional post in the period to March 2018.
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – an additional Economic Development Officer post has been funded via Invest in Renfrewshire.
- 3. **Community Planning** –  
**Jobs and the Economy** – the programme has a key aim of supporting the social economy and introducing additional funding resources into community based projects.
- 4. **Legal** – none
- 5. **Property/Assets** – none
- 6. **Information Technology** – none
- 7. **Equality & Human Rights** -

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 as the report 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** –
9. **Procurement** - none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** - none

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### **List of Background Papers**

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