

**To:** Leadership Board

**On:** 1 May 2024

---

**Report by:** Chief Executive

---

**Heading:** Funding for Engage Renfrewshire 2024/25

---

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This paper outlines proposals for the allocation of £360,610 of grant funding to Engage Renfrewshire for 2024/25. Together with annual core Scottish Government funding and wider income generation, this grant funding enables Engage Renfrewshire to provide a range of activities and supports across the area and to operate as Renfrewshire's third sector interface organisation.
- 1.2 The level of funding remains unchanged from previous funding allocations, and if approved would be supported by a grant agreement between Engage Renfrewshire and the Council, subject to ongoing monitoring. The agreement has historically set out the key priorities and activities to be delivered by Engage Renfrewshire in respect of the grant funding, however this remains flexible to ensure that both organisations can continue to work together to respond to emerging issues. For example, in recent years this has been demonstrated as local partners navigated COVID and the current and ongoing cost of living crisis.
- 1.3 Information is provided in Section 4 in relation to the activities delivered by Engage Renfrewshire in 23/24 in relation to the grant funding allocated, whilst section 5 highlights the priorities that will be progressed during 24/25 subject to approval of the grant funding.

- 1.4 As elected members will be aware, the Council is progressing its Connected Communities programme which is being led by the Head of Policy and Partnerships. As part of this, work is being undertaken to map existing mechanisms and resources for developing community capacity in Renfrewshire, with the funding for Engage Renfrewshire included within the scope of this review.
- 1.5 Officials from Engage Renfrewshire have worked very proactively with officers during 2023 to provide detailed information on the activities undertaken by the organisation. This is being used to inform more detailed design work being progressed to develop the Connected Communities model. It is anticipated that further updates will be provided to elected members on these proposals and future funding proposals during Autumn 2024.
- 

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that elected members:
- approves grant funding of £360,610 to Engage Renfrewshire to deliver the priorities outlined in section 5 of this report.
- 

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Engage Renfrewshire is the designated Third Sector Interface (TSI) for the Renfrewshire Council area. Engage provides services to support the operation and growth of community and voluntary sector organisations (also known as the third sector), including Social Enterprises, within the area. The organisation:
- supports social enterprises, community development trusts, charitable groups, mutual aid groups and more.
  - helps groups to build capacity and to be safe, by providing information, advice and training for everything from charitable structures to funding.
  - support volunteer involving organisations with recruitment and volunteer support, and work with individuals to find them rewarding and uplifting volunteer opportunities. They also work with local charities and public sector bodies to promote volunteering for all.
- 3.2 Engage Renfrewshire is funded to provide support to local community and voluntary sector organisations by the Scottish Government, and to deliver against the TSIs outcome framework for Scotland.

- 3.3 Engage Renfrewshire is based in the Engage Hub in Ferguslie Park, and a number of local organisations from both the third and public sector are tenants within the Hub. Membership of Engage Renfrewshire is free to organisations and individuals.
- 3.4 Engage also generates its own income through trading, through the provision of financial and payroll services to individuals, organisations and voluntary groups.
- 

#### **4. Key activities delivered during in 2023/24**

- 4.1 In April 2023, Leadership Board approved the allocation of £360,610 in grant funding to Engage Renfrewshire for 23/24 and a grant support agreement was subsequently put into place to deliver a number of identified and agreed priorities. Progress against this programme of work has been regularly monitored by officers with key activities including:
- Building capacity within the community and voluntary sector by supporting members to access development, support and funding. Engage membership continues to grow and Engage now has a membership of 448.
  - Co-ordinating the Renfrewshire Social Enterprise network, enabling its 114 members to access specialist support to develop their organisations. Engage have helped RenSEN members secure an additional £152,000 of investment and seen £57,000 in cash grants allocated.
  - Collaborating with Renfrewshire Council's procurement team to pilot a new approach to the Community Benefits menu, with a focus on raising the importance of community engagement at a pre-tender stage
  - Supporting and promoting various local funding initiatives including Multiply, the Winter Connections programme, Culture Arts and Health Social Care and Cultural Heritage and Event Funding. In particular over 2023/24, Engage played a key role in supporting the design of community funding approaches as well as assisting with partnership decision making.
  - Managing and distributing over £0.5m of funding from the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund - the overarching aim of the Fund is to support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing and/or mitigate and protect against the impact of distress and mental ill health within the adult population. Engage are now working alongside the HSCP to deliver the Renfrewshire Community Wellbeing Network.

- Supporting the Community Planning Partnership, including chairing the Forum for Empowering Communities, connecting Renfrewshire's third sector to the wider Community Planning agenda and supporting other partnership groups and activities relating to children and young people, employability, connectedness and mental health and wellbeing
- Childrens Services Partnership development, providing insight and voice of third sector and also facilitating the Our Children Network
- Representatives on all Local Partnerships, and in particular supporting a partnership approach to identifying appropriate community funding sources
- Supporting local volunteering activity, promoting Volunteers Week and co-ordinating Saltire Awards across Renfrewshire. There are 1,483 potential volunteers registered on Team Kinetic system, receiving updates from 121 provides on volunteer opportunities.
- Continuing to lead the Renfrewshire Affordable Credit Alliance, and supporting third sector organisations to support people around affordable credit options. Initially funded by Renfrewshire Council, Engage successfully secured external funding to continue this work and moving forward there will be increased focus on illegal money lending prevention, while promoting the affordable borrowing options.
- Establishing and growing the Renfrewshire Integration Network (IN-Ren) and supporting wider community integration of New Scots in Renfrewshire. The N-Ren training programme attracted 226 attendees to sessions across the year.

4.2 Further information on Engage Renfrewshire's full range of services and activities for 2022-23 can be found within their Annual Report <sup>1</sup> published on their website.

---

## 5. Grant funding for 2024/25

5.1 As outlined in Section 1, officers recommend that funding of £360,610 is allocated to Engage Renfrewshire for 2024/25. This would support the organisation to continue to operate in Renfrewshire, and deliver the following key strategic priorities in partnership with the Council

- Building Renfrewshire's community and voluntary sector capacity
- Representing the third sector in the delivery of our Community Plan and its strategic priorities
- Providing the strategic and operational lead for volunteering in Renfrewshire

---

<sup>1</sup> [engage-annual-report-2023.pdf \(engagerenfrewshire.org\)](#)

- 5.2 A refreshed outcomes framework has been developed to support this funding arrangement if approved. As outlined in Section 1, this remains flexible in order that support can be requested by the Council and community planning partnership in relation to emerging priorities. Particular strategic priorities for 2024/25 include supporting emerging programmes of work in relation to Fairer Renfrewshire, Climate emergency, Digital, Equalities, Migration, Asylum/New Scots and Community Learning and Development.
- 5.3 Appendix 1 sets out a one-page summary of Engage Renfrewshire's Business Plan for 2024/25, which will be used to inform monitoring of performance during 2024/25, alongside the Grant Support Agreement.
- 5.4 Engage Renfrewshire will continue to submit a quarterly performance monitoring report to officers in Renfrewshire Council Chief Executive's Service for review and agreement.
- 

## **6. Connected Communities programme**

- 6.1 When considering funding arrangements for 23/24, elected members were asked to note that work has commenced to formally review the funding arrangement with Engage Renfrewshire going forward, linked to the Connected Communities programme led by the Head of Policy and Partnerships.
- 6.2 Throughout 23/24, officers have worked alongside Engage Renfrewshire to review the current funding model. Several areas have been identified where there may be further alignment and efficiencies which will be explored as the Council develops and implements its new model. These include:
- reviewing how we support community and voluntary organisations to build their capacity more broadly, including the balance of tasks carried out by various Council services as well as partners such as Engage,
  - reviewing the Council's strategy and resources related to both its own investment in communities, but the effectiveness and opportunities in leveraging in additional external investment to support the voluntary and community sector,
  - the potential role of the third sector interface in the transition to greater locality-based working, particularly the support to Local Partnerships and support and resourcing of the Local Action Plans to be developed throughout 2024,
  - how the Council supports social enterprise, and connection to wider economic development activity
  - where Engage provides direct support to the deliver of key Council services, such as the support offered in co-ordinating the distribution of community benefits

- 6.3 Engage have proactively supported the initial phase of work by providing all additional information requested. As we move into the detailed design phase of the programme it is anticipated that further updates will be provided to Leadership Board by Autumn 2024, including recommendations in relation to funding for external organisations to support the programme.
- 6.4 Officers will continue to work very closely with the Chief Executive of Engage Renfrewshire to continue to develop and strengthen this relationship as the review progresses and proposals are brought forward for consideration by elected members.
- 

### Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – commitment of £360,610 in grant funding to Engage Renfrewshire which can be met from the Chief Executive’s Service budget for 24/25.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – funding for the Third Sector Interface supports the third sector contribution to all priorities detailed within both the Council and Community Plans.
4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & 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. Supporting the Third Sector Interface would have a positive impact on equalities outcomes, by developing and engaging a range of diverse voices in the community planning process and supporting the development of equalities-led third sector organisations.
8. **Health & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** - None
10. **Risk** – Funding the Third Sector Interface mitigates risk of community and voluntary sector organisations not being able to contribute to community planning outcomes.
11. **Privacy Impact** - None

12. **Cosla Policy Position** – Cosla supports the principle of community planning as a means of improving outcomes and reducing inequalities and the importance of Third Sector Interfaces in delivering this.
13. **Climate implications** - no direct implications, however Engage have supported all partnership work in this area and encouraged active participation across the sector.

---

**List of Background Papers** - None

---

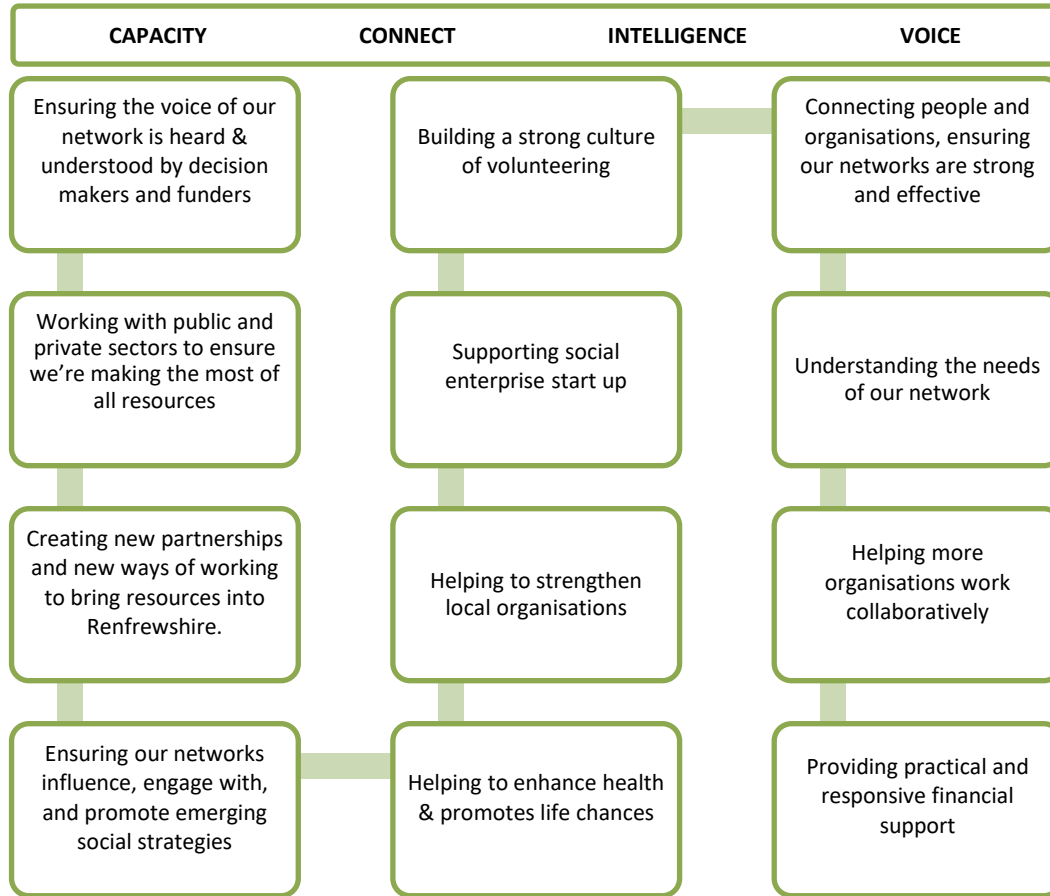
**Author:** Annabelle Armstrong-Walter, Strategic Partnerships and Inequalities Manager, [annabelle.armstrong-walter@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:annabelle.armstrong-walter@renfrewshire.gov.uk)





# Engage Renfrewshire – Business Plan 2024/25

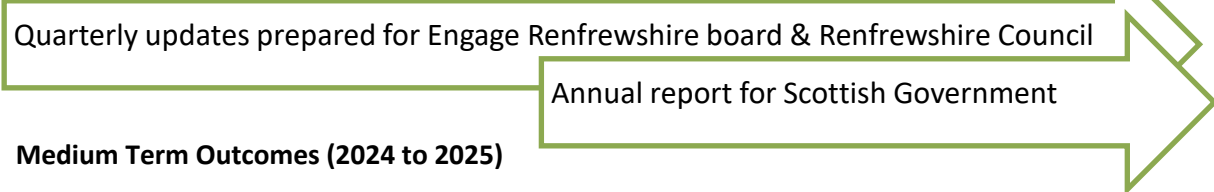
*Our aim is to help charities and community groups to be well managed, well resourced, well represented and well connected.*



## During 2024/25 we will:

- Support Scottish Government, Renfrewshire's Community Planning Partnership and Renfrewshire's communities
- Support cross sector partnership work (CLD, Drugs & Alcohol, Whole Family Wellbeing etc)
- Align ourselves to key strategies including the Social Enterprise Action Plan and the Volunteering Action Plan, ensuring the strength of the sector's role in supporting recovery
- Deliver on agreements associated with the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing fund
- Support high standards of volunteer recruitment and management within our membership while promoting volunteering as part the employability pipeline
- Promote social enterprise as a viable business model through workshops and training programmes
- Assist partners to increase and develop their awareness and understanding of the local third sector
- Promote Engage Financial Services to all members and partners
- Arrange and facilitate area based initiatives in support of developing community assets
- Support the delivery of the IN-Ren Network and support equality
- Support external funding applications being submitted by members
- Provide advice and support in response to humanitarian crises as they arise
- Survey the impact of volunteering
- Promote digital as a platform for engagement and use digital communications to promote the work of the Third Sector
- Deliver a training timetable reflective of the needs of our members
- Support promotions and engagement sessions around access to fair and affordable forms of credit
- Work well with the private sector through engagement with Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce
- Promote financial governance as a key responsibility for local organisations and local trustees
- Develop a response to the National Health & Wellbeing Survey

## Schedule of Monitoring



## Medium Term Outcomes (2024 to 2025)

