

To: Communities, Housing and Planning Board

On: 20th August 2019

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Community Empowerment Fund

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 sixth 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 Two new applications were received through this round and five applications previously deferred were considered.
- 1.4 The next deadline for applications is 3 September 2019.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the board approves the recommendations made in relation to the three applications received in this funding round, as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1.

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 Two new applications were received by the deadline date of 27th March 2019 and four applications previously deferred. The total value of requested grants through this round is £66,180.

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 applications submitted by 18th Paisley and District (Coats) Scout Group, Foxbar Community Garden and Environmental Projects Group, The STAR Project and Paisley Opera. The total value of applications recommended for approval is £46,700.
- To defer the applications submitted by Renfrew YMCA SCIO and New Tannahill Centre for further discussions with the groups.
- To defer until further notice the application received by Aspire Community Solutions.

4.4 A summary of the applications 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
 - 13. **Climate Risk** – 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
18th Paisley & District (Coats) Scout Group (Deferred Application)	Seeking £10,000 from the community empowerment fund to conduct a feasibility study. The study will help to identify suitable plots of land for purpose-built Scout Group and community facilities in Foxbar area. This phase of the project will include community engagement activity, site surveys, feasibility assessment, initial concept design drafting, legal advice, support in seeking funding. Most of the funding will be used for engagement of professional services.	£10,000	Award £10,000 with the condition that the group will continue to work with Council's planning department to identify a suitable building site and that they will seek appropriate permission of any exploratory work they will undertake.	The award will enable preparatory work on the project to take place and supports the priorities of the Foxbar Place Plan. Clarification sought previously on the project was received to satisfaction of the Approval Panel.	Paisley (Foxbar)
Foxbar Community Garden & Environmental Projects Group (Deferred Application)	Seeking for £10,000 to conduct a feasibility study between 1st June and 30th November 2019. The study will support the development of business plan to create a community garden and a local hub facility on the site of the demolished St. Paul's Primary School in Foxbar area. Findings of the study will be used to support Foxbar Community Garden & Environmental Project Group's asset transfer application.	£10,000	Award £10,000 for feasibility study.	The award will enable the feasibility of the project to be determined prior to submission of an asset transfer proposal. The project supports the priorities of the Foxbar Place Plan. Clarification sought previously on the project was received to the satisfaction of the Approval Panel.	Paisley (Foxbar)
Renfrew YMCA SCIO (Deferred Application)	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	£9,480	Defer the application to seek clarification on aspects of the proposal in order that the application be reconsidered at a future Board.	Further clarification was received, but the Approval Panel wish to have further discussions with the applicant.	Renfrew

Applicant	Project description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
	study and finally the development of a business plan. The findings will be used to inform and support next stages of asset transfer application.				
New Tannahill Centre (Deferred Application)	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. The two stages of the feasibility study will take place between March 2019 and March 2020. The first stage is funded by the Scottish Government. The second stage of the feasibility study will commission a design scheme/consultants to develop a plan to secure funding and apply for asset transfer to secure a sustainable long-term solution regarding management of the Tannahill Centre.	£10,000	Defer decision and seek a strategic discussion regarding the project.	The scale of the project merits a full strategic discussion with the applicant regarding potential support.	Paisley (Ferguslie Park)
The STAR Project (New Application)	Seeking £20,000 in connection with the creation of a labyrinth in the area approved for asset transfer in Fountain Gardens in the North of Paisley. The funding will be used for site set-up and ground preparation	£20,000	Award £20,000 for site works.	The award will enable work to commence on a new asset for community use in Fountain Gardens.	Paisley (Shortroods)
Paisley Opera (New Application)	Seeking £6,700 in connection with potential asset transfer of Whitehaugh Barracks to develop a rehearsal space and Community Hub in the East End of Paisley. The funding will be used to consult with the local community, carry out a fact finding visit, undertake a commercial building survey and develop a business plan.	£6,700	Award £6,700 for preparatory work in connection with potential asset transfer.	The application will enable preparatory work to take place regarding possible asset transfer	Paisley (Whitehaugh)
Aspire Community Solutions (Deferred Application)	Seeking £8,700 to develop a business case for the potential development of Whitehaugh Barracks as a mixed-use facility to be used for employability, training, office and community space.	£8,700	Defer until further notice	To defer until the conclusion of the inquiry by OSCR.	Paisley (Whitehaugh)