

To: Leadership Board

On: 16 September 2020

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Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services

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Heading: Renfrewshire's Cultural Recovery and Renewal Funds (New Culture Events and Heritage Fund)

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a proposal to adapt the New Culture Heritage and Events Fund (CHEF) into **Renfrewshire's Cultural Recovery and Renewal Fund** to offer swift support to Renfrewshire's important yet vulnerable culture sector at this time.
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## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Leadership Board agrees:
- (i) that in light of the extreme impact of Covid 19 on Renfrewshire's culture sector that the £200,000 allocated for a new fund is repurposed to become **Renfrewshire's Cultural Recovery and Renewal Fund**;
  - (ii) that further work will be taken forward by officers to develop the funds eligibility, criteria, funding caps per application and assessment process to ensure a swift, simple and inclusive process;
  - (iii) to put in place a review panel comprised of two elected members one from Renfrewshire Leisure Board, one from Renfrewshire Council and 1 community representative appointed by Engage Renfrewshire to review the recommended awards made by the assessing officers, and to delegate authority to the Director of Communities Housing & Planning to determine the applications for funding taking into account the views of the review panel and to distribute the agreed awards, to enable funds to be swiftly distributed.

- (iv) that a report updating progress with the distribution of grants from the Fund will be brought back to Leadership Board at an appropriate time.
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 In March 2020 Renfrewshire Council, as part of its budget setting process, allocated £0.200 million of resources to support a new Cultural Heritage and Events fund supporting projects across the whole of Renfrewshire.

The initial approval at Leadership Board in 4 December 2020 also noted that the current criteria, application and support process for applicants should be revised to take account of the findings of the Chef review undertaken in 2019.

### **4. Current Context**

- 4.1 Since these approvals, the context has been altered dramatically by the global pandemic, and the impact of lockdown. Renfrewshire's culture sector, that has been so much part of its history and is at the heart of the vision for its future, is experiencing its greatest ever set of challenges. This is reflected across the UK and the globe yet during the pandemic people have reached to creativity to express, to connect, to make sense of, to grieve and to find joy in dark times. People have used spaces – on-line and physical – to meet, to share and to mark. The need for and valuing of local spaces and culture are one of the defining characteristics of the pandemic. Renfrewshire's Culture sector has responded with innovation and care during lockdown to support people in a range of ways from digital to delivering Creativity Boredom boxes.
- 4.2 The types of support that are required by the local cultural, heritage and events sectors to support the step changes under the Future Paisley programme have shifted. There are several threats being experienced by these sectors. The previous project focus of CHEF is no longer appropriate or meaningful. Individuals and organisations are not able to deliver projects effectively and would be challenged to work with participants and audiences due to ongoing lockdown restrictions. Planning for 2021 remains difficult especially for smaller organisations and individuals.
- 4.3 Renfrewshire's anchor cultural organisations have seen income plummet and there is no return to previous business models in sight. Some community focussed cultural organisations have worked non-stop to offer basic needs of food as well as friendship and creativity. Newer organisations, smaller ones, independent artists, businesses and small creative industry SMEs are also facing an uncertain future. Renfrewshire Leisure have worked closely with the sector locally and are following national developments to offer support to the sector at this time.
- 4.4 At this time, there is no clear picture on the final allocation of the £97m the Scottish Government received from the UK Government to support the culture and heritage sector. It is also unlikely that many Renfrewshire organisations and artists would receive support from Creative Scotland due to the extreme pressure on national funds.

## 5. Renfrewshire's Cultural Recovery and Renewal Fund

- 5.1 It is proposed to adapt the budget provided for the new CHEF into a suite of three funding programmes that support the overall make-up of the sector across Renfrewshire at this time. It has been developed in response to need, opportunity and would support the Future Paisley Step Changes. The three funding strands have been designed to support the whole cultural ecology of Renfrewshire to adapt, and to recognise the different elements needed to retain a healthy and sustainable sector.

The £200,000 will be split across the following strands, during the development of the criteria options to increase this amount by leveraging in internal and external budgets will be explored:

- (i) **Cultural Organisations Support:** organisational grants for cultural and creative businesses which are ineligible for the Renfrewshire Coronavirus Business Support Fund (as it is not available to not-for-profit organisations, voluntary or charitable organisations) that are facing significant threat. This fund will support businesses which have to make adaptations to protect income and ensure the sustainability of their organisation. Criteria to be developed which focuses on business continuity in the post lockdown environment. A maximum award of £20,000 is proposed in this category.
- (ii) **Artist development grants:** one of the most hidden impacts has been on the livelihoods of freelance artists. This is most keenly felt across music, theatre, visual arts with writers also losing income generated from events. This fund would provide a lifeline for many artists living and working in Renfrewshire by providing support that gives them time and space to develop new work. This funding will be crucial in supporting artists through a challenging financial period, to ensure that Renfrewshire retains an independent creative sector. Maximum awards under this category will be £3000.
- (iii) **Town Centre & Neighbourhood Creative Installations:** Project funding to support the animation of defined sites such as empty shop windows or pedestrianised areas in town centres and neighbourhoods through awards to artists to create and install artistic interventions across Renfrewshire. Awards of up to £5000 will be made to ideas that add value to public and civic outdoor spaces that can be enjoyed during lockdown restrictions. This strand recognises both the importance of neighbourhood and on encouraging people to return to town centres and neighbourhoods safely. Criteria would include demonstrating how the project will enhance the experience of people using local businesses and outdoor public places.

## 6. Next steps and process

- 6.1 Renfrewshire Leisure, on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, will develop the eligibility, criteria and assessment and decision-making processes with the funds aiming to open by the end of 2020.

The application and assessment processes will be simplified to ensure swift support to the sector with funds to be distributed in the early part of 2021. Recommendations of awards will be made by assessing officers and it is proposed that a review panel comprised of two elected members one from Renfrewshire Leisure Board, one from Renfrewshire Council and 1 community representative appointed by Engage Renfrewshire be established to review the recommended awards. Delegated authority will sit with the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning to make a final determination of the grant applications taking into account the views of the review panel to ensure that funds are distributed as quickly as possible. A full report will be brought back to Leadership Board to update on progress with the distribution of the grants from the Fund.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The grant budget outlined in the report was identified as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21.
2. **HR & Organisational Development - None**
3. **Community Planning –**  
**Community Care, Health & Wellbeing** - The Culture, Heritage and Events projects will have a positive effect on wellbeing.  
**Jobs and the Economy** – The Future Paisley programme aims to deliver positive economic impacts.
4. **Legal – None**
5. **Property/Assets – None**
6. **Information Technology - None**
7. **Equality & 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 the projects and criteria have been developed to provide opportunities across equality groups.
8. **Health & Safety – none**
9. **Procurement – none**
10. **Risk – none**
11. **Privacy Impact – none**
12. **CoSLA Policy Position – n/a**
13. **Climate Risk – n/a**

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