

**To: Forum for Empowering our Communities Thematic Board**

**On: 1 February 2017**

**Report by:**

**Alan McNiven, Chief Executive, Engage Renfrewshire**

**TITLE:**

**Aspiring Communities Fund**

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Scottish Government published in December 2016 details of the Aspiring Communities Fund, supported by the European Social Fund. Application forms for the Aspiring Communities Fund will be available on the Scottish Government website by the end of January 2017, with events to be held across Scotland in February 2017 to coincide with the launch of the fund.
- 1.2 The Aspiring Communities Fund has a total value of £18.9 million with information available on [aspiringcommunities@gov.scot](mailto:aspiringcommunities@gov.scot) (see press release attached at Appendix 1). The fund will be open for applications from January 2017 to December 2018 and will be open to applications from community bodies, including community anchor organisations, third sector and other community organisations.
- 1.3 The purpose of the fund is to:
  - Enable communities to establish new services addressing poverty/inequalities.
  - Support staff posts within community organisations.
  - Accelerate projects/services delivering long-lasting community solutions

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities:

- (a) Notes the opening of the Aspiring Communities Fund for applications by end of January 2017.
- (b) Promotes applications to the Aspiring Communities Fund from community organisations in Renfrewshire that contribute to Renfrewshire Community Planning partnership outcomes.

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### Aspiring Communities

The Aspiring Communities Fund will support fragile and disadvantaged communities across Scotland to develop and deliver community-led solutions that tackle inequality and poverty. The Fund will support applications from community anchor organisations, third sector and other eligible community bodies working collaboratively to accelerate the design and delivery of enduring community-led initiatives that tackle poverty, inequality and exclusion. It will strengthen communities, increase levels of economic activity, stimulate inclusive growth, local service provision and inclusion by:

- Enabling communities to design and establish new or enhanced services addressing poverty and inequalities
- Supporting staff posts within community organisations to increase levels of economic activity, local service provision and inclusion, and enhance community resilience
- Accelerating the implementation of projects and services delivering longer lasting community-led solutions

The funding will support identified target groups and local priorities and the following key areas for community designed and delivered actions including:

- support to combat fuel poverty and food poverty
- provision of childcare and social care
- business and management training for community bodies to increase resilience

The Fund will contribute to the achievement of the ESF Operational Programme targets:

- community based or community led services supported
- new childcare places available
- deprived or fragile communities supported
- increase in earned turnover of supported organisations
- new or improved community owned assets (capital for acquisition via other non ESF sources)

It will also provide an opportunity to test out place-based approaches to tackling inequality, particularly:

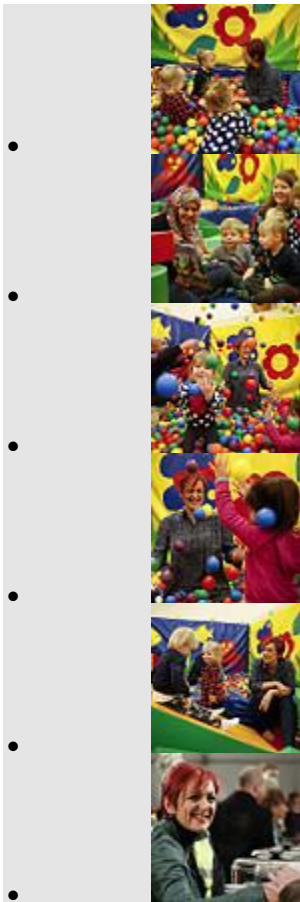
- improving access to networks and decision making for communities
- collective leadership and new models of collaboration
- improved access to networks

For more information on the Fund please email  
[aspiringcommunities@gov.scot](mailto:aspiringcommunities@gov.scot)

**Application forms and guidance will be published here from the end of January 2017 when the Aspiring Communities Fund is opened for applications.**

**We will be holding several stakeholder events in a number of locations throughout Scotland in February 2017 to provide further information on the fund. The dates and venues for these events will be published here so please check for updates.**

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