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**To: Economy and Jobs Policy Board**

**On: 20 May 2015**

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

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**Heading: Social Enterprise Small Grants Fund Update**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 In March 2013 the Economy & Jobs Board committed £500,000 towards the development of the social economy and in September 2014 £100,000 from the Invest in Renfrewshire budget was committed to the establishment of a new Small Grants Fund for social enterprises across Renfrewshire.
  - 1.2 The fund was formally launched by the Leader of Renfrewshire Council, on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014 at the 'Social Enterprise in Renfrewshire' conference and has been well received with 38 expressions of interest being received by the Development & Housing Service and five grants already issued.
  - 1.3 This paper summarises progress in delivering the Social Enterprise Small Grants Fund, provides further information on the awards made and seeks approval for an increase in the funds committed to the Grant Scheme as well as approval for an additional Grant to assist in feasibility work for a potential Community Asset project as part of the wider objective of Renfrewshire Council to maximise the potential benefits from the Social Economy.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:
  - (i) Note the successful delivery of the Social Enterprise Small Grants scheme and the awards made to date.

- (ii) Agree that a further £100,000 should be committed to the Small Grants Scheme from the Invest in Renfrewshire Social Enterprise Budget with updates provided to the Economy & Jobs Board on grants awarded and related social enterprise development work.
  - (iii) Agree to an award of up to £34,000, to the Paisley 2021 Community Development Trust for the purposes set out in section 5 below.
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Economy and Jobs Policy Board approved a new Strategic Framework and Action Plan for the development of the Social Economy in Renfrewshire in May 2014. The Strategic Framework and Action Plan is built around four priorities:
- Awareness Raising
  - Capacity Building
  - Market Development
  - Community Assets
- 3.2 The Social Enterprise Small Grants Fund was established as one of the key actions to support the capacity building priority in the social enterprise sector in Renfrewshire.
- 3.3 Grants of up to a maximum of £5,000 are available to help organisations become more enterprising, to pilot or develop new services and to create economic impacts such as new jobs, training or volunteering opportunities.
- 3.4 A formal process has been established for application appraisal, grant payment and monitoring. Each recipient also receives individual tailored support from an Economic Development Officer with expertise in assisting Social Enterprises.
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### **4. Small Grants Fund Progress**

- 4.1 The Small Grants Fund is becoming well known and the Economic Development Team has already had 38 expressions of interest from local social enterprises.
- 4.2 All expressions of interest are followed by visits to the applicant organisation to discuss ideas and needs. While a number of the expressions of interest have not led to full applications five grants totalling £20,782 have been approved, leaving a balance of £79,218 to be allocated before 31 March 2016. A further 14 outline applications are currently being discussed and developed and it is expected that most of these will result in full applications.

#### 4.3 The details of the grants issued to date include:

- **Crisis Counselling:** Crisis provides specialist therapeutic services for adults and children experiencing mental health difficulties. The grant has enabled Crisis to enhance security systems and develop marketing materials for its new, innovative and 100% Green 'Eco-Pod' counselling and training facility. This will increase capacity and significantly expand the number of customers benefitting from Crisis' services. The Eco-Pod will allow Crisis to deliver Distance Counselling via Skype – this will be especially useful for clients experiencing trauma who find it difficult to travel, including ex-military personnel.
- **Erskine Music and Media Studio:** EMMS is a music, arts and media training and development enterprise, "run by young people for young people", and part of Renfrewshire's burgeoning creative industries sector. Through the Fund, EMMS is upgrading its equipment from analogue to digital and this will allow it to reach new markets, increasing turnover, training, volunteering and job opportunities.
- **Scottish Huntington's Association:** SHA is the national support organisation for Huntington's Disease, a progressive neurological disease. The Association is based in Linwood. The Fund is supporting the development of an innovative eBay online service. This will generate two new self-financing jobs and additional income for the Association to continue to expand its information, advice and development services throughout Scotland.
- **Kilbarchan Improvement Projects:** 'KipCo' encourages community regeneration activity within the village from its community facility base in the former library. KipCo has successfully secured funding to increase IT capacity and provide modernised CCTV security inside and outside the property. This will have a number of impacts including increased footfall, better usage of the facility and reduced insurance premiums and maintenance costs.
- **Environmental Training Team:** The ETT is a recently established enterprise providing environmental improvement support and training services in Ferguslie Park and other Renfrewshire communities. An establishment grant, primarily for office equipment, will enable the business to move to the next stage of development with the potential to secure commercial contracts.

#### 4.4 Given the success to date of the Social Enterprise Small Grants Fund it is suggested that an additional £100,000 should be made available from the "Communities" element of the Invest in Renfrewshire initiative which makes specific budget provision for growing the Social Economy. This will also allow the implementation of the Small Grants to continue until March 2017.

- 4.5 Further reports will be brought forward to the Economy and Jobs Policy Board to update on progress.
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5. **Grant support for Paisley 2021 Community Development Trust**

- 5.1 The Council has received an approach from the Paisley 2021 Community Development Trust for support in developing the feasibility and business case for a new multipurpose performing and visual arts venue in Paisley.
- 5.2 The establishment of this arts venue accords with the Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy and having tendered for suitable consultants to help deliver the feasibility and business case for the facility the Trust has approached the Council for assistance.
- 5.3 In March 2013 the Economy & Jobs Board committed £500,000 towards the development of the Social Economy. This included supporting social enterprises to develop the feasibility of community assets. Given the project being developed by Paisley 2021 has significant regeneration potential and capacity to deliver economic and social benefit it is recommended an award is granted on a phased basis up to a maximum level of £34,000, subject to appropriate 'Gateways' set by the Director of Development and Housing in consultation with the Director of Finance & Resources.
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**Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – A further £100,000 should be committed to the Social Enterprise Small Grants Scheme with an additional £34,000 made available to the Paisley 2021 Community Development Trust from the approved Invest in Renfrewshire Budget.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning – Jobs and the Economy** – Support to local social enterprises will increase capacity to deliver services and build sustainability.
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 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
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#### **List of Background Papers**

- (a) Background Paper 1 – Growing the Social Economy – 21st May 2014
  - (b) Background paper 2 – Social Enterprise Small Grants – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2014
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