Renfrewshire Council

Minute of Meeting
Forum for Empowering Communities Group

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 27 September 2022	14:00	Remotely via Teams,

PRESENT

A Thomson, Bridgewater Housing Association; A McNiven, Engage Renfrewshire; S Cruickshank, Renfrewshire Access Panel; M Mathieson, Barnados;

CHAIR

A McNiven, Chief Executive, Engage Renfrewshire, presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

R Robertson, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership; A McBride and K McIntyre (both Engage Renfrewshire); D Lockyer (CAB); D Pole, S Graham and R Devine (all Renfrewshire Council).

APOLOGIES

M Fotheringham, Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau and C Forbes, ROAR.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to commencement of the meeting.

1 MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Renfrewshire Forum for Empowering Communities Group held on 24 May 2022.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 ROLLING ACTION LOG

The Rolling Action Log was submitted for approval.

DECIDED:

(a) That the update be noted; and

(b) That the Rolling Action Log be approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING

An update was given in respect of the Disability Resource Centre.

S Graham advised that the next round of Local Partnership meetings would be held soon and it was agreed that A McNiven and S Graham would meet with A Thomson to brief him on how the Local Partnerships worked.

DECIDED: That the updates be noted.

4 COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING FUND

A McBride gave a verbal update on the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund.

She advised that the Fund was now in its second year and Engage Renfrewshire were given just over £550,000 to distribute to the third sector for new applicants and also previously awarded projects. The Fund would close on 31 October 2022 and successful groups would be notified early December.

DECIDED: That the verbal presentation be noted.

5 REFUGEE SUPPORT UPATE

K McIntyre gave a verbal update on refugee support and the work In-Ren was currently undertaking.

She advised that Ukranian refugees had been coming through Glasgow Airport as well as other refugees. As a result, there were now a couple of sizeable communities within Renfrewshire who were receiving short-term support with a view to long-term support. Engage were working to support the refugees and co-ordinate the sector response by putting various initiatives in places.

K McIntyre shared IN-Ren Race Equality Toolkit. She advised that it aimed to support employers and practitioners in Renfrewshire to better understand the barriers faced by ethnically diverse communities to accessing services. The toolkit also aimed to inspire action and inform learning to promote race equality.

R Robertson gave an update on the Integration Network.

It was noted that S Cruickshank had leaflets entitled "Improving Physical and Social Accessibility" in relation to having physical meetings which he was happy to distribute.

DECIDED: That the verbal presentation be noted.

6 **REFRESH OF COMMUNITY PLAN**

S Graham, Partnerships Planning and Development Manager, Renfrewshire Council gave an update on the refresh of the Community Plan (the Plan).

He advised that the Plan had now gone through a partial refresh with a change of emphasis on some of the activities and action. There was a refocus on poverty, anti-poverty, the cost-of-living crisis and climate change.

He thanked everyone that was involved in the consultation. The Plan had now gone through the Community Planning Executive Group and was to be submitted to full Council on Thursday 29 September 2022 for formal approval. It was noted that a copy of the Plan would be circulated to members once it had been approved. S Graham advised that the Plan would form the basis for future discussion and action.

DECIDED:

(a) That a copy of the Plan be circulated to members once it had been approved; and

(b) That the verbal update be noted.

7 **FORUM FOR EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES - WORKPLAN DEVELOPMENT**

The Chair led discussion on the development of agenda items for the Forum for the coming year.

The following items were discussed:

• Ethnic Diversity of Renfrewshire – Updates from IN-Ren will be supplied on a regular basis;
• For consideration - Voluntary Sector Groups and impact of crisis - There is a tension between agencies seeking to help while perhaps having costs cut – for example, a rent freeze will impact on housing associations potential to do additional support work. This point should be shared with the Executive group as an 'alert' – a danger that local agencies are under ever increasing pressure with less and less resource;
• Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Programme – Updates will be supplied on a regular basis till conclusion (activity ceasing around December 2023);
• Supporting the workforce within 3rd Sector and Voluntary Organisations - Many of us are employers – what additional actions can we take to ensure our staff are supported during this time;
• Reaching those with real need versus organisations staying within financial constraints (living wage/procurement/hardship funds) - We need to act to ensure that phrases like 'warm banks' are not normalised – the Forum should be vocal around this issue;
• Winter Connections Programme (update at next meeting);

•	Providing Confidential Support - the importance of delivering services unobtrusively; the delivery of community services should be dignified, without stigmatisation and should be a service of 'choice'; and
•	The Positivity of Connectiveness – the opportunity when delivering services such as designed to tackle the #CostofLivingCrisis to also tackle social isolation and increase connectiveness.

It was agreed that the list of possible agenda items would be circulated to members for further refinement and agreement.

DECIDED: That the list of possible agenda items be circulated to members for further refinement and agreement.

8	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

DECIDED: That it be agreed that the next meeting of the Forum for Empowering Communities Group would take place on Tuesday 15 November 2022 at 2pm.