



Renfrewshire
Council

To: Leadership Board

On: 21 February 2024

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Local Partnerships – Launch of 2024 Development Programme

1. Summary

- 1.1 In 2019, Renfrewshire Council approved a new model of community level governance through the launch of 7 new Local Partnerships. The partnerships have continued to develop and grow over this period, promoting community empowerment through the identification of the initial local priorities, local grant making and the nationally recognised youth participatory budgeting process Celebrating Renfrewshire.
- 1.2 The pandemic has impacted some of the planned developments in relation to the Local Partnerships, and a consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken in late 2023 to learn from the work that has been undertaken to date and to identify options for building on this as we move forward. The findings of the consultation exercise were reported to Leadership Board in September 2023.
- 1.3 Local Partnerships have a huge amount of potential to strengthen community empowerment and capacity in Renfrewshire, and to harness this potential it is proposed that next phase of their development is now progressed. With a focus on “*Local Plans, Local Priorities and Local Voices*”, a range of development actions are now proposed, as set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 1.4 Subject to the approval of the board, this development programme and related campaign will commence from the end of February 2024. A key focus in 2024 will be around enhancing communications in relation to Local Partnerships activities, refreshing partnership membership and supporting a review of current priorities for each Local Partnership. Regular updates will be provided to Leadership Board as progress is achieved.

- 1.5 In addition to the Local Partnerships development programme for 2024, members are also asked within this paper to consider Local Partnership Grant Funding guidance which has been refreshed for 2024 in response to the consultation exercise feedback received.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Leadership Board:
- Note the launch of a new campaign to relaunch the Local Partnerships which will be implemented from end February 2024;
 - Approve the refreshed Local Partnership Guidance for 2024 and;
 - Note that future updates on the Local Partnerships will be provided as part of the six monthly reports on community planning provided to Leadership Board.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Local Partnerships were established during 2019 following an extensive programme of consultation. Seven Local Partnerships were created, replacing the previous Local Area Committees that had been in place for many years.
- 3.2 This new model of community level governance was viewed as being critical to the Council changing the way in which it works with local communities, providing opportunities for communities to have a say on what matters at a local level and working together to achieve these ambitions.
- 3.3 It was initially intended that the operation of the Local Partnerships would be reviewed after a period of 12 months, however due to COVID and wider resource pressures, the review was postponed at that time. In September 2023, officers commenced a consultation and engagement process to inform the next phase of the development of Local Partnerships, with a key focus on building on existing strengths and identifying further opportunities for the Partnerships to grow.
- 3.4 Specifically the process focused on identifying opportunities to:
- Enhance participation in Local Partnership meetings
 - Facilitate greater engagement from Council services and partner organisations on issues which impact Local Partnership areas
 - Develop meaningful local priorities and action plans
 - Identify options for improving the grant allocation process
- 3.5 A detailed report on the consultation findings was presented to Leadership Board in December 2023. Overall there was consensus that Local Partnerships have created a new community level governance model which has moved on considerably from that which previously operated under the Local Area Committee model. One of the key strengths identified was that current model supports Local Partnerships to develop their

own identity and to work flexibly in line with local requirements and that this was a very important feature to be protected.

- 3.6 Extensive feedback was provided on what is working well and also on opportunities to develop the model even further. Key findings were highlighted as being:

Summary of findings:

- Local partnerships are generally working well, but there could be a better balance of input with more opportunities for the community voice.
- Adjustments may be required to ensure greater participation of Local Partnership members/groups facing barriers.
- Local representation could be strengthened in terms of ensuring that all membership spaces are filled and that there is a spread of representation across communities and with different groups such as young people.
- Council services and partner organisations need to review the way in which they engage with Local Partnerships to ensure this is tailored and focused on what matters to each Local Partnership.
- Local Partnerships represent a significant opportunity – they should not be solely about grants, and all opportunities to strengthen their role should be progressed.
- There is strong support in relation to Local Partnerships refreshing their priorities and developing local action plans – but this needs to be meaningful and there needs to be resource in place between meetings to make things happen and to join the dots.
- Local Partnerships need support to reach out into communities and to communicate what is happening at a local level through the collaboration that is taking place.
- Grants allocation guidance and support for applicants needs to be strengthened
- Information on grant applications could be further strengthened to support decision making. A stronger focus needs to be placed on reporting back impact at a local level.

4. **Next Phase of Local Partnerships – Local Plans, Local Priorities, Local Voices”**

- 4.1 In response to the findings from the consultation and engagement findings, officers have been working to develop the next phase of the Local Partnerships, and subject to approval of the board, this will be launched from late February 2024. Under the banner of a “Local Plans, Local Priorities and Local Voices” campaign, we will work with partners and communities to implement the following elements:

- Local Partnership membership refresh exercise to be undertaken to ensure strong and representative **Local Voices** inform their activities
- To further strengthen representation the Community Learning and Development team will work with young people to develop proposals on how to involve young people more meaningfully in the work of the Local Partnerships.
- Support will be provided to each Local Partnership to review current **Local Priorities during 2024** to ensure these remain fit for purpose: - these will be used to develop a future work programme of activity through a **Local Partnerships Plan**
- Work will be undertaken to enhance communication on the work of the Local Partnerships – through newsletters, email and social media channels: - showcasing impact of activities and positive opportunities to get involved in local activities.
- A Local Partnership Development Officer will be recruited who will co-ordinate all related activities including the review of local priorities and development of the Local Partnership Plans
- A new meetings schedule for Local Partnerships will be implemented – 3 core meetings per year to focus on taking forward Local Partnership Plans, with one special meeting per annum in May/June each year to consider grant awards.
- Refreshed grants guidance will be launched early March 2024 – making it clearer for grant applicants and Local Partnership members to participate in the grant making process, and with a much stronger emphasis on evidencing the difference or impact that grant funding has made in a local area.
- A Council grant prospectus will be developed and promoted - ensuring there is visibility and enhanced awareness of all available Council grant funding, with Local Partnerships focusing on funding small and locally focused projects.

5. Launch of Local Partnerships Funding

- 5.1 Extensive feedback was provided through the engagement process on the current Local Partnerships grant funding process. Respondents recognised that Local Partnerships needed to continue to develop to focus on other activities beyond grant awards, however the grant award process itself could be strengthened moving forward. Local Partnership funding is heavily oversubscribed and it was recognised that applicants may need more help to ensure their applications are strong and tailored for consideration on a small grants basis.
- 5.2 Key points raised within the consultation and engagement exercise were:
- Continuing to improve the support provided to grant applicants on the process as well as to direct to other sources of funding which may be appropriate to the requirements of a community organisation, or to the project/initiative seeking funding
 - The need to review grant criteria to make this clearer on the process and funding criteria – strongly reinforcing the requirement for applicants to evidence links to Local Partnership priorities and to provide evidence of impact.
 - A requirement to review the levels of grant funding available through the Local Partnerships Grant Funding – specifically including the provision of a cap on application values given that the funding is significantly oversubscribed.

- 5.3 Existing funding guidance has now been reviewed and refreshed Local Partnerships Guidance 2024, is now attached at Appendix 1 for approval. In updating the guidance, officers have aimed to incorporate the key suggestions and points made through the engagement exercise, including the implementation of maximum funding levels in line with other small grant funding opportunities offered eg Community Food Fund, Summer of Fun and the Winter Connections programme.
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6 Next steps

- 6.1 The consultation and engagement exercise highlighted the strong progress that Local Partnerships have made, moving to a community level governance model which is much more strongly rooted in community voice and representation. The launch of the second phase of the Local Partnerships represents a significant opportunity to move forward and strengthen the potential impact that these can have across Renfrewshire's communities. Regular updates on the implementation of Phase 2 – *Local Plans, Local Priorities and Local Voices* will be provided to Leadership Board through the 6 monthly update reports provided in relation to community planning.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – as outlined within the content of the report.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** –
8. **Health and Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** – none
11. **Privacy Impact** – none
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – none
13. **Climate Risk** – none

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Local Partnerships Funding

Local Partnerships provide small grants for local activities and projects that help them to meet their Local Priorities. We've made some changes to this funding, so please take the time to read this guidance – even if you've applied before.

About the fund

We want to support projects that bring communities together around their shared priorities for where they live.

We believe that communities that work together and share resources provide a stronger and more sustainable impact.

Therefore, we want applications from projects that demonstrate how they connect with their communities, make best use of the existing skills and assets in an area, and will provide the biggest possible impact to those who need it most.

Please be aware that we always have more applications than we're able to fund, so Local Partnerships will prioritise awards based on their Local Priorities, and the projects they feel will have the most impact for people in their local area.

Key Information

- Awards of up to £5,000 are available for voluntary and community organisations.
- Applications can be submitted to more than one Local Partnership.
- Awards are for local activities and projects which bring communities together.
- Each Local Partnership has its own Local Priorities for this area. Applications should clearly show how they contribute to the Local Priorities in the area they are applying.
- Applications should explain why there's a need for the project and how it will be delivered for the benefit of people in the Local Partnership area.
- Applications should consider how the project adds value to services currently available in your local community, and work collaboratively with other groups to maximise the impact of the project.
- There may be other Council and external funding streams which better fit your project or organisational objectives. Officers may contact you as part of the process to explore other possible funding options.

- If your application is successful, the Council's Conditions of Grant require you to evidence the impact of your project. We will only ask for information that we need as part of the process, but it is important for Local Partnerships to know what impact funding is having within their local area. Local Partnerships may choose not to fund organisations who have not met the grant conditions for previous awards.

Who and what we'll fund

Who can apply

We welcome applications from any community or voluntary organisation operating in Renfrewshire. Applicants must have a constitution and a bank account and be accountable to their members.

Who can't apply

While the focus is on what will be achieved, there are some organisation types that aren't eligible for this fund.

- An individual
- A commercial or for-profit organisation
- Departments or services of Renfrewshire Council

What we can fund

Provided your project meets the Local Priorities, we can fund a wide range of costs and items.

However, your application should state how your project adds value to existing services or provision – we won't fund costs that are already being incurred such as projects that have already occurred or core costs of staff members.

Your project should consider how you involve your community in the design and delivery of the project to help show it's really needed.

Here are some projects we've funded previously and below are examples of what can be funded – if you're not sure whether we can fund an item, please speak to us beforehand by calling xxxxxxxxxxxx, or xxxxxxxxxxxx

- Improving community facilities such as a building or land to make them better and more accessible for community use.
- Enhancing or creating community gardens to provide attractive spaces to be enjoyed by the community.
- Community events that provide opportunities for local people to gather together.
- Projects that help people get out and about and meet together so they are socially connected in the community and don't feel isolated.

What we won't fund

Unfortunately, we can't fund everything and this fund won't cover:

- projects that don't meet the Local Priorities of the Local Partnership they are applying to
- projects that don't clearly show how they will deliver their project in the Local Partnership area
- large projects which require significant funding or investment
- construction or refurbishment projects where building regulations approval, planning permission or landlord consent are needed and haven't yet been obtained
- costs of activities which have already happened
- projects which exist to further religious or political beliefs
- trips abroad and hospitality to other organisations
- installation, storage and maintenance of Christmas lighting where this has not been agreed in advance with Council officers

Awards are one-off and are not intended to provide ongoing funding for the same or similar activities on an annual basis. We may need further information about the sustainability of your project if you are applying for general running costs or existing costs of your organisation (e.g. utility bills, staffing etc)

Local Partnerships may choose not to award funding to previous applicants who have not complied with grant conditions, for example, not providing feedback on their project.

How much funding is available

Awards of up to £5,000 are available for voluntary and community organisations. Local Partnerships may choose to limit total awards further, or part fund projects, if they are oversubscribed.

Some Local Partnerships also have access to additional funding, called 'Common Good' funding. There is no limit on awards from the Common Good. This applies in the Renfrew, Paisley North, Paisley East and Gleniffer Local Partnerships.

Funding priorities

We always get more applications than we're able to fund and use the Local Priorities to make decisions. The Local Priorities for each of the seven Local Partnerships are set out here:

[What the priorities are for each Local Partnership - Renfrewshire Website](#)

Applying

Preparing your application

Remember that we know nothing about your project and so it's important you take your time to explain the essentials.

- **Who** will benefit
- **Why** the project is needed
- **How** you'll deliver those benefits

About your project

Think about the people you're going to work with and be clear how you know they need this project.

We particularly encourage applications that have been developed by the communities they'll support, as this helps show there's a need for the activity.

You should also think about other services that may currently be offered by other organisations in the area and explain how your project complements these.

Consider the potential impact or outcomes it'll have on participants but be realistic with your targets and ambitions.

If you apply for a project in more than one Local Partnership, it should be clear how the project will benefit people in each Local Partnership area. Be clear about where the project is based, how it is promoted within the Local Partnership and how you know if specifically benefits people from the Local Partnership you are applying to.

Delivery

Tell us the resources you need to deliver the activity and how you'll ensure your project is a success.

Make it clear how many people will benefit, and how you'll reach the residents in the Local Partnership area you are applying.

Think about any other organisations you'll work with to help maximise the benefit of the project and how you'll achieve a legacy with the project.

If the amount you apply for from Local Partnerships funding is one part of a larger package with funding from other sources, please tell us about the other funding.

Budget

You will be asked to provide a breakdown of what any potential funding will be spent on.

Consider whether your budget is offering the best value for money and includes all the costs you need to deliver the activity, even if you don't require all the money from us.

Supporting Documents

We ask that you provide some key pieces of supporting documentation with your application, and your application cannot be considered until this has been submitted.

You will need to provide:

- A bank statement (less than 3 months old)
- Annual accounts or Income & Expenditure Statement (this should be less than 15 months old. New organisations should submit estimates of income & expenditure for the first 12 months)
- Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association (must be dated and signed)

If you have project plans, budget, letters of support or videos that show the impact of your work then feel free to upload them or provide links to them when you submit your application.

After You've Applied

Your application and documents will be checked and then stored on the Council system. Please bear with us as our team respond to the demand for our funding. If we need some more information, we may contact you.

A summary of your application will be prepared and included in the papers for the relevant Local Partnership meeting. The members of the Local Partnership in each area will make a decision on each funding application.

We'll try and notify you of the decision as soon as possible. You will not be required to attend or expected to speak at a Local Partnership meeting. Local Partnerships are public meetings, and may take place in-person or online. You are welcome to attend the meetings to observe or watch the recordings.

Please be aware Local Partnerships only have limited funds available and therefore can't fund everything they would like to, including some really good projects. As a result, applicants might not receive funding, even if they have previously been successful.

Local Partnership funding is for the provision of additional projects in the community and shouldn't be relied on if you are applying for funds needed to keep your organisation going. If you need funding for this reason, please speak to us about sustainability funding.

If you're successful

If you're successful, you'll receive an award agreement by email, stating the purpose of the award and containing our terms and conditions, along with our monitoring and feedback requirements.

It'll also contain forms you'll need to fill in to accept and claim your award. Please read your award letter carefully and keep it safe for future reference.

Your grant funding is intended specifically for what you've applied for, and any proposed changes must be discussed with us in advance.

You should also keep all receipts and evidence of expenditure. Payments for goods and services for the project must be made directly from the organisation's bank account (i.e. not by cash) as we may request bank statements to verify project expenditure. You should make sure payments from your account are clearly annotated.

There are some new '[Fair Work First](#)' rules that apply to all Council grants. This means if we award you a grant, you must follow the Fair Work First criteria to:

- pay at least the real Living Wage if, it applies to your project
- provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition.