

**To: Council**

**On: 4 March 2021**

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**Report by: Chief Executive**

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**Heading: Impact of COVID-19 on Renfrewshire's Communities – Social  
Renewal Plan**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 In September 2020, Council agreed that a community impact assessment should be undertaken to develop a deeper understanding of the impact of the pandemic on local people, and that this would inform the develop of a Social Renewal Plan for Renfrewshire setting out how the Council will work with partners to tackle both the impact of COVID-19 and existing inequalities across Renfrewshire's communities.
- 1.2 It was recognised that the impact on communities would have to be assessed over an extended period of time of at least one year, as changes to for example employment, income, relationships and mental health and wellbeing may develop over time. Ongoing restrictions also continue to impact local people, businesses and communities and there is an ongoing need for the Council to work with partners to identify and respond to any emerging issues as these arise.
- 1.3 This report builds on the report to Council on 17 December 2020, which highlighted the initial findings from the community impact assessment in relation to issues such as income, employment and health and wellbeing. The report noted that further engagement was required over the winter period to conclude this initial phase of the community impact assessment, including

targeted engagement with groups that may have been more disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

- 1.4 Section 4 of this report provides a summary of the extensive work that has taken place to complete this first phase of the community impact assessment, including a COVID-19 impact survey issued to 1500 local people, engagement with the Local Partnerships and targeted engagement with a range of different equality groups.
- 1.5 All of the information gathered to date has been now been analysed and key findings have been identified. It is clear from these findings, that local residents have been, and continue to be, significantly impacted by the pandemic. Section 5 of this report, highlights a number of key areas of concern including:
- *The impact of high levels of COVID-19 infections and deaths recorded across Renfrewshire's communities. Local people remain very concerned about the risk of themselves or someone they know becoming ill due to COVID-19, and there is a need to consider support for people that experienced bereavement during the pandemic.*
  - *The increasing number of low-income households that are struggling to manage financially and need support with food and fuel costs.*
  - *Potentially high levels of local people feeling worried about their physical health and who have not accessed help or have been unable to access treatment due to ongoing restrictions.*
  - *The significant impact of the pandemic on mental health, with significant levels of anxiety and loneliness being reported across Renfrewshire.*
  - *Concern in relation to the ongoing impact of restrictions on many services across society which provide opportunities for support, advice, socialisation and care, and the impact that this has had on physical and mental health.*
  - *The impact on children and young people and their families of lockdown restrictions and changes to learning, assessment and examinations and the reduced opportunities for socialisation.*
  - *The positive benefits that digital access has brought to many households across Renfrewshire were recognised strongly, however for specific groups of people there remain real barriers to access.*
- 1.6 There is strong evidence that the pandemic has impacted some people and communities more profoundly than others. The starting point of local people in terms of the inequalities or challenges that they faced before the pandemic has been important, with issues such as low income, insecure employment, caring responsibilities and disabilities all being exacerbated by the pandemic and its associated restrictions. It is clear that targeted work needs to continue

to identify people that need help, and to break down barriers to allow them to access this support in the most appropriate way.

- 1.7 The role that community groups and organisations have played locally in terms of responding to the pandemic has been fundamental, and the close partnership working that has developed with the Council is widely recognised as a key strength. Groups and organisations remain committed to this work but have raised concerns in relation to the availability of national and local funding available going forward to maintain and develop this role.
- 1.8 The research findings have been used to develop an initial **Social Renewal Plan** which sets out a range of priority actions which the Council and partners should take forward. At the heart of this plan, there is a **focus on improving wellbeing and tackling the inequalities** that exist across Renfrewshire's communities. This is the first step in the process of social renewal, with more detailed work to commence with community planning partners in late March 2021.
- 1.9 It is critical that the Council continues to engage with local people and communities to take forward the local response. There are very strong foundations upon which to build locally to respond to both existing and new challenges arising from the pandemic, and it is important that local people are involved in shaping the future, whatever this may look like following the pandemic.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that members:
  - Note the progress that has been achieved in terms of assessing the impact of COVID-19 on local people and communities to date;
  - Note the emerging issues being experienced locally, as identified through the community impact process;
  - Agree the initial Social Renewal Action plan attached as appendix 1 to this report in response to these key issues; and
  - Agree that updates on the Social Renewal Plan will be brought back to the Council's Leadership Board on a regular basis.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 In September 2020, Council agreed that a community impact assessment should be undertaken in Renfrewshire, in order to develop a much deeper understanding of the impact that COVID-19 has had on local people and communities. It was recognised that the issues being experienced were likely to emerge over an extended period of time, and that partners would need to

work together to continually assess and respond to challenges as these emerged over time.

- 3.2 Although it was agreed this process would primarily focus on the impact of the pandemic, the opportunity to tackle some of the existing inequalities across Renfrewshire's communities was also recognised. Council agreed that the approach to be undertaken was one of "listening and learning", and that a Social Renewal Plan would be brought forward to set out how the Council, partners and communities could work together to respond to the issues being experienced.
- 3.3 It is also important to explore some of the positive developments that have emerged through the pandemic, most notably in terms of the community response and the partnership working in place to support local people and communities most in need. The strength of this partnership working in Renfrewshire was recognised in a national report produced by the Carnegie Trust and it has been important to recognise the role of community groups and organisations by involving them in this process.
- 3.4 The community impact assessment process has encompassed the following activities:
- Analysis of all available data - on service demands, national and local data and research.
  - A programme of listening events and surveys to gain a deeper insight into the issues being experienced by different demographic groups.
  - Engagement with Local Partnerships on key issues impacting local communities.
- 3.5 On 17 December 2020, Council considered an update on the community impact assessment process, with particular focus on the issues being experienced around income and employment and health and wellbeing, and consideration of the extensive support that has been provided across communities by local groups, organisations and services during the pandemic.
- 3.6 It was agreed that further targeted engagement would be prioritised with these groups between December and February 2021, and be drawn with wider research to inform the development of an initial Social Renewal Plan for Renfrewshire. Section 4 of this report provides an update on the community impact assessment process.

## **4 Community Impact Assessment – Update**

- 4.1 Between December 2020 and February 2021 officers worked with partners across sectors and communities to finalise this first phase of the community impact assessment in Renfrewshire. The key areas of activity include:
- Initial analysis of the findings from the 2020 COVID-19 Impact survey of the Renfrewshire Public Services Panel.

- Engagement with all seven Local Partnerships on the impact of the pandemic at a community level.
- Engagement with local representative groups and organisations on issues impacting people from BME communities, women and people with a disability in Renfrewshire.
- Further analysis of national policy developments and research in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic with a specific focus at a local level on housing and children and young people.

## **4.2 Public Services Panel – COVID-19 Impact Survey (December 2020)**

4.2.1 In December 2020, a survey was issued to approximately 1500 Renfrewshire residents through the Renfrewshire Public Services Panel, with a focus on gaining a deeper insight on the impact of COVID-19 on issues such as wellbeing, income and employment, support needs and digital access. 897 responses were received to the survey, which could be accessed online or through a postal return and was managed by an independent research company on behalf of the Council.

4.2.2 The results from the survey indicate that the biggest impact of the pandemic has been in relation to mental health and wellbeing. Respondents reported experiencing a range of worries during the pandemic with:

- 66% worried about their/family's future
- 44% worried about helping / supporting a family member that needed help
- 34% worried about health treatment they needed
- 33% experiencing social isolation and feeling lonely
- 20% worried about job security, losing their job or being furloughed
- 20% feeling stress of working from home

4.2.3 Those worries were also still evident now with 70% respondents reporting that they were worried about a family member becoming unwell/seriously from COVID-19 or indeed themselves (42%). Approximately one-third of respondents were also worried about their own or a family member's mental health, whilst just over 1 in 5 (22%) respondents reported that they are currently worried about their financial situation or employment.

4.2.4 The majority (65%) of people said they feel a little or a lot less happy than they did before the pandemic, and almost half (47%) reported feeling lonely some, all or most of the time.

4.2.5 Panel members were asked to think about how they were managing financially before the pandemic, and how this compared to their experience now. 74% of respondents felt that they had been managing their finances quite well or well before, however this dropped to 62% now. Whilst the majority of respondents reported they did not require help at present, 8% of respondents were experiencing difficulty paying their energy bills, 6% were finding it difficult to get the food or medicine they need and 4% were finding it difficult to pay their rent or mortgage.

4.2.6 Survey respondents reported that they had received support from a range of sources during the pandemic mainly to check they were OK, bring food or prescriptions or support with an existing condition. 33% of people reported that they still need help now, with 11% of people stating they need help with their mental health in particular.

4.2.7 Further more detailed analysis of the survey results will be undertaken at an SIMD level.

### 4.3 Targeted engagement

#### Local communities

4.3.1 Presentations were delivered at all seven Local Partnerships over January and February 2021 to present early interim findings from the Public Services Panel, with a view to gaining feedback on local perceptions of the results and also providing an opportunity for Local Partnerships to reflect the impacts of the pandemic into their Local Priorities.

- In some cases, local data shows that issues already identified by Local Partnerships are being exacerbated, for example, social isolation had already been identified by a number of Local Partnerships as an area of focus but is now felt to be a more significant issue. In other cases, some Local Partnerships are seeking further information around new areas of concern, such as access to digital devices.
- Further to this, the results of the Public Services Panel survey show a variation in results at a locality level which warrants further exploration, particularly as areas understood to be more affluent consistently show more favourable results compared to more deprived areas.
- It is also important to note that in many cases community organisations providing support during the pandemic have often been very focussed on smaller communities and geographies, and Local Partnerships were keen to recognise the role of groups operating to support people in their particular area.

#### Equalities groups

4.3.2 As outlined within section 3 of the report, through the initial phases of the community impact assessment it was evident that some specific groups are also experiencing more challenges as a result of the pandemic, including those from black and minority ethnic communities, women, and people with a disability. Further targeted engagement work was carried out with community organisations representing these groups to gain a deeper understanding of some of the emerging issues. Key findings are highlighted below:

- **Disabled participants** reported adverse impacts of extended periods of shielding or self isolation due to underlying health conditions, such as greater anxiety about contracting COVID-19 (especially when attending hospital appointments) and greater levels of isolation.

- While efforts to move services online were recognised, there were also concerns about higher levels of digital exclusion for disabled people generally, as well as specific challenges around the poor level of accessibility of some digital platforms and the additional costs of accessibility software and equipment.
- **Black and minority ethnic participants** reported a lack of information and support, particularly with regard to medical information. It was reported that a 'one size fits all' approach had left people feeling less safe and sometimes stigmatised. It was also felt that some people in BAME and Polish communities may have less extended family and support networks available, with increasing childcare responsibilities having a greater impact.
- Digital exclusion was also referenced again for BAME communities, who felt digital exclusion was higher and that lack of access has exacerbated social isolation where people are unable to travel to visit family.
- **Women** also reported a number of specific impacts, such as isolation from networks such as mothers' groups and extended family, which were vital sources of support pre-pandemic for women with primary care responsibilities. It was felt that responsibilities for home schooling had also fallen disproportionately to women, adding to workload, stress and anxiety.
- Financial insecurity due to the impact on the economy has also affected women due to gendered employment patterns. Many women in low income jobs have been severely impacted by jobs ending or being furloughed, putting further strain on household budgets.

#### 4.4 Children and Young People

- 4.4.1 A number of national reports have been published in relation to the impact of the pandemic on children and young people, considering the impact of lockdown restrictions, changes to learning, assessment and examinations, opportunities for socialisation and wider family support. Two reports published in Winter 2020 are of particular relevance - a Scottish Government Report on the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people, and a report summarising the results of partnership survey conducted by the Scottish Youth Parliament, YouthLink Scotland and Young Scot called Lockdown Lowdown.
- 4.4.2 Both of these reports note significant impacts in terms of mental and physical wellbeing, with boredom, isolation, too much screen time and poor routine all being described as particular issues by both children and young people and their families. Some of these impacts were felt to be more pronounced for vulnerable children in particular. Some positive aspects were however reported by some in terms of increased outdoor exercise and play, and also in relation to mental health.

- 4.4.3 Within the Lockdown Lowdown survey, children and young people also reported a number of concerns about their future due to the longer term impact of COVID-19, including in relation to employment (lack of choice and availability), financial security, education (difficulty making plans in uncertain times, exams), mental health, and digital access (both a barrier and opportunity).

### ***Impact on learning***

- 4.4.4 In late 2020, Scottish Government produced an initial report considering the impact of the pandemic on attainment. A local pupil equity audit has also been undertaken by Children's Services, as part of its ongoing COVID-19 response and focus on recovery and improvement of learning. The key purpose of the audit was to better understand the extent to which the attainment and needs of local children and young people have changed throughout this pandemic, and to develop actions to respond to the issues being experienced. Key initial findings:
- The data suggests that although not as large as might have been expected, the attainment gap has widened across all quartiles. This is a similar picture nationally.
  - As is the case with the national equity audit, there is evidence that children with additional support needs, behavioural issues and those obtaining free school meals and clothing grants have experienced greater impact.
  - Engagement with learning continues to be an important factor in determining the impact on attainment. Families continue to juggle home learning and parental employment, and some families may not have access to the digital devices required to support learning. Some young people reported they found it difficult to engage with learning.
  - Children and young people reported that they had felt anxious and stressed at home with lack of social contact being the most common theme that was discussed. Children and young people missed interaction with their teacher and face to face contact with their classmates.
  - Several children had also been personally impacted by COVID-19 with family members having tested positive or parents shielding. While they noted that this caused them some anxiety and felt it might have affected their learning, they also felt that returning to school helped to alleviate their concerns and that it brought some normality back to their lives.
- 4.4.5 Since August 2020, schools have been working with children and young people to narrow the gap and are using a range of evidence-based



approaches and interventions to support children and young people. Following the equity audit, planning sessions were undertaken with headteachers to develop and identify key priorities between January and March 2021. Whilst these plans have been impacted due to the subsequent lockdown in December 2020, the organisation remains absolutely committed to supporting young people and their families through the pandemic.

## **4.5 Impact on housing**

- 4.5.1 Safe and secure housing is a critical element of individual and family wellbeing, and services across Renfrewshire have worked very closely to provide housing support services to local people during the pandemic. There have been some changes to legislation over the period, with a ban on the enforcement of evictions until 31 March 2021 in place. This position is likely to be masking a number of issues which could lead to an increased number of homeless presentations after this period ends.
- 4.5.2 In Renfrewshire the number of statutory homeless households increased during the 'lockdown' period, rising from 297 awaiting settled accommodation at March 2020 to 409 by September 2020, and is currently at 381. There have been a total of 619 statutorily homeless households since lockdown.
- 4.5.3 The Council and Registered Social Landlords have focused over this period on providing settled tenancies for those statutorily homeless or in chronic housing need, and this may need to continue into the future. Prior to the pandemic partners had been working to implement Renfrewshire's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which is a 5 year plan detailing how the length of time that those who are homeless stay in temporary accommodation can be reduced, and how they can be supported to resettlement. This work was impacted by the pandemic but has now restarted.
- 4.5.4 During the pandemic there has also been a substantial increase in demand from those in need of Housing Support – with around a 50% increase. Sheltered Housing tenants at our 10 complexes have not had access to the same form of housing support and wellbeing activities as usual due to COVID-19 related restrictions, and as lockdown restrictions ease, it is anticipated that wider health and wellbeing and digital participation activities can be restarted.
- 4.5.5 Although difficult to quantify at present, the impact on homelessness and demand for housing support in the post COVID-19/ furlough period is expected to be high. The impact on tenants will continue to develop over time and services will continue to take a proactive and supportive approach to assist with difficulties being experienced. For example, the housing team have been making targeted contact with those tenants whose payment patterns have changed during the pandemic, whilst also supporting tenants who have proactively contacted the service to discuss some of the issues they are experiencing in terms of income, support needs or digital access.

4.5.6 The Public Services Panel COVID-19 Impact Survey (see 4.2) found that just over 1 in 5 (22%) of respondents reported they are currently worried about their financial situation or employment. Although this percentage does not relate solely to council tenants, it confirms the need for our ongoing effort during the pandemic and priorities in the post COVID-19 recovery to continue to target activity at enabling access to all financial and other support available. Work is ongoing through the Right for Renfrewshire programme to work towards simplifying access to advice service of which housing and homelessness advice will play a key part alongside wider welfare advice.

4.5.7 Consistent with the findings from Panel members, staff feedback from the ongoing proactive contact confirms that the majority of tenants report that they do not require help at present. However, it is anticipated that as support schemes such as furlough end, we may experience a steep increase in members of our communities finding it increasingly difficult to manage, particularly in relation to household income. As a consequence of this and the uncertainty in the local employment market and wider economic implications it is anticipated that there will be an increase in rent arrears, new universal credit claims and changes in payment methods. This situation is being closely monitored and officers are undertaking detailed analysis and monitoring on rent account management as well as providing detailed welfare contacts to support our tenants where there is an indication of financial pressure.

## **4.6 National focus on social renewal**

4.6.1 On 21 January 2020, the Scottish Government published the first report from the Social Renewal Advisory Board – *If not Now, When ?* - which was set up by Ministers to make proposals to improve society across Scotland as it emerges from the pandemic. In establishing the Board, the Scottish Government recognised the significant inequalities that exist across Scotland's communities, and for this reason it was important not to wait until the pandemic is over to begin to learn its lessons.

4.6.2 The report sets out 20 calls to action in relation to Money and Work, People, Rights and Advancing Equality and Communities and Collective Endeavour. Local authorities have a significant role to play in terms of responding to the call to action including in relation to:

- proposals to end digital exclusion
- the development of a social contract on fair work – with the public sector using this to support people most disproportionately impacted
- ensuring there are enough homes that are secure, warm, accessible, affordable, and not overcrowded, in places people want to live
- ensuring everyone has access to nutritious, culturally appropriate and affordable food

- giving more control to people and communities over the decisions that affect their lives.

4.6.3 The calls to action are seen as essential building blocks to the COVID-19 response, which can build on the commitments and strengths which already exist across Scotland. A particular focus of the report is on the importance of place-based approaches to strengthen communities, reduce inequalities and make the most of the opportunities where people live and work.

## 5. Community impact assessment - key findings

5.1 The initial phase of the Community Impact Assessment is now complete, with a number of significant findings being identified through this process. These can be summarised at a high level as follows:

- ***Renfrewshire has experienced amongst the highest levels of incidence and death from COVID-19 in Scotland***, and has been impacted by a range of ongoing related restrictions and lockdowns at both a local and national level to control high levels of community transmission. Support for people experiencing bereavement in very difficult circumstances continues to be required.
- ***The starting point that people had in terms of factors such as income, employment and health has played a significant role in terms of the ability of people to manage the impact of the pandemic.*** Whilst many people may have experienced loss of income/employment or ill health for the first time, for others the pandemic has represented a deterioration in already difficult circumstances.
- ***The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in Renfrewshire in relation to income and employment.*** Lockdowns and associated restrictions have impacted people on low incomes and groups of people most likely to be in insecure or part time employment such as women and young people. 6% of the working age population are currently claiming out of work benefits (77% increase since March 2020).
- There is strong evidence that **some individuals and families are finding it increasingly difficult to manage**, particularly in relation to household income. Food insecurity and fuel poverty are seen as being particular issues, with high ongoing demand for community based supports. Between March 2020 and November 2020, the number of people in receipt of Universal Credit in Renfrewshire increased by 92% (80% increase in Scotland overall). Applications for crisis grants in Renfrewshire were also 30% higher in November 2020 than in November 2019.
- There are particular concerns with the ongoing nature of restrictions and the health and wellbeing of local people, particularly in relation to **loneliness and isolation and the impact that this can have on mental health and wellbeing**. Young people were a key area of concern, as were people with a disability, with a significant loss being reported in terms of socialisation.
- In terms of wider health and wellbeing, there is emerging evidence at a local and national level that **people are not seeking help with medical**

issues, or are experiencing delays or difficulties accessing support with an existing medical condition. The impact of the pause in particular health services, treatments and screening programmes during the course of the pandemic will emerge over time.

- **Restrictions on the services provided by the Council and wider partners across communities have had a significant impact**, with services and community supports being provided in different ways as permitted under guidance. This includes general advice support services, as well as access to leisure services, community groups and activities and formal day services. There is a risk that levels of harm are not being identified in the same way that they would have been prior to the pandemic and that people providing unpaid care have been impacted.
- **Children, young people and families have been significantly impacted** by ongoing restrictions and the lockdowns that have taken place, and the shift to online learning at home. Young people have also experienced major changes to assessment and examinations. Whilst there has been significant work at a local level to support children and parents with online learning and to provide access to digital devices and connectivity, local and national evidence does indicate some level of disruption to attainment levels. Particular impacts have been identified for children with additional support needs, and from low income households.
- **Digital exclusion remains a significant issue for some**, with many groups and organisations stating that online provision had worked well in some instances, but that issues remained in terms of access and engagement through online means. Positive feedback was received on support received through the Connecting Scotland programme and through the provision of digital devices and connectivity to support learning. Findings from the Public Services Panel noted reasonably high levels of access to digital devices within the home and to internet connectivity and it is clear that much further work needs to be done to identify people who are most likely to be experiencing digital exclusion.
- Engagement indicates that ***some specific groups are also experiencing potentially a greater impact as a result of the pandemic***, including those from black and minority ethnic communities, women, and people with a disability. Initial listening sessions have taken place recently and it was reported that issues were being experienced in terms of social isolation and loneliness, digital inclusion, provision of information, managing family relationships and advice and income and employment.
- Community groups and organisations have played a fundamental role in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and in providing support to local people and communities. Initial funding was made available by Scottish Government to support these groups and organisations, however there is increasing concern about the **availability of future community based funding**, and the resilience of some groups to be able to continue to meet increased demand within existing resources. The strength of partnership working is of real significance locally, and is a key building block for future work to respond to the pandemic.

5.2 These findings have been used to inform the development of an initial Social Renewal Plan for Renfrewshire. The plan sets out some of the high level

actions that will need to be taken forward with partners and communities as a priority.

## **6. Renfrewshire Response - Social Renewal Plan**

- 6.1 As outlined in section 3, given the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the likely longer term issues that may emerge over time within Renfrewshire's communities, it was recognised by Council that there would be a need to work with partners on a continuous basis to respond to changing priorities and levels of need.
- 6.2 The findings from the community impact assessment to date, confirm a number of key priorities which partners and communities should address jointly. It is important that partners and communities continue to work together on these priorities, and that people most impacted are able to shape the actions that are taken to address the issues being experienced. In effect the first stage of the community impact assessment represents only the initial phase of the engagement that will be required.
- 6.3 It is also critical that both the economic and social wellbeing response to the pandemic are fully aligned, as economic recovery will be a major driver of social recovery. An Economic Recovery Plan for Renfrewshire was approved by Council in December 2020 which recognised the need to fundamentally tackle inequalities across Renfrewshire in terms of employment, income, education and health including measures to mitigate the risks of increasing multiple disadvantages and any widening of the gap between the most and least deprived as a result of the economic crisis. It is also important to consider the opportunities and challenges arising from the pandemic in relation to the declared climate emergency in Renfrewshire.
- 6.4 An **initial Social Renewal Action plan** has been developed which sets out how the Council will work with partners to **improve wellbeing and tackle inequality**. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the key initial actions which have been identified by the Council in response to the key findings from the community impact assessment. These actions demonstrate how the organisation will build on the work that is already being progressed locally.
- 6.5 The next stage of the social renewal planning process will involve working with community planning partners and with local communities to further develop the Social Renewal Plan and to identify further opportunities to work together to address the key findings from the community impact assessment. A special meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Executive Group will take place on 29 March 2021 to take this work further.



- 6.6 Work will also be undertaken with partners to further explore the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on specific demographic groups across Renfrewshire. A particular focus will be on:
- Unpaid carers
  - Young people
  - People experiencing issues accessing medical treatment.
  - People who have experienced bereavement during the pandemic.
  - Opportunities and challenges in relation to climate change
  - People directly impacted by poverty (joint work with the Poverty Alliance)
- 6.7 The Council and its partners have very solid foundations upon which to progress this work, with a number of existing programmes already in place to address the wellbeing of children, to raise attainment, to tackle poverty and inequality and support community empowerment amongst many others. The Health and Social Care Partnership have also moved quickly to respond to issues in relation to social isolation and loneliness, with a range of community-based proposals receiving funding to progress initiatives which will support people now and through the pandemic.
- 6.8 There is also an opportunity to link the social renewal response from the pandemic, to many of the significant investments and developments being progressed through existing economic, cultural and housing regeneration programmes in Renfrewshire, which will build a positive and vibrant future for local people and communities. The role of culture in facilitating sustainable change socially and economically is recognised, and partners will work together to embed cultural and creative practice across social renewal activity. This will include identifying opportunities to align closely with the Future Paisley programme.
- 6.9 Moving forward there will be a requirement to consider the resources that are available across partner organisations and to ensure that these are targeted in the right places and at the right level to support social renewal in

Renfrewshire. Further discussions in relation to resource allocation will be progressed with community planning partners.

### **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** – the pandemic has had and will continue to have a significant impact on the resources available to the Council. Given the anticipated longer term financial challenges facing the Council, the requirement for targeting of resources in priority areas will be essential.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - the commitment of the Council's workforce since the pandemic emerged has been fundamental to the ability of services to continue to support local people, businesses and communities. A significant proportion of the Council's workforce live locally in Renfrewshire, and many of the social impacts outlined in the report are also being experienced by our employees. Targeted support is being offered to employees in order to address issues such as financial insecurity and mental health and wellbeing.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – There has been a strong partnership response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Renfrewshire with community and third sector organisations working closely together to maximise the resources available at a local level to meet the needs of local people and communities. This will be a critical focus going forward as partners work collectively to mitigate the impact on those most negatively impacted in our communities.
4. **Legal** - New legislative requirements have been put into place by the Scottish Government to support the country's response to COVID-19. There may be further changes to these requirements or further legislation as the lockdown measures ease, which the Council will require to respond to.
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 because it is for noting only. 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** – there are climate emergency actions in the attached action plan, aligning this Social Renewal Plan to the Council’s commitment to tackling the climate emergency through a green recovery from COVID-19

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#### **List of Background Papers**

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## SOCIAL RENEWAL PLAN FOR RENFREWSHIRE

Theme	Actions
Income, poverty and financial insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and Relaunch the Tackling Poverty Programme to address issues arising from the pandemic with particular focus on addressing gaps in available support</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of a local community resilience network, particularly to explore models of (a) dignified food provision such as Community Pantries (b) providing emergency support for fuel costs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and promote supports for financial inclusion, including income advice to maximise income and manage debt, and increase awareness of affordable credit options</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop participatory approaches for people with lived experience of poverty, as part of the Get Heard programme with the Poverty Alliance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a simplified service model for accessing advice services, such as housing and homeless advice, income and welfare advice</li> </ul>
Ensuring economic recovery for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align to actions in economic recovery plan to make sure those from disadvantaged groups have opportunities, particularly black and minority ethnic people, women and disabled people.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review procurement strategy to maximise benefits for local people through community wealth building, community benefits and supporting local suppliers</li> </ul>
Building community resilience and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop neighbourhood hub model beyond COVID-19 response to provide support to communities at a locality level, strengthening connections across services and to the community and third sector groups in their respective localities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and promote opportunities for communities to have voice and influence, for example by supporting Local Partnerships to progress their local priorities, and by creating opportunities for participation in local neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on the Community Learning and Development function with increased focused on locality working and community development</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore external funding opportunities to support innovative practice around community resilience and partnership</li> </ul>
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop programme of work around social isolation and loneliness</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the recommendations of Renfrewshire's Alcohol and Drug Commission</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify actions to increase physical activity levels, particularly in key groups such as children who are physically inactive, and older and clinically vulnerable people who have been shielding/at home</li> </ul>
Digital participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to develop a new Digital Participation programme for Renfrewshire, which will seek to increase access, participation and digital skills.</li> </ul>
Green / Climate emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver projects funded through the Climate Change Action Fund, including those which will support food insecurity, encourage participation and enable active travel and use of greenspace with a link to wider health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a climate change adaptation plan, linked to social and economic recovery plans in order to maximise the opportunities that may exist to tackle climate change as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery process</li> </ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress a significant housing led regeneration programme across Renfrewshire's communities improving the quality of homes and environment contributing to sustainable communities and improved wellbeing.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan including wrap around support services through programmes such as Housing First, and tenancy resettlement services, and increase the proportion of lets to homeless households.</li> </ul>
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver comprehensive of programme of mental health support for children and young people through a partnership programme of activity</li> </ul>
Culture and creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity driven by Culture, Arts, Health and Social Care Group (CAHSC) to embed cultural regeneration within health and social care services at a local level, with specific focus on support and recovery for those most impacted by Covid19</li> <li>Through Future Paisley cultural programme and the newly established BAME cultural steering group, tackle social isolation by co-producing, programming and curating work with those groups most adversely affected by the impact of the pandemic.</li> <li>Developing a clear pipeline from Future Paisley projects that drive participation and skills development to work experience and paid work.</li> </ul>