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**To: Communities and Housing Policy Board**

**On: 12 March 2024**

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**Report by: Chief Executive**

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**Heading: Community Funding Update**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 As agreed previously by the board, the Policy and Partnerships service now prepares and submits a paper for consideration each cycle in relation to Council led community funding available for allocation through the Greenspaces, Villages Investment and Sustainable Communities Fund(s). This paper represents the most recent update for members in relation to these funds.
- 1.2 Whilst the Greenspaces and Villages Investment Fund are well established, elected members will be aware that the Sustainable Communities Fund was launched in early October 2023. The initial response to the fund continues to be very positive with a strong pipeline of applications under development.
- 1.3 An officer panel has been established to review applications for the Sustainable Communities Fund and to make recommendations on funding awards to members of the Communities and Housing Board. The panel met in February 2024 to consider applications received through the second funding round which closed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.
- 1.4 Section 4 of the report provides an overview of the Sustainable Communities Fund and sets out recommendations for consideration by the board in relation to the second funding round. 5 applications are recommended for approval, 10 new applications are recommended to be deferred at this time to allow for further information gathering and engagement on applications with the community organisations concerned. 4 applications are not recommended for funding, as these were not assessed as meeting the funding criteria by the officer panel.
- 1.5 Members are asked to note that where projects are not recommended for award, this does not reflect the quality and value of these projects and associated organisations

at a local level, and officers will work with wider partners to signpost to other appropriate funding mechanisms.

- 1.6 The Sustainable Communities Fund has been very popular since its launch and has attracted a significant number of initial formal applications and more informal contacts and expressions of potential interest. Applicants are strongly advised to engage with co-ordinating officers as early as possible in the application development process. In the first two rounds there have been a number of applications where further information is required to fully assess an application, which has led to a number of applications being recommended to be deferred at this time, in order to give applicants the best possible chance of success as part of the assessment process.
- 1.7 Following learning from the first round of the Sustainable Communities Fund, several areas have been identified where Fund guidance can be clarified and strengthened to improve the application process for both applicants and officers. Officers will work to reflect learning both in the formal guidance in due course, as well as the advice given to applicants and information available through the Council website.
- 1.8 Full detail on all applications and related recommendations relating to the Sustainable Communities Fund is provided in Appendix 1 of this report. Elected members are asked to note that the next funding round ends on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.
- 1.9 Sections 5 and 6 of this report sets out recommendations in relation to the allocation of Greenspaces and Villages Investment funding.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Board:
  - Approve the funding recommendations detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of this report in relation to the proposed allocation of the Sustainable Communities Fund
  - Approve the funding recommendations outlined in Section 6 in relation to the proposed allocation of funding from the Villages Investment Fund

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 To strengthen monitoring and oversight of funding recommendations made in relation to a number of specific Council funding streams, the Policy and Partnerships service now submits a community funding paper to each cycle of the Communities and Housing Board. This includes recommendations from officers in relation to funding awards through the Greenspaces Fund, Villages Investment Fund and the recently launched Sustainable Communities Fund.

## **4. Sustainable Communities Fund**

- 4.1 In March 2023, Council agreed to combine the remaining monies from the Community Empowerment Fund and Climate Change Action Fund to create a single Sustainable Communities Fund. This was further boosted by £650,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Communities and Place for the support and improvement of

community assets and infrastructure. £1.5m is available as funding to support projects and organisations through this Fund.

- 4.2 On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Leadership Board approved the key objectives and criteria of the fund and agreed that applications to the Sustainable Communities Fund be submitted to the Communities and Housing Board for final approval with a key focus on community infrastructure, place and climate.
- 4.3 The Sustainable Communities Fund utilises a tiered funding model to reflect different-sized community projects as well as the varying levels of support required at different stages of development. A tiered approach helps to ensure ease of access to a proportionate application process to enable a range of initiatives that align with community empowerment:
- **Small - awards up to £10K:** capital and revenue funding to develop local projects and initiatives which are targeted at enabling community participation and promoting community collaboration and which build resilience within our communities. This level would be targeted at groups where a small amount of money can make a significant difference to enabling community participation.
  - **Intermediate – awards of £10K to £25K:** capital and revenue funding to develop projects or organisations with a focus on improving community infrastructure and/or community wellbeing and which have the potential to be replicated in other areas; and
  - **large – awards up to £100K:** larger capital grants with the aim of supporting communities that aspire to take ownership or develop land or buildings in local communities.
- 4.4 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which makes up part of the Sustainable Communities Fund, comprises a clear split between capital and revenue funding with set amounts allocated over financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. UKSPF will be allocated to approved projects which meet the criteria and to maximise drawdown within each financial year.
- 4.5 The Fund officially opened to applications on 10 October 2023, and the second funding round closed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.
- 4.6 All applications were assessed in February 2024 by the cross service panel of officers which has been established to review and assess the applications against the agreed objectives and criteria outlined within the funding guidance. This included follow up discussions on applications which were deferred through previous funding rounds. In summary the panel has recommended that:
- 5 applications be recommended for funding awards with total funding to be allocated of £163,383
  - 10 applications be deferred to gather further information and to allow for further engagement to be undertaken
  - 4 applications are not recommended for funding awards as these were assessed as not meeting the criteria of this particular funding stream.

- 3 applications remain deferred and under development from previous rounds.

4.7 The five applications recommended for approval through the Sustainable Communities fund in this founding round are:

- 7<sup>th</sup> Paisley & District J.N.I Scout Group (£10,000)
- Brick Lane Music Academy (£20,000)
- Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust (£100,000)
- Sculpture House Collective CIC (Dye Garden) (£8,383)
- Renfrewshire Community Transport (£25,000)

4.8 Ten applications were submitted where further information requires to be gathered and evaluated before officers are able to make recommendations on these applications to the Board. To allow for further work to be carried out with groups relating to their proposals, it is recommended that applications are deferred as follows:

- Finding Your Feet
- Bishopton Rugby Club
- I was Gonnae
- Sculpture House Collective CIC (Architectural Feasibility)
- Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP) (Thrive Together and Zero Emission Shared Transport)
- Ralston Primary Out of School care
- Renfrew Town Sea Scouts
- St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation
- Linwood Community Gardens Ltd

4.9 As mentioned in Section 1 of this report applicants are strongly advised to engage with co-ordinating officers as early as possible in the application development process. In the first two rounds there have been a number of applications where further information is required to fully assess an application, which has led to a number of applications being recommended to be deferred at this time, in order to give applicants the best possible chance of success

4.10 The 3 applications which remain deferred from previous funding rounds are in relation to:

- Bishopton Tennis Club
- Caledonia Bowling Club
- Kirklandneuk Growers Group

4.11 Elected members are asked to note that applications previously submitted by Outspoken Arts and Renfrewshire Association of Growers have now been withdrawn.

4.12 Finally, following assessment by the officer panel, the following applications are not recommended for a funding award, as they do not meet the criteria of the fund:

- Sewing2gether All Nations
- Ralston Community Council
- The Tannahill Centre

- **Our Place Our Families Renfrew**

- 4.13 Members are asked to note that where projects are not recommended for award, this does not reflect the quality and value of these projects and associated organisations at a local level, and officers will work with wider partners to signpost to other appropriate funding mechanisms.
- 4.14 Detailed information in relation to each application is provided in Appendix 1. Elected members will note that for some projects this will require the development of partnership agreements to be progressed with relevant community organisations should funding recommendations be agreed by the Board.
- 4.15 Subject to the approval of recommendations as set out in Appendix 1, £163,383 would be allocated to successful projects through Round 2 of the fund (£135,383 Capital and £28,000 Revenue). Of the total £163,383, £108,383 will be funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (£105,383 Capital and £3,000 Revenue).
- 4.16 The next funding round will close on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and officers will continue to work with all new applicants and deferred applicants to progress information and proposals proactively over the coming months.
- 4.17 As highlighted in Section 1, following learning from the first round of the Sustainable Communities Fund, several areas have been identified where Fund guidance can be clarified and strengthened to improve the application process for both applicants and officers. Officers will work to reflect learning both in the formal guidance in due course, as well as the advice given to applicants, and applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their application with officers in advance.

## **5. Green Spaces, Parks and Play Areas Fund**

- 5.1 The Green Spaces, Parks and Play Areas Fund has supported 58 community projects since October 2018. As previously agreed by members of the board, remaining Greenspaces funding has been divided into three streams:
- General funding available to fund greenspace, parks and play areas improvements.
  - Funding to support school-based developments.
  - Funding to support Team Up to Clean Up developments.
- 5.2 The Fund currently has approximately £13,000 available to support community projects, a further £20,000 is available for school projects meeting the fund criteria, and £13,000 for Team Up to Clean Up volunteers and projects.

### **Team Up to Clean Up Fund – “Trash for Cash”**

- 5.3 Trash for Cash is the proposed brand for the initial Lotto Litter proposal that was previously agreed by the Board and is expected to launch on 15 April as pupils return to school after their Easter holiday. The Scheme will reward pupils for binning their litter where they upload a photograph of this evidence. Each school month until the end of the year, 2 participating pupils from each secondary school will receive a

voucher as a reward. It is hoped the scheme will encourage pupils to form good habits.

## **6. Villages Investment Fund**

- 6.1 The Villages Investment Fund continues to support the villages in delivering innovative projects for local people. £242,000 remains available for village community groups to access through this funding stream.
- 6.2 Since the last update to board in January 2024, one Village Investment Fund application has been formally considered by officers, and also highlighted at the recent officer grant panel.

### **Howwood Community Council – Village Structural Improvements (£10,000)**

- 6.3 Howwood Community Council have worked alongside the Green Spaces and Villages Investment Fund Team in the past to deliver upgrades to their local park, install a community shelter, and deliver other smaller projects creating a sense of pride within their village.
- 6.4 The Chair of the Community Council has evidence of local appetite for a handrail to be installed which will aid visitors to the public park in walking on the steep path at the entrance/exit point of the park. Further to this, the group have requested replacement fencing to replace a damaged section at the space cared for by volunteers, Rhombus Garden, and finally a replacement community notice board at the villages Triangle.

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## **Implications of the Report**

- 1. **Financial** – This paper recommends the allocation of £163,383 of funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund (£135,383 Capital and £28,000 Revenue). Section 6 also sets out recommendations to approve one application for £10,000 from the Villages Investment Fund.
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none.
- 3. **Community/Council Planning** – the Fund set out in the paper supports engagement and collaboration with local communities on a range of activities which align with the new Council Plan 2022-2027; Our Renfrewshire Community Plan and/or Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero.
- 4. **Legal** - none.
- 5. **Property/Assets** – none.
- 6. **Information Technology** – none.
- 7. **Equality and 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. 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 and Safety** – none.

9. **Procurement** – none.
  10. **Risk** – none.
  11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
  12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none.
  13. **Climate Risk** – the Sustainable Communities Fund aligns with the themes within Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero and the delivery of relevant projects will assist the local response to the climate emergency.
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#### Appendix 1: Summary of applications with Panel recommendations

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##### **List of Background Papers:**

Sustainable Communities Fund Guidance

**Author:** Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Partnerships

## Appendix 1 – Sustainable Communities Fund Applications Round 2

TABLE A - RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE					
Name of organisation	Project description	Tier	Grant Application Amount	Funding Award Recommended	Comments
<b>7th Paisley &amp; District J.N.I. Scout Group</b>	To provide modern, clean toilet facilities for activity centre users which are currently inadequate	Small	£10,000	Approve	<p>Previously deferred by the Panel for further engagement with group on the extent to which the wider community could benefit.</p> <p>Group have provided details of extensive range of community groups that use facilities and would benefit from accessible facilities.</p>
<b>Brick Lane Music Academy</b>	To improve the space at the back of Brick Lane Studios by creating a community sensory studio and gardens for families.	Intermediate	£20,000	Approve	<p>Previously deferred by the Panel for further engagement with group on the extent to which the wider community could benefit.</p> <p>The group have provided details of access arrangements as well as further information on planning and consents required.</p>
<b>Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust</b>	Creation of an inclusive garden space where all villagers can meet and socialise. Improvement of local facilities and services, helping the community to become more self-reliant.	Large	£100,000	Approve	<p>Previously deferred by the Panel for further engagement with the group to understand costs and level of work required as part of funding application.</p> <p>Additional information provided and confirmation received that the organisation have secured funding from the National Lottery Community Led Fund of £115k to cover revenue</p>



					and overhead costs for 3 years as well as contribution toward capital costs.
<b>Sculpture House Collective CIC</b>	To expand the growing capacity of the site at the front of the building used for growing dye plants and flowers.	Small	£8,383	Approve	N/a
<b>Renfrewshire Community Transport</b>	To develop a sustainable business case for the establishment of a Community Transport offer in Renfrewshire	Intermediate	£25,000	Approve	n/a

**TABLE B - RECOMMENDATION TO DEFER**

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Grant Application Amount</b>	<b>Funding Award Recommended</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Finding Your Feet (FYF)</b>	To enhance the garden space at the rear of the Finding Your Feet Hub, St James House Paisley.  Activities and workshops would be run from the space for service users across 11 tenant organisations within the building.	Large	£92,245	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to gather further information on project sustainable, partner contributions and land use. around the sustainability of some of the revenue and staffing costs associated with the proposal, the role and contributions of partners and to clarify queries relating to land use.

<b>Bishopton Rugby Club</b>	To purchase grounds maintenance equipment to improve usability and access to both pitches and off pitch areas.	Intermediate	£20,000	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to clarify information in relation to land ownership and potential for wider external funding.
<b>I was Gonnae</b>	To contribute to costs of music experience programmes for various groups including adult learners, young adults with learning difficulties, adult drop-in centres, judicial groups, carers, visually impaired, veterans, and youth groups.	Intermediate	£19,100	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to better understand the relationship between this and other similar funding awards, and to seek clarification on the sustainability of the project.
<b>Sculpture House Collective CIC</b>	To instruct an Architectural Feasibility Study to explore how the fabric can be upgraded to reduce environmental impact, improve access and expand offer.	Small	£9,948	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to obtain further project information.
<b>Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP)</b>	To develop the Community Larder provision	Intermediate	£24,900	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to seek clarity on sustainability of the project.
<b>Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP)</b>	The project will increase users and usage of Zero-Emission cars and E-Bikes in Linwood and Lochwinnoch.	Intermediate	£25,000	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to obtain further information on project.

<b>Ralston Primary Out of School care</b>	To identify if the building of a purpose build family centre is needed and possible in the area between Ralston Primary School and the Ralston Community sports football pitches	Intermediate	£25,000	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to understand the strategic and place-based context for this project and to discuss this more widely with Council services.
<b>Renfrew Town Sea Scouts</b>	To renovate the hall used by the Sea Scouts to bring it up to standard and increase capacity	Intermediate	£25,000	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to explore this proposal in further detail. Further information is also required on the wider community benefit of the proposal.
<b>St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation</b>	To provide a health and wellbeing hub in Ferguslie Park as well as a standalone base for charity staff.	Large	£100,000	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to gain further information on how the project fits with wider strategic plans due to the scale of the funding requested.
<b>Linwood Community Gardens Ltd</b>	To redevelop the gardens and bring them back to a workable condition for the local community.	Intermediate	£25,000	n/a – Deferred application	Officer panel recommend that further engagement is undertaken with the group to obtain further information on planned expenditure.

**TABLE C – DEFERRED APPLICATIONS FROM PREVIOUS ROUNDS**

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Grant Application Amount</b>	<b>Funding Award Recommended</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Bishopton Tennis Club</b>	To invest in floodlight provision to extend playing period and encourage	Intermediate	£24,000	n/a –Deferred application	Further information and engagement with the group is required to support assessment process.

	activity across senior age groups				
<b>Caledonia Bowling Club</b>	The purpose of the project is to improve the Club's internal and external facilities to make these safer and more inclusive, including ramps and handrails, toilet facilities.	Small	£10,000	n/a – Deferred application	Further information and engagement with the group is required to support assessment process.
<b>Kirklandneuk Growers Group</b>	To establish plots for local tenants to grow plants, fruit and veg, whilst enhancing the area, provide relief and recovery towards mental health, and educating children on growing foods.	Large	£100,000	n/a – Deferred application	Further information and engagement with the group is required to support assessment process.

**TABLE D – APPLICATIONS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR AWARD**

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Grant Application Amount</b>	<b>Funding Award Recommended</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Sewing2gether All Nations</b>	To provide upcycling workshops	Intermediate	£25,000	Not recommended for award	The application did not meet the core funding criteria in relation to project sustainability, and involved ongoing recurring revenue costs. Given the potential of this project, officers will continue to work with the organisation to identify alternative sources of funding to support this.

<b>Ralston Community Council</b>	To improve local environment by installing large planters in prominent locations within the Ralston area	Small	£8,500	Not recommended for award	The application did not meet the core funding criteria in relation to project sustainability, and involved ongoing recurring revenue costs. Given the potential of this project, officers will continue to work with the organisation to identify alternative sources of funding to support this.
<b>The Tannahill Centre</b>	To build capacity of local volunteers and groups by employing a development worker	Intermediate	£25,000	Not recommended for award	The application did not meet the core funding criteria in relation to project sustainability, and involved ongoing recurring revenue costs. Given the potential of this project, officers will continue to work with the organisation to identify alternative sources of funding to support this.
<b>Our Place Our Families Renfrew</b>	To support clients in the community that are needing extra financial help due to the cost of living with vouchers for winter boots and coats, heaters and energy vouchers	Small	£9,000	Not recommended for award	The application did not meet the core funding criteria, in relation to sustainability, place-based projects or climate.  Given the potential of this project, officers will continue to work with the organisation to identify alternative sources of funding to support this.

**TABLE E – WITHDRAWN**

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Project description</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Grant Application Amount</b>
<b>Outspoken Arts Scotland Limited</b>	The purpose of the project is to redevelop the former Allders department store to secure it for permanent use as a town centre art gallery and mixed arts, retail use. It requires major modifications and repairs to make it fully accessible. The funds requested are to develop a feasibility study to bring the asset into ownership of the charity to secure it permanently for the town.	Intermediate	£15,000

<b>Renfrew Association of Growers and Gardeners</b>	Broadloan Community Gardens is a community-led project that aims to create a green and inclusive space that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, abilities, or background. Funding requested to cover salary of full-time community gardener for one year	Large	£30,200
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