To: Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities Thematic Board

On: 30 August 2016

Report by:

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COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT – OUTLINE CONTENT OF PROPOSED TOOLKIT

1. Summary

1.1   Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities seeks to promote and encourage use of the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. The Forum has proposed that a Renfrewshire Community Empowerment Toolkit be developed in order to assist community groups considering asset transfer, purchase of abandoned, neglected or detrimental land or participation requests.

1.2   At the Community Empowerment community planning conference on 20 May 2016, community groups heard presentations on the Community Empowerment Act, the experience of community groups who have had involvement in community planning arrangements and a national organisation supporting communities. Some initial discussion took place at the conference regarding the views of local groups on implementation of the Act.

1.3   An outline of proposed content for a Renfrewshire Community Empowerment Toolkit is attached for discussion and input from Forum members at Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Forum For Empowering Communities:

a)   Agrees the outline content of the proposed Community Empowerment Toolkit for development; and

b)   Agrees that the finalised toolkit be submitted for approval to a future meeting of Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities.

3. Background

3.1   The Scottish Government is due to issue finalised guidance on the Community Empowerment Act during autumn 2016. Part of the guidance will focus on the duty of Community Planning Partnerships to publicise the Community Empowerment Act and raise awareness of its potential benefits.

3.2   At a presentation to Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership Board on 24 February 2016, it was proposed that Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities develop a localised toolkit to raise awareness of the provisions of the Community Empowerment Act, encourage communities to consider using the provisions of the Act and provide some initial advice and assistance to interested community groups.

3.3   Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership held a community planning conference event on the subject of Community Empowerment on 20 May 2016 in Johnstone Town Hall, attended by 70 members of local groups, with inputs from Engage Renfrewshire, Erskine Music and Media and Community Ownership Support Service. Workshop sessions were held which discussed some of the content of the Scottish Government consultation on the Community Empowerment Act. These discussions will be used to inform the content of the Toolkit.

3.4   Attached at Appendix 1 is an outline of chapter headings for the Toolkit and content topics to be developed in order to provide advice and support to community groups. Members of Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities are invited to discuss and comment on the proposed content of the Toolkit and provide input on any sources of information for inclusion within the Toolkit.

Community Empowerment Act Toolkit

Draft Content To Be Developed

Who This Toolkit Is For?

Community groups or people wanting to start community groups who are interested in being involved in community planning in Renfrewshire, taking over use, lease or ownership of a community assets (usually a building in public sector use), taking over an area of abandoned or neglected land or get involved in delivering a service.

The idea is to help people get an idea of what's involved in any of these things, what you need to do to achieve the things you want to do and who can help you along the way.

Asset Transfer

- Define what "asset transfer" is and the other possibilities (lease etc).

- Why asset transfer - what to consider before you start.

- What does a community group need to qualify for asset transfer.

- What skills do you need or need to organise (note: are there lawyers, accountants etc on the trusted trader scheme?)

- What needs to be considered regarding making assets "digitally raedy" and what advice and support is available.

- What is the "road map" (see COSS)

- How can you access funding?

- What support is available?

- What is the Council/other partners asset transfer policy and who are the relevant contacts?

- Case studies of local groups who have undertaken asset transfers.

- What is the appeals process if the asset transfer is refused?

Abandoned, Neglected Or Detrimental Land

- What is the definition of abandoned, neglected or detrimental land?

- How to identify owner of the land – what help is available?

- What is the "road map" for purchase of abandoned, neglected or detrimental land and how does it differ from other land/asset transfer.

- What services are required to progress right to buy of abandoned, neglected or detrimental land?

- What role do statutory authorities play in the process regarding purchase of abandoned, neglected or detrimental land?

- What is the appeals process if purchase is refused?

Community Planning

- Description of community planning and Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership.

- How can your group be involved in community planning in Renfrewshire?

- Case studies of how local organisations are currently involved in community planning in Renfrewshire.

- Engagement and consultation opportunities within Renfrewshire.

- How to use Renfrewshire 2023 website as a community resource.

- Community engagement in development of Renfrewshire Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

- Community engagement in development of Locality Action Plans.

- How the Community Empowerment Act will be encouraged/promoted.

- Explanation of Christie Commission "Prevention" agenda.

Participation Requests

- What is a participation request?

- Who can make a participation request?

- What service areas would statutory partners particularly welcome participation requests in?

- What is the process for a participation request and how long does this take?

- What should a participation request contain?

- Who can advise on/support a participation request?

- What is the decision- making process

- What resources do you need to have/consider to deliver your participation request?

- What is the appeals process if a participation request is refused?

Further Information and Support

- Sources of advice and information available to community groups