

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

**On:** 29<sup>th</sup> October 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 seventh 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.
- 1.3 Four new applications were received through this round and two applications previously deferred were considered. All applications were considered by the officer panel established following the launch of the fund, with panel recommendations set out in Section 2 and detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.4 During the first year of its operation, the Community Empowerment Fund has received a wide range of applications. In some circumstances, assessment of these applications has indicated a potential requirement to update the guidance in place for applications,

in order to recognise the diverse nature of applications and projects in place in Renfrewshire now, and in the future. A review of the year 1 operation of the fund is now underway, and it is intended that updated guidance will be submitted to the Leadership Board for approval. Elected members are asked to note that several learning points have been identified from applications considered in this current round of CEF, at 2.1(d & e). These applications are being recommended for approval in principle, subject to updated fund guidance being approved by Leadership Board on 4 December 2019.

- 1.5            The next deadline for applications to the Community Empowerment Fund is 5 November 2019.

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## 2.            **Recommendations**

- 2.1            It is recommended that the board approved the recommendations as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1, namely:
- a) To approve the award of £10,000 to the New Tannahill Centre
  - b) To approve the award of £3,800 to Renfrew Victoria Football Club
  - c) To approve the award of £6,500 to the Western Desert Recce Group
  - d) To approve in principle the award of £6,760 to the Paisley 2021 Community Trust, pending the decision of Leadership Board on 4 December 2019 clarifying the position of funding projects which would see commercial assets brought into community use
  - e) To approve an award of £50,000 to Active Communities, and to approve in principle a further £50,000 pending the decision of Leadership Board on 4 December 2019 clarifying the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria for awarding beyond the current £50,000 limit

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## 3.            **Background**

- 3.1            At its meeting on 2 March 2018, Council agreed to commit £1.5million (£0.5million in revenue and £1million 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 that the £1.5million represents a one-off investment fund.

- 3.2 On 20th June 2018, Leadership Board agreed the key objectives and criteria of the fund, and agreed that applications to the Community Empowerment Fund be submitted to Communities, Housing and Planning Board for final approval.
- 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
- 3.4 The fund is comprised of £0.5million in revenue funding and £1million 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.
- 3.5 It will be important applicants to the fund are 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
- 3.6 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 Four new applications were received by the deadline date of 3 September 2019 and two applications previously deferred were considered. The total value of requested grants through this round is £142,060.

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

4.3 The officer recommendation is:

- To approve applications submitted by: New Tannahill Centre (£10,000), Active Communities (£50,000, with a further £50,000 in principle, subject to further discussions), Renfrew Victoria Youth Football Club (£3,800), Paisley 2021 Community Trust (£6,760 in principle, pending final decision by the Leadership Board) and Western Desert Recce Group (£6,500). The total value of applications recommended for approval in principle is £127,060.

Elected Members are asked to note:

- (a) that decisions regarding the development of and future capital works to the New Tannahill Centre will be made within the context of the Ferguslie Masterplan exercise taking place during winter 2019/20.
- (b) that an award of £50,000 be made to Active Communities is recommended. A further award of £50,000 is recommended in principle. This would be subject to discussions with Active Communities as part of the development of their Strategic Partnership Agreement and authority from revised guidance to be presented to the Leadership Board seeking to clarify exceptional circumstances for an award in excess of £50,000.
- (c) that an award in principle of £6,760 be made to Paisley 2021 Community Trust subject to authority from revised guidance to be presented to the Leadership Board, in particular seeking to clarify use of the Community Empowerment Fund in relation to commercial assets where it is intended to bring these into community use. The Approval Panel recognises merit in the project and that the project is in keeping with the spirit of the Fund, as specifically in this case it would bring a commercial asset into community use.
- (d) To defer the applications submitted by Renfrew YMCA SCIO pending decision by the group on their future plans.

4.4 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** – Not applicable

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

Applicant	Project description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
Renfrew YMCA SCIO	Seeking £9,480 funding to undertake a feasibility study from May 2019 to determine a community need and interest for the charity to undertake an asset transfer of one of Renfrew's community spaces. Currently they are interested in the McMaster Centre in Robertson Park, Renfrew. This phase of the project will allow for Renfrew YMCA together with The Community Enterprise to undertake a community consultation, evidence gathering, developing case studies, market research, ownership and management options, skills audits, outcome and financial modelling, development of a funding strategy, feasibility study and finally the development of a business plan. The findings will be used to inform and support next stages of asset transfer application.	£15,000	Defer	A decision is to be taken by Renfrew YMCA Board regarding whether this project will progress. It has been agreed with the organisation that this application will be considered at a future date if Renfrew YMCA decide to proceed with the project	Renfrew
New Tannahill Centre	Seeking £10,000 funding as a contribution towards the second stage of a feasibility study in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the Tannahill Centre , including the move from a long term lease to full ownership. This stage of the feasibility study will commission a design scheme/consultants to develop a plan to secure funding and apply for asset transfer.	£10,000	Award	The award will enable this phase of the work to progress. The future of the Tannahill Centre will be discussed in the context of the Ferguslie masterplan.	Paisley North, West and Central
Active Communities	Seeking £100,000 contribution to purchasing and renovating the old Police station in Johnstone to provide a base for Active Communities and other community groups. The asset would be open to the whole community. Activities provided would include low cost health and wellbeing, physical activity classes and training and employment opportunities. There will be a focus on prevention and early intervention which will	£100,000	Award £50,000 with a further £50,000 in principle subject to discussion.	The Community Empowerment Fund has an award limit of £50,000 for capital projects, but the guidance states that a greater award can be made in exceptional circumstances. On this basis, the public benefit of the project merits an initial award of £50,000. The Council is working to develop a Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) with Active	Johnstone & Linwood

Applicant	Project description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
	reduce inequalities by building the capacity of local communities to lead preventative action. A community Youth Health project will be developed providing youth activities, health information and peer led activities. The asset would also provide space for Kairos, a women's initiative developed in partnership with the Robertson Trust.			Communities. Within this context of the SPA, further discussion is required to assess the merit of the award of an additional £50,000.	
Renfrew Victoria Youth Football Club	Seeking £3,800 for architects plans for refurbishment of Kirklandneuk Pavilion. The project is to totally refurbish the pavilion into a facility that would be open to community groups. Upgraded changing rooms would allow inclusion of a girls and disabled people's section, in line with the Scottish Football Association's Grassroots Pathway. The refurbished facility would be integral to the growth of Renfrew Victoria by encouraging more children to join and start their football journey.	£3,800	Award	The award will enable this project to progress	Renfrew
The Paisley 2021 Community Trust	Seeking £6,760 for a High Street Cinema feasibility study. Paisley Community Trust (PCT) is focused on making the biggest impact possible in the town centre, with the development of a community cinema central to this. A location has been identified that has the potential to meet the requirements of the group. A feasibility study is required to document the suitability of a town centre building for conversion and use as a community cinema.	£6,760	Award in principle, subject to Leadership Board approval	Community Empowerment Fund guidance states that the purpose of the fund is to enable publicly-owned assets to be owned or managed by community groups. The premises identified by Paisley 2021 Community Trust is commercially owned rather than publicly owned. The Approval Panel recognises merit in the project and that the project is in keeping with the spirit of the Fund, as it would bring a commercial asset into community use, but the guidance does not allow for the grant to be awarded. If the Leadership Board approves changes to the guidance which would enable	Paisley North, West and Central



Applicant	Project description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
				bringing a commercial asset into public use to be considered, awarding the grant in principle would enable the project to progress.	
Western Desert Recce Group SCIO	Business Plan Development and community engagement regarding future use of Whitehaugh Barracks. The grant would be used to scope out Business Plan Development and carry out community engagement. The project includes: stakeholder and community engagement; market analysis; business planning; financial projections for three years and a potential funding plan. The group will work alongside Paisley Opera and form an association and/or partnership if necessary and investigate working with other groups.	£6,500	Award	The award will enable the group to progress its plans for Whitehaugh Barracks. The group is working together with Paisley Opera to explore a potential joint approach for this asset.	Paisley East