

**To:** Communities, Housing and Planning Board

**On:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019

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**Report by:** Chief Executive

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**Heading:** Community Empowerment Fund

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Communities, Housing and Planning Board for the award of grants in the third round of the Community Empowerment Fund.
- 1.2 The key objective of the fund is to support community organisations to acquire and develop community assets. The fund aims to support and develop community organisations with a specific focus on assisting those organisations that wish to acquire and develop community assets.
- 1.2 One new application was received in this round, with another one decision deferred from the previous board. Two applications are being recommended for grant award, with a total award value of £33,000.
- 1.3 The next deadline for applications is 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

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## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the board approves the recommended grant awards, as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report to the total value of £33,000.

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## 3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 2 March 2018, Council agreed to commit £1.5million (£0.5mil in revenue and £1mil in capital) to establish a Community Empowerment Fund that will be used to support community asset transfers by providing up-front investment in the condition of assets prior to transfer. It should be noted the £1.5million is a one-off investment.
- 3.2 On 20th June 2018, Leadership Board agreed the key objectives of the fund, and agreed that allocations of the Community Empowerment Fund be made by Communities, Housing and Planning Board.
- 3.3 The key objectives of the fund are to support and develop community organisations with a specific focus on assisting those organisations that wish to acquire and develop community assets in three ways:
- **Project:** Support the development of the Business Plan for an asset
  - **Organisation:** Develop the organisational capacity to manage and develop an asset
  - **Property:** Upfront investment in assets prior to or after transfer
- 3.3 The fund is comprised of £0.5mil in revenue funding and £1m in capital funding. As such, it is anticipated that revenue funding will support applications to develop the project or organisation, and the capital funding will be used to support property costs.
- 3.4 It will be important applicants to the fund will be able to demonstrate the following:
- Able to demonstrate positive impact for local communities
  - The community are involved in the design and delivery of the project
  - Good working relationships and partnership with others
  - The project is financially sustainable
  - Strategic fit with the fund objectives and criteria

- Value for money and leverage of additional funding and/or resources

3.5 The award of funding from the Community Empowerment fund does not commit the Council to a particular outcome as part of the Asset Transfer process, which will be subject to a separate decision making process through relevant governance arrangements.

#### 4. **Summary of applications**

4.1 One application was received by the deadline date of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018, and another application was deferred for decision making at the previous board.

4.2 A cross-service panel of officers have been established to review and assess the applications against the agreed objectives and criteria outlined at Section 3.2 and 3.3 of this report.

4.3 Two applications are recommended for approval at this Board, one full award and one partial award. A summary of the applications can be found at Appendix 1.

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### **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** - Council approved the allocation of £1.5million to establish the Community Empowerment Fund in March 2018.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None

3. **Community/Council Planning –**

The Renfrewshire Community Plan 2017-2027 states “There are new opportunities for communities to use, manage or take ownership of public sector assets and also to participate in the planning and delivery of services through the Community Empowerment Act. Over the last few years, there are over a dozen examples of community groups that have taken over public sector buildings or land in Renfrewshire, and more community groups are now thinking about assets and participation requests. As a partnership, we are committed to supporting this wherever we can.”

The Renfrewshire Council Plan also has a number of relevant priorities as part of the ‘Building strong, safe and resilient communities’ outcome. These include:

- Strengthening existing community networks and empowering local people to become more involved in their area and the services delivered there.
  - Working with communities to support the regeneration of some of our most disadvantaged areas.
  - Ensuring all towns and villages in Renfrewshire are better connected and able to participate in social, cultural or economic activities across the Renfrewshire area.
4. **Legal-** The establishment of this fund supports the delivery of a number of the Council's obligations as part of the Community Empowerment Act 2015.
  5. **Property/Assets** - The development of this fund will support Asset Transfer, and support the Council to meet its obligations as part of the Community Empowerment Act.
  6. **Information Technology** – None
  7. **Equality & Human Rights** - It is anticipated that the fund will have a positive impact on equality and human rights, and applications for the fund will be assessed to ensure they take relevant equalities implications into account.
  8. **Health & Safety** – None
  9. **Procurement** – None
  10. **Risk** – None
  11. **Privacy Impact** – None
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None

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### List of Background Papers

- (a) Background Paper 1 – None

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**Author:** Annabelle Armstrong-Walter, Strategic Partnerships and Inequalities Manager, 0141 618 5968

## Appendix 1: Community Empowerment Fund – Round Two – Recommendations for Communities, Housing and Planning Board

Applicant	Project description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust- Struthers Water Action Group (New Application)	Seeking £8k funding to conduct feasibility study in order to develop a water abstraction facility to be run as a community owned business. This would avoid loss of underground water source on the site of the former Struthers lemonade factory.	£8,000	Award £8,000	This development of this proposal is still in early stages, with a business case required to clarify key aspects around viability and sustainability.	Lochwinnoch
Kustom Kruizers (Application deferred from last Communities Housing and Planning Board)	Seeking £50k to refurbish former toilet block in Robertson Park. The project aims to engage young people in bike maintenance in Renfrew, and are seeking funding to refurbish former toilet block and turn it into bicycle workspace, hub and training centre.	£50,000	Award £25,000	Recommendation to award £25,000 contribution towards costs of full refurbishment of Robertson Park toilets. This Asset Transfer application is still at an early stage, with drawdown of this funding available on the successful completion of this process.	Renfrew