
To: Communities and Housing Policy Board

On: 21 March 2024

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Community Funding Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines a series of recommendations in relation to the award of grant funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund, following consideration of applications by an officer grant panel. The current application round for the Sustainable Communities Fund ended on 31 March 2024.
- 1.2 A core focus of the Sustainable Communities Fund is to support the development of community assets, infrastructure and capacity, with £1.5m of initial funding available through both the Council and the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 1.3 Section 3 of the report provides an overview of the Sustainable Communities Fund and Section 4 sets out funding recommendations for consideration by the board as follows:
- 7 applications are recommended for approval
 - 4 applications are recommended to be deferred at this time to allow for further information gathering and engagement on applications with the community organisations concerned
 - 5 applications are not recommended for funding, as these were not assessed as meeting the funding criteria by the officer panel.
 - 3 applications were considered to be withdrawn; and
 - 1 application was remitted to the Villages Investment Fund
- 1.4 Members are asked to note that where projects are not recommended for award, this does not reflect the quality and value of these projects and associated organisations at a local level, and officers will work with wider partners to signpost these to other appropriate funding mechanisms.

- 1.5 Full detail on all applications and related recommendations relating to the Sustainable Communities Fund is provided in Appendix 1 of this report. Elected members are asked to note that the next funding round ends on 31st May 2024.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Board approve the funding recommendations detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of this report in relation to the proposed allocation of the Sustainable Communities Fund, totalling £284,339.

3. Background

- 3.1 To strengthen monitoring and oversight of funding recommendations made in relation to a number of specific Council funding streams, the Policy and Partnerships service now submits a community funding paper to each cycle of the Communities and Housing Board. This includes recommendations in relation to funding awards through the Greenspaces Fund, Villages Investment Fund and the recently launched Sustainable Communities Fund which is the core focus of the report this cycle.
- 3.2 As elected members will be aware, in March 2023 Council agreed to combine the remaining monies from the Community Empowerment Fund and Climate Change Action Fund to create a single Sustainable Communities Fund. This was further boosted by £650,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Communities and Place for the support and improvement of community assets and infrastructure. £1.5m was initially available as funding to support projects and organisations through this Fund.
- 3.3 On 20th September 2023, Leadership Board approved the key objectives and criteria of the fund and agreed that applications to the Sustainable Communities Fund be submitted to the Communities and Housing Board for final approval with a key focus on community infrastructure, place and climate.
- 3.4 The Sustainable Communities Fund utilises a tiered funding model to reflect different-sized community projects as well as the varying levels of support required at different stages of development. A tiered approach helps to ensure ease of access to a proportionate application process to enable a range of initiatives that align with community empowerment:
- **Small - awards up to £10K:** capital and revenue funding to develop local projects and initiatives which are targeted at enabling community participation and promoting community collaboration and which build resilience within our communities. This level would be targeted at groups where a small amount of money can make a significant difference to enabling community participation.
 - **Intermediate – awards of £10K to £25K:** capital and revenue funding to develop projects or organisations with a focus on improving community infrastructure and which have the potential to be replicated in other areas; and
 - **large – awards up to £100K:** larger capital grants with the aim of supporting communities that aspire to take ownership or develop land or buildings in local communities.

- 3.5 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), which makes up part of the Sustainable Communities Fund, comprises a clear split between capital and revenue funding with set amounts allocated over financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. UKSPF will be allocated to approved projects which meet the criteria and to maximise drawdown within each financial year.

4. Sustainable Communities Fund – Round 3 recommendations

- 4.1 The third funding round closed on 31 March 2024 and an officer panel met twice during April and May 2024 to assess all new and deferred applications against the agreed objectives and criteria outlined within the funding guidance. In summary the panel has recommended that:

- 7 applications are recommended for approval totalling (£284,339)
- 4 applications are recommended to be deferred at this time to allow for further information gathering and engagement on applications with the community organisations concerned
- 5 applications are not recommended for funding, as these were not assessed as meeting the funding criteria by the officer panel.
- 3 applications were considered to be withdrawn; and
- 1 application was remitted to the Villages Investment Fund

- 4.2 The seven applications recommended for approval through the Sustainable Communities Fund in this round are:

- Finding Your Feet (£92,245)
- Linwood Community Gardens (£24,507)
- LEAP – Thrive Together (£24,900)
- Sculpture House Collective CIC Page/Park Feasibility Study (£8,940)
- Ferguslie Community Development Trust (£24,747)
- Renfrew Town Sea Scouts (£10,000)
- Outspoken Arts (£99,000)

- 4.3 Four applications were submitted where further information requires to be gathered and evaluated before officers are able to make recommendations on these applications to the Board. To allow for further work to be carried out with groups relating to their proposals, it is recommended that applications are deferred as follows:

- RIG Arts
- Tannahill Centre
- Friends of Barshaw Park
- Caledonia Bowling Club

- 4.4 Following assessment by the officer panel, the following applications are not recommended for a funding award, as they do not meet the criteria of the fund:

- Bishopton Tennis Club
- Bishopton Rugby Club

- I was Gonnae
 - Cameron Dance Group
 - LEAP – Zero Emission Shared Transport
- 4.5 An application received for the Kilbarchan Smile Project has been remitted to the Villages Investment Fund, whilst applications from Kirklandneuk Growers Group, St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation and Ralston Primary Out of School Care were considered withdrawn.
- 4.6 Members are asked to note that where projects are not recommended for award, this does not reflect the quality and value of these projects and associated organisations at a local level, and officers will work with wider partners to signpost to other appropriate funding mechanisms.
- 4.7 Detailed information in relation to each application is provided in Appendix 1. Elected members will note that for some projects this will require the development of partnership agreements or specific grant conditions to be progressed with relevant community organisations should funding recommendations be agreed by the Board.
- 4.8 Subject to the approval of recommendations as set out in Appendix 1, £284,339 would be allocated to successful projects through Round 3 of the fund (£198,252 Capital and £86,087 Revenue). Of the total £284,339, £157,194 will be funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (£121,007 Capital and £36,187 Revenue).
- 4.9 The next funding round will close on 31st May 2024, and officers will continue to work with all new applicants and deferred applicants to progress information and proposals proactively over the coming months.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – This paper recommends the allocation of £284,339 of funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund (£198,252 Capital and £86,087 Revenue).
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the Fund set out in the paper supports engagement and collaboration with local communities on a range of activities which align with the new Council Plan 2022-2027; Our Renfrewshire Community Plan and/or Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero.
4. **Legal** - none.
5. **Property/Assets** – none.
6. **Information Technology** – none.
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - the Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health and Safety** – none.

9. **Procurement** – none.
 10. **Risk** – none.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – none.
 12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none.
 13. **Climate Risk** – the Sustainable Communities Fund aligns with the themes within Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero and the delivery of relevant projects will assist the local response to the climate emergency.
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Appendix 1: Summary of applications with Panel recommendations

List of Background Papers:

Sustainable Communities Fund Guidance

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