



To: **Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities**

On: **1 September 2015**

Report by:

Chair of Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities

**Promoting and Supporting The Third Sector**

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Third sector organisations in Renfrewshire are playing a key role in delivering the outcomes of the community plan Renfrewshire 2023.
- 1.2 While statutory community planning partners have been exploring ways to work with third sector organisations through initiatives like provision of a £100, 000 social enterprise fund by Renfrewshire Council, working to build capacity of third sector organisations to bid for service contracts and looking for ways to ensure that the Living Wage can be paid in the sector, there is scope for further work to build sustainable community capacity in the third sector.
- 1.3 In addition to existing initiatives such as Renfrewshire Council's Your Time to Give and other similar staff volunteering schemes, where staff can donate up to two days volunteering time to local good causes, the third sector could be strengthened through other specific in-kind support. This support would build the governance and operational capacity of third sector organisations and would also increase the level of awareness within the statutory sector of the potential contribution of the third sector to achieving policy objectives.
- 1.4 The private sector could also be approached for support in a similar way to the public sector in order to further increase the resource pool available to voluntary and community organisations in Renfrewshire.



## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities:
- (a) Agrees to consult with voluntary and community sector groups on skills requirements for governance and use the results of this work to contribute to the further development of statutory partners' staff volunteering schemes as appropriate.
  - (b) Agree that the Forum makes a presentation to the Community Planning Partnership Board on practical ways for statutory partners to support local third sector organisations.
  - (c) Remits the Lead Officer and Empowering Communities Manager to develop material for this presentation.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The strength of governance and pool of volunteers available to third sector organisations are two key drivers of its capacity to contribute to delivering positive outcomes in Renfrewshire.
- 3.2 Staff volunteering schemes currently exist that encourage public sector workers to volunteer in local organisations. A good example of this is Renfrewshire Council's "Your Time To Give" scheme, which allows for council staff to contribute two days of their time to volunteering. This scheme is currently being reviewed with a view to strengthening its impact.
- 3.3 Within this context, it is proposed that Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities submits proposals on how partner organisations can strengthen the pool of governance and operational resources available to the third sector, building on existing staff volunteering schemes.
- 3.4 In terms of governance capacity, public and private sector partners have workforce in the following areas that could help build capability:
- Legal
  - Finance and Accountancy
  - Property
  - Policy/Strategy relevant to the particular voluntary/community organisation



- Human Resources

- 3.5 It is proposed that Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities consult with local third sector organisations on their skills requirements, agree any areas where skills are required by individual organisations and collate this information. The results of this consultation would then be presented for discussion with managers of staff volunteering schemes to establish skills-specific vacancies volunteering opportunities within individual community/voluntary organisations in Renfrewshire. In addition to the volunteering option, public sector partners would also be invited provide this support organisation- to- organisation on an in-kind basis. This could potentially be constructed as a continuous development opportunity for professional staff, where they provide a set number of hours of support to a named organisation. In return, the staff member providing the support would gain wider knowledge of the work of a third sector partner.
- 3.6 It is intended that, by identifying needs in governance skills and seeking to meet these needs by utilising skills that currently exist within the community planning partners' workforce, the overall pool of governance capacity in the third sector in Renfrewshire will be increased. This method of seeking support could also be extended to the private sector in Renfrewshire, in order to ensure that third sector organisations have access to as wide a pool of professional support as possible.
- 3.7 In order to seek agreement of community planning partners to the proposals identified in paragraphs 3.5-3.6, it is proposed that a paper/presentation be submitted to Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Board to discuss these issues. This presentation would be developed by the Empowering Communities Manager and led by the lead officer for Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities.