

To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 18 August 2020

Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services

Heading: Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on progress made in supporting community projects using the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment fund and seeks Board approval for the provision of grant funding for the project described in Section 3 of this report and set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The key objective in allocating funding is to work with and support community groups to identify and deliver improvement projects in their local communities, to improve their local greenspaces (including parks and play areas) and to strengthen the identity, heritage, uniqueness and integrity of village life. One of the other aspects of the work is to open up opportunities for groups to access additional funding from other sources and as can be seen by a number of the projects included within this report communities are actively engaging with this, with a number of the projects seeking additional funding from other sources in order to support the community in meeting its ideal aspirations.
- 1.3 The Council and partners have been working closely with many groups across Renfrewshire since the launch of the fund in October 2018, with several smaller applications now having been approved by the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning under delegated authority in order to enable smaller projects to develop and move forward quickly. Where these awards have not been previously reported to Board, they are included in Appendix 1 for information. Progress has been slower than anticipated over the last 4 months due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the severe restrictions placed on groups within communities. During the lockdown period Stronger Communities Glenburn and Elderslie Community Council have each been impacted by delays in procurement as companies have furloughed employees. Tenders have now been issued to suppliers and it is anticipated that contracts for these projects will shortly be awarded to allow installation to progress.

- 1.4 However, as lockdown measures have been eased groups are beginning to finalise their plans and move forward once again with their funding proposals. Some projects have already also made good progress on the ground. Howwood Community Council and Pals of the Privies have completed the installation of their play parks which have been well received by their communities. Friends of Knockhill Park have installed their benches and Emotional Swing, Erskine Community Garden have improved their asset with benches, provision of tools for children and new orchard trees and shrubs and Elderslie have placed Dog Fouling Dispenser Bags around their village which are being well used.
- 1.5 In addition to the project contained within this Board report, several other projects are currently being developed by community groups and funding recommendations in relation to these projects will be brought to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board for information or approval as relevant at future meetings of the Board.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board:
- (i) notes the work currently being undertaken to support communities as they develop projects to be funded using the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund; and
 - (ii) agrees to fund the project as detailed in Section 3 of this report and Appendix 1, awarding grant funding totalling £50,000 to support Kilbarchan Community Council.
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3. Summary of Applications

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Council has been working with a number of community groups since the launch of the funding in October 2018, and currently around 8 projects are actively being developed within communities across Renfrewshire. Projects under active development include:
- Upgrade to Barwood Play Park in Erskine
 - Play park upgrades in Lochfield and Hawkhead
 - Upgrade to McKerrell Street Play Park
 - Community Growing Ground in Foxbar
 - Community Growing Ground in Linwood
 - Upgrade to South Park Mound (Houston)
 - Friends of Fountain Gardens – park upgrade
 - Inchinnan – Improvements to path network
- 3.2 Further reports will be brought back for the consideration of the Board in relation to these projects at future meetings of the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board.

- 3.3 A cross-service panel of Officers has been established to review and assess the applications against the agreed objectives and criteria. For any grant award under £5,000, the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services has delegated authority to approve grant applications in order to allow smaller scale projects to progress quickly within communities.
- 3.4 Whilst Officers have maintained contact with community groups since March 2020, activity has been severely restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
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Applicant 1: Kilbarchan Community Council
Funding Requested: £50,000
Recommendation: Approve

- 3.5 Kilbarchan Community Council is a longstanding organisation constituted in 1978 with the objective to “make Kilbarchan a great place to live, by enhancing the sense of community and supporting those who live in and around the area to play and keep active”.
- 3.6 The Community Council is active in the area, and alongside Kilbarchan Smile, deliver many small grounds maintenance projects to improve the look and appeal of the village.
- 3.7 In 2003 the Community Council were instrumental in upgrading the local children’s play area. New play apparatus was installed aimed at pre-school and junior users. Picnic benches, seating, skate ramps and a zip wire were further added using funds raised locally through a number of organisations and local donors, boosted by Renfrewshire Council.
- 3.8 Kilbarchan Park further benefited from recent infrastructure improvements, funded by Environment & Infrastructure which included widening the paths and improving ongoing drainage issues.
- 3.9 Kilbarchan Community Council has taken the lead in upgrading the Park for the community. Consultation revealed many participants feel the park is in need of some further improvements.
- 3.10 The group are in possession of plans detailing the parks potential new structures. The local community have been kept up to date with the Community Council’s plans via social media and have provided input into the play opportunities they would like to see delivered.
- 3.11 Consultation results have led the group to seek replacement wet pour for the pre-school/ junior area to extend the life of current play equipment, a feature would be made of the steep grassy mound in the park, complementing a previously installed hill-slide with a scramble mat. The parks appeal to carers and families will be increased with additional seating and picnic benches installed.
- 3.12 Fitness enthusiasts, fitness groups and interested individuals will be encouraged by the installation of outdoor gym equipment.

- 3.13 Kilbarchan Community Council promoted their consultation throughout 2019, visiting the local nursery, primary school, aftercare group and Action for Children. Hard copies of the survey were left in key community areas and with partners. Social media surveys further promoted the project and generated further interest.
- 3.14 Around 350 responses were collated showing many consider the park useful for children's play and exercise (54%). A significant number of people (48%) feel the park is a great place to enjoy the outdoors with many commenting additionally that the open green space is one of the parks greatest assets. Fitness groups, and individuals who use the park for exercise, expressed further opportunities encouraging exercise should be explored.
- 3.15 These suggestions were acknowledged by the Community Council who plan to improve the current play offerings, install fitness equipment and offer an opportunity to relax and watch children play or enjoy the scenery.
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4. Funding Allocation

- 4.1 To date, from a total budget of £1.87m, £869,475 has been awarded or committed (inclusive of the recommendations at this Board).
- 4.2 Projects to the value of £620,000 are currently in development, leaving a potential balance of £380,525 from the available budget.
- 4.3 The budget and figures above include £370k allocated to the Villages Investment Fund of which £23,200 has been committed to date.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - Council approved the allocation of £1.870 million to establish the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Parks and Villages Investment Fund in March 2018. Due to the capital works being undertaken, Officers are ensuring that there are minimal recurring revenue costs to Services in the coming years.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community/Council Planning** –

The Greenspaces, Parks & Play Parks and Village Investment Fund will be important to achieving and assisting the Community Plan by ensuring that Renfrewshire is thriving, well, fair and safe for residents, workers and visitors.
4. **Legal** - All legislative requirements will be taken cognisance of during this process wherever required e.g. health and safety requirements.
5. **Property/Assets** - There is the potential for property/assets to be included as part of this fund.
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. 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** - Cognisance will be taken of health and safety requirements wherever required e.g. for play park equipment.

9. **Procurement** - There is potential for the Council to be procuring and installing equipment of behalf of a community group as part of this grant funding process.

10. **Risk** - Discussions with the Council Risk Manager are on-going to ensure that the risk to the Council, as part of this grant funding process, is minimised.

11. **Privacy Impact** - None.

12. **COSLA Policy Position** – Not Applicable

13. **Climate Risk** – Not Applicable

List of Background Papers

None

OR/MC/CD
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Appendix 1

Applicant	Project Description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
<p>1. Kilbarchan Community Council</p>	<p>Kilbarchan Community Council are seeking to improve their current public park and green space.</p> <p>The Park is considered an asset to the village and is well used by children and adult alike.</p> <p>£50k of infrastructure improvements will increase the appeal of the Park locally. In addition, upgrades and repairs to the current offerings will ensure they continue to be fit for purpose.</p> <p>The wet pour safety surface at the pre-school and junior area is beginning to break up and the zip wire is broken. Delivering these improvements/repairs, along with a couple of new pieces, will increase the appeal to children. Increased seating and picnic opportunities will offer carers and families greater opportunity to use the Park.</p> <p>Fitness equipment is a new direction for the park, however it is locally used for classes and running therefore it is considered this will further offer greater user benefits.</p>	<p>£50,000</p>	<p>Approval by Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board.</p>	<p>The grant funding should be approved as it matches the award criteria.</p> <p>Kilbarchan has a well-used and enjoyed public play park, however it does require to be upgraded and improved to offer continued value.</p>	<p>Kilbarchan - Villages</p>