

**To: The Villages Local Partnership**

**On: 17 November 2022**

**Report by:**  
Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council

## **Building And Strengthening The Local Action Group For The Former LEADER Rural Areas**

### **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This note concerns a collaborative programme between Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde to recruit new members to a strengthened Local Action Group (LAG) for the Greater Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (GRI) rural areas.
- 1.2 The approach currently being taken regards strengthening the LAG was approved by the Economy and Regeneration Policy Board on 23 August 2022.
- 1.3 The former European funded LEADER programme stopped in 2020, with the UK withdrawal from the European Community. Between 2014 and 2020 it invested some £1.7m, leveraging £2.8m match funding and generated some £4.5m for the area.
- 1.4 With the cessation of LEADER, Scottish Government has been interested in how the approach to rural support and intervention might be enhanced and has invited submissions from former LEADER areas (through the Local Action Groups, on which Councils have sat), for projects to test new approaches to delivering community-led local development and now, in 2022/23, to identify how Local Action Groups might be strengthened with more diverse representation. While funds across Scotland for these projects in 2022/23 have been modest (£11m+), they do lend credence to future funding being made available by Scottish Government to substitute for LEADER once the 2023/24 Scottish Budget is published in December 2022.

- 1.5 The strengthening of Local Action Groups by inviting applications to join has been interpreted to include people and organisations from the geography of the rural areas (e.g. community development trusts, village associations etc.) and from those whose activities are considered to meet equality, diversity and inclusion criteria. Thus, people and organisations in the urban areas who represent e.g. gender, youth, ethnic and other diverse interests, who might want to extend their activities, or want stronger representation in the rural areas, would be appropriate to encourage to apply.
- 1.6 The role of the strengthened Local Action Group and of the new members recruited for their capacity, interest, commitment and skills, are being defined at the present, with each Council, plus e.g. Engage Renfrewshire, participating in a widespread social media recruitment campaign in November. Potentially, the role will include managing funds made available through the Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate, help strengthen local communities by advocating solutions/ projects/ investment to meet their needs, support and strengthen Councils' funding bids for the area, as well as address emerging local and national level priorities and translate what action should be taken on the ground (i.e. climate emergency and achieving net zero carbon emissions, inclusive growth/wealth building, local capacity building/community support interventions and placed-based delivery).
- 1.7 We anticipate a strengthened Local Action Group of between 10 and 15 people. The Partnerships are asked to help publicise the recruitment opportunity.

## 2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Local Area Partnerships are asked to help publicise the recruitment opportunity.