

To: Communities and Housing Board

On: 16th August 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Community Empowerment Fund

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Communities and Housing Board for the award of grants from 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 Three new applications were received through this round as detailed within Section 2 and Appendix 1.

1.4 The next deadline for applications is 18 September 2022.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the board approves the recommendation as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1, to award:

- £50,000 to Renfrew Victoria to refurbish and upgrade the internal areas of the Kirklandneuk Pavilion.

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 and Housing 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 Three new applications were received by the deadline date of 4 July 2022. The total value of requested grants through this round is £101,321.00.

4.2 A cross-service panel of officers has been established to 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 the application submitted by: Renfrew Victoria Youth Football Club (£50,000.00) for refurbishment and upgrading of internal areas within the Kirklandneuk Pavilion.
- To defer the applications submitted by Lochwinnoch Community Development Trust and Western Desert Recce Group SCIO to allow for further work to be carried out with groups relating to their proposals.

4.4 A summary of the recommendation for award can be found at Appendix 1.

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

List of Background Papers

(a) Background Paper 1 – None

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Appendix 1: Recommendation for award

Organisation	Amount Requested	Purpose	Recommendation	Additional Info and/or Areas of Concern
Renfrew Victoria Football Club	£50,000.00	<p>The purpose of the project is to regenerate and refurbish the pavilion built in 1976, with a Community Asset Transfer agreed in 2019.</p> <p>The purpose of the project is to enable the club to follow the Scottish Football Association playing pathway by starting a girls' section and growing this to levels of the boys' group. The project will allow a greater match and training day experience by increasing the size of the changing area and refurbishment of the shower areas to Sport Scotland standards. This refurbishment will allow the club to increase membership and usage of the playing fields by having facilities to change and shower after activities.</p> <p>The refurbishment will have an environmental impact as the project will provide 100% renewable energy for lighting and heating due to the installation of 21 solar panels and 2 battery units.</p>	£50,000	<p>The Panel felt that funding would allow Renfrew Victoria Football Club to progress their plans to upgrade the facilities at Kirklandneuk Pavilion, and progress capital works required to split utility provision with the Community Centre in line with the Community Asset Transfer agreement. The panel also felt the funding package would support the group to lever in additional external funding, for example from Sport Scotland.</p>