

REPORT BY POLICY LEAD FOR COMMUNITY, CULTURE, GAELIC AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

1. INTRODUCTION

This is my fourth report as Policy Lead for Community, Culture, Gaelic and Strategic Housing and covers the period from September to March 2016 and aims to highlight developments within my portfolio.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this paper.

3. DETAIL**3.1 COMMUNITIES****3.1.1 Third Sector Grant Funding**

The closing date for the receipt of Third Sector grant applications for the first round of funding was the 8 February 2016. The total amount made available for 2016/17 is £126,000 allowing an allocation of £31,500 to each area. In addition, £9,941 has been carried forward from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

In total, 93 applications were received (3 ineligible, 2 withdrawn and 3 deferred to the second round). The Community Development team have assessed the remaining 85 applications and submitted reports for a decision at local area committees in April. The closing date for the second round of funding is 13 June 2016.

3.1.2 Modern Apprenticeship in Youth Work – Oban Lorn and the Isles

The Community Planning and Community Development team have worked with partners in Youth Services, Education, and Governance and Law to develop a modern apprenticeship in youth work based with the community development officer in Oban. The post is for a level 2 modern apprentice and aims to increase youth engagement with local community planning in Oban, Lorn and the Isles. Progress and success will be monitored throughout and regular reports will be provided to the Community Planning manager who will line-manage the position. On the ground support and mentoring will be provided locally by the Community Development officer. The closing date for applications was 11 March with interviews due to take place on 18 April.

3.1.3 Scottish Older Peoples Assembly (SOPA) Oban, Lorn and the Isles

The Scottish Older Peoples Assembly took place in Oban on the 13 November 2015. The all-day event took in the business of SOPA, workshop activities, entertainment and outreach into local care homes. The Community Development Team took the lead on the event and worked in with Age Scotland, NHS Highland, Argyll TSI, Alzheimer's Scotland, North Argyll Carers Centre and

the Salvation Army to ensure a co-ordinated approach. Funding was secured from the local Health and Wellbeing Network (HWN) to support the event and supported participation from the islands of Coll, Tiree, Mull and Islay. The issues raised at Oban will be taken forward to inform the Scottish Older Peoples Assembly in 2016.

3.1.4 Alliance for Action and Rothesay Charrette - Bute and Cowal

Alliance for Action for Rothesay secured funding from the Scottish Government to carry out a Charrette in Rothesay. The Company appointed to deliver the Charrette was Ice Cream Architecture. The community development team supported Ice Cream Architecture by providing information on the various community groups on Bute prior to the delivery of workshops and interactive sessions as part of the Charrette process. The team will also be involved in the post Charrette meeting in April working with the facilitator appointed by SURF and the Alliance for Action team to take forward the identified projects.

3.1.5 Riverside Swim and Health Centre, Dunoon Information Day – Bute and Cowal

The community development team facilitated a community engagement and information exercise in partnership with the Councils Leisure Services team at the Riverside Swim and Health Centre, Dunoon on the 18 & 19 January 2016. There were four information sessions held out over the two days with the aim of gathering feedback from the community on the planned work to be carried out at the Riverside Centre and to address concerns for alternative arrangements for swimming and relocation of the gymnasium.

3.1.6 Partnership Training – Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay

Third Sector partners came together for Partnership Training in Lochgilphead in December 2015. The training looked at both the theory and legal practicalities of writing a partnership agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding, and in what circumstances they might be appropriate. All attendees took useful templates home and a checklist of things to take into account when considering a partnership. The training was commissioned and part-written by the community development team and delivered and part-written by Charlotte Lamb, trainer in Scottish Law.

3.1.7 Funding Day – Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay

Co-hosted by the Third Sector Interface, a Funding day was held in the Gaelic Centre, Islay on the 16 December 2015. Twenty-three Third Sector organisations were in attendance and received presentations from the Community Development team on Third Sector Funding, the Health and Wellbeing fund and the new Lottery initiatives, as well as from Foundation Scotland on the funding opportunities they have to offer.

3.1.8 Film and Editing Training – Helensburgh and Lomond

The Community Development team facilitated Filming & Editing Training in March. Five young people, 13 Third Sector representatives and 3 Council staff from around Argyll and Bute participated in the training provided by UrbanCroft Films (<http://urbancroft.co.uk/>). The purpose of the training was to provide participants with the skills to use accessible devices, like mobile phones, to

make, edit and upload short films to websites like You Tube and Instagram. Twenty out of the 21 participants rated the training as 'excellent' and one; Oban Community Playpark, has already created a short film about their project, to assist with securing funding.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHd0qFhTSQ8&feature=youtu.be>.

- 3.1.9 Kirkmichael Community Development Group – Helensburgh and Lomond**
Community Development facilitated a multi-agency partnership to support residents in the Kirkmichael area of Helensburgh. The Kirkmichael area was identified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012 as the area of highest multiple deprivation in Argyll & Bute and in the top 5% of deprived areas in Scotland. The Kirkmichael Partnership, which includes representatives from Police Scotland, NHS Highland, ACHA, Dunbritton Housing Association, Third Sector Interface and Criminal Justice Service; as well as the Council's Social Work, Amenities, Youth, Adult Learning, Governance and Community Development departments, is also supporting a new constituted community based group, the Kirkmichael Community Development Group.

3.2 CULTURE AND LIBRARIES

3.2.1 Culture and Libraries.

The Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service will launch in Dunoon Library on 16th May (this is a "soft" launch only – an official launch of the service will be arranged for a later date).

Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) of £100,000 has been secured for the "Written in the Landscape" Project aimed at digitising key documents held in our archives, as well as the archives of Argyll Estates. I was delighted to meet up with the Duke of Argyll at Inverary Castle to acknowledge receipt of this funding. Two Project Archivists will be appointed early in the new financial year to undertake this work, including liaising with smaller archive collections throughout Argyll and Bute. Further funding has also been secured from heritage organisations locally.

In October I was delighted to officially open the new library at Tarbert. This is a wonderful facility and a huge improvement to the old library and similar to the other excellent small library at Cardross.

3.3 SPORT

3.3.1 Community Sport Hubs

The last seven months have been extremely positive and productive in the development of Community Sport Hubs across Argyll and Bute. Following a period of scoping and strategic engagement, Community Sport Hubs were secured in Argyll and Bute until 2019, thanks to funding from **sportscotland** and Argyll and Bute Council.

The strategic plan for 2015 - 2017 is now underway with new Community Sport Hubs planned in Cowal, Helensburgh and Oban along with continued support for Rothesay Community Sport Hub.

Rothesay Community Sport Hub has delivered exciting projects throughout the year, which have been having a positive impact across the island. These include the introduction of four new activities aimed at getting the community actively involved in sport and physical activity. New ladies netball and hockey clubs have seen a combined total of over 50 participants each week, and growing all the time. Jog Scotland began at the tail end of summer and has a steady membership of 18 joggers out and about on the streets of Rothesay twice a week. Finally, Walking Football sessions started for the over 50s. This is led by a local volunteers and offers a slower pace of football in a social and fun environment.

Alongside new activities on the island a joint programme between sports clubs, local agencies, Active Schools and the Community Sport Hub delivered a holiday programme for primary children in the summer and October holidays in 2015. Both were extremely successful attended by over 40 children and will be replicated in the summer 2016.

Another exciting project in Rothesay Community Sport Hub and thanks to funding from the Scottish Ambulance Service and Rothesay Rotary Club, a Public Access Defibrillator was installed at Bute Shinty Clubhouse in September 2015.

Most recently in Rothesay the Community Sport Hub organised and delivered a charity Fun Run, on Sunday 13th March, which saw over 120 entrants run, walk or jog either 1 mile, 2 miles or 3 miles. The Sport Hub Fun Run raised funds for the local "Kidney Dialysis for Bute Campaign" and to date, the charity have collected over £2000! The run started and ended at Bute Shinty Clubhouse with the opportunity for participants to enjoy tea and cake whilst learning about the various activities available on the island. A fantastic time was had by all!

In other areas, two Community Sport Hub meetings have taken place in Cowal, with 18 sports clubs actively engaged thus far. Cowal Community Sport Hub is likely to focus on promotion of activities, increasing participation, sharing resources and coordinated coach education and training courses in the coming year. Exciting developments lie in the year ahead.

The first meeting of Helensburgh Community Sport Hub is due to take place at the end of April. The feedback from meetings with sports clubs, Hermitage Academy and the Active Schools Coordinators, has been extremely positive and it looks to be a great year ahead in sport in Helensburgh and Lomond.

Sportscotland recently announced that an additional £6m will be invested in the Community Sport Hub programme which will now continue to 2020. This is good news for Argyll and Bute as the programme is now developing well and demonstrating results for our sporting communities.

Community Sport Hubs bring together sport clubs and key local partners, including local authorities, who want to develop and grow the number of sports and physical activities in the community. They focus on sustainable, community-led approaches that get clubs working together to develop welcoming, safe and

fun environments for sport.

3.3.2 Living Well Physical Activity Coordinators

A joint bid between the Leisure Service and NHS staff was submitted to the Integrated Care Fund local grants for three new posts in Helensburgh and Lomond, Bute and Cowal and Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay. Funding awards were made for a full-time post based in Helensburgh and a part-time post for MAKI.

The Coordinators will have the fundamental aim of increasing the uptake of physical activity in sedentary members of the community to adopt active, healthy lifestyles through long-term behaviour change. They will also be responsible for developing and managing physical activity pathways within the area that link to the ArgyllActive programme as well as linking to existing and further developing wider community programmes. They will also be responsible for developing an infrastructure to recruit, support and sustain a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who in turn deliver physical activity sessions in the wider community.

The posts will be managed within the Leisure Service and the recruitment process is now underway.

3.3.3 Scottish Schools Swimming

Tuesday 10th November saw over 100 pupils from Argyll and Bute schools travel to Aqualibrium, Campbeltown, to take part in the Argyll and Bute Scottish Schools Swimming Trials. Thanks to incredible support from Kintyre Amateur Swimming Club volunteers and the Active Schools team, the trials were a huge success.

This annual event serves as the regional trials for swimmers to gain entry to the national Scottish Schools Swimming Finals, which were held at Tollcross International Swimming Centre on Saturday 30th January. This event is the only opportunity for our swimmers to represent their school, as opposed to their swimming club and is a huge honour for pupils and schools alike. This year a total of 20 swimmers represented eight Argyll and Bute schools across 26 events including a relay team from Dalintober Primary School.

3.4 GAELIC

3.4.1 Gaelic Up-date

There has been quite a bit of activity by the council in relation to Gaelic issues over the past few months and progress is being made on delivering the actions in the agreed Gaelic Action Plan.

Regular meetings take place with officers to progress actions in the Gaelic Language Plan. The most recent actions underway are to take advantage of the funding available through GLAIF to support delivery of the Plan and to put in place arrangements for a 'Gathering' of Gaelic groups in Argyll and Bute, to share good practice and improve networking, all in support of promoting the Gaelic Language. This event will be held at the Corran Halls on 20th August.

Regular activities continue to be delivered by officers across the council to support Gaelic language. A selection of these is highlighted in this report.

3.4.2 Visit to Mull

I recently spent a day on Mull and met a number of individuals involved in Gaelic and enjoyed the Feis at Bunessan. It was great to be made aware of the strong positive interest in Gaelic from youngsters and parents in Mull.

3.4.3 Furan Gaelic Centre - Oban

Furan Gaelic Centre continues to be a valuable resource for Gaelic learners and fluent speakers and for the young and not so young.

Regular events and classes include Bookbug, Gaelic for Parents, Speaking our Language, Furan Conversation Group, Forestry Conversation Group, Lynn Court Cèilidh, Stramash Gaelic lessons.

Furan Gaelic Centre also offers reading lessons to children who are in Gaelic Medium Education and one-to-one adult conversation sessions.

Following on from the success of the Oban Royal National Mod 2015, Furan is working closely with the local Mod committee in preparation for the 2016 local Mod which takes place on the 3rd and 4th June. Furan will host some of the children's competitions and will also be the base for the Mod office.

3.4.4 Recent Developments

New, recent developments include "Leugh Leabhar", a weekly "book club" for school children and the fortnightly Mid-Argyll Conversation Group which meets in the Grey Gull Hotel in Ardrishaig.

The bookbug initiative continues to grow in Argyll & Bute with 214 sessions delivered during 2014-15, attended by 1111 adults and 1690 children. New training took place on the 20th of February and the response to this was good. An annual report on Book Bug to include statistics for 2015-16 is due to be published in April. I look forward to being able to update members.

The Mid-Argyll Gaelic Bookbug session has recently moved from Lochgilphead Library to the Ardrishaig Primary School Early Learning Centre. Children from the nursery and local families attend this weekly session.

3.4.5 Gaelic language classes for Council employees

Working in partnership with Ionad Chaluim Chille Ile (ICCI), Gaelic language classes for Council employees began in January 2016, funded by Bòrd Na Gaidhlig. The classes are delivered weekly and will run up until the end of June 2016. The classes are delivered using video teleconferencing via the Council's Microsoft Lync communications system. The classes are delivered by ICCI tutors using the Council's Islay Service Centre and learners join the classes from multiple locations across the Council area. Learners can join the classes from their usual work location or can join other learners using Council meeting rooms for a shared learning experience. The majority of learners are based in

Lochgilthead with a few learners joining from Helensburgh, Dunoon, Oban and Campbeltown.

Learners follow the Ceumannan text books as used in High Schools. Classes are grouped by experience levels. We have 2 intermediate classes and 4 beginners classes. There is also some homework provided to embed the learning. We have over 20 people regularly attending a 1 hour class each week which is scheduled on a Tuesday or Thursday morning. Classes have been well received as evidenced by requests from new learners to join the classes after hearing about them by word of mouth.

In addition to the above there are 2 employees currently enrolled on the Ùlpan course delivered by the Tìree Community Development Trust. These are delivered via traditional evening class format and learners follow a 6 level system. This option is currently only available to employees based on Tìree and helps to support a local organisation.

Learning and Development recently carried out an evaluation to look at how the classes have been received so far and to also gauge interest in extending the classes beyond June 2016. The evaluation was sent to the 20 learners 10 of which responded. Learners were asked how many classes they had been able to attend so far.

- 1 learner had been unable to attend any
- 1 learner had managed between 1 and 2 classes
- 3 learners had made 3-4 classes
- 4 learners had managed 5 or more classes.

When asked if those participating would like to be included in dates beyond June 2016 all 9 out of the 10 learners that responded, and had managed to attend classes said yes and stated that they would recommend the classes to a colleague.

On the whole, the use of the Lync system has been successful as it has allowed us to reach learners in multiple locations therefore increasing participation. It has also reduced travelling to attend classes. Learners who prefer group interaction are able to join classes as a group, using Council meeting rooms. There have been some instances where delays have occurred to the class start time where the technology has held things up but Learning and Development are looking into options to improve the way delegates join the meetings. Generally learners have found this method positive. The learners were asked to rate the use of the Lync system for the classes as excellent, very good, good, poor, fair. The majority (7) of the learners found using the Lync system good or very good with 2 stating that it had been fair. Learners were also asked to rate the class delivery. All learners found the tutor's teaching method and the materials used excellent very good, or good. 2 learners have found the pace of the learning fair with the remaining 7 finding it excellent, very good or good. When asked what their overall assessment of the classes was, 3 responded excellent, 2 very good and 4 good.

Learners were also asked to provide any feedback which could be used to

improve classes. Learning and Development will use these comments to make improvements for future sessions.

Based on feedback from learners the Council will be submitting an application to secure funding to deliver classes beyond June 2016. Existing learners will be invited to attend. Learning and Development will also communicate the next session of classes to Employees once these have been scheduled.

3.4.6 Gaelic on the Council website and intranet

Press releases in Gaelic are issued at a rate of 2 per month and these are all included on the website. Gaelic page has been set up and, whilst in the early stages of development, highlights the council's Gaelic Language Plan and also the Gaelic Schools in the area. Events at Furan, Feis events and other Gaelic community events are included in the 'What's On' section of the website. It was agreed that wholesale translation of website pages into Gaelic was not the appropriate route to take, but that interesting and appropriate content is much more engaging and more likely to gather interest and promote the language. The website can now also be translated fully into Gaelic by using Google translate. Officers are currently working on improving the Gaelic content of the site.

The council's Hub provides information for employees on using the Gaelic language. Soundbites illustrating how to pronounce the language are included in toolkit sections called WhyGaelic, TalkGaelic and UseGaelic. These all enable employees to access the language easily, at a time that suits them and helps to build confidence in their use of the language.

3.4.7 Education Support Officer

We continue to await a start date for Catriona Garvin, our new Education Support Officer for Gaelic. Catriona's teaching post needs to be filled first before she can be released, and there has so far been insufficient interest in successive adverts for her position. Catriona will commence this post as soon as a replacement has been appointed to Rockfield.

Meanwhile Don McAllister, Education Officer Learning and Achievement is dealing with any matters requiring urgent attention with regard to Gaelic Education, and is working closely with Duncan MacNeil, Gaelic Centre Administrator.

3.4.8 Priorities in Gaelic Education

Priorities in Gaelic Education continue to be:-

- Recruitment and retention of Gaelic Medium Teachers and Staff
- Planning local delivery of Gaelic Teacher Training working with UHI and Ionad Chaluim Chille Ìle
- Planning and delivering quality CPD for Gaelic staff
- Monitoring and Evaluating the quality of Gaelic provision
- GLPS and Language 1+2 to promote Gaelic learners.
- Engaging with parents and Comann nam Pàrant

Islay and North Mull clusters of schools have opted for Gaelic to be the second

language within the government's **Languages 1+2** initiative to be learned in English medium education from P1 up from August 2015 (English being the first language). Within all Gaelic Medium classes, Gaelic is already the second language being learned through immersion from P1 to P3. The education service will promote Gaelic as the preferred third language for all children from P5 to P7 in establishments where French has been chosen as the second language.

3.4.9 Education Bill

The Education Bill continues to make progress and within this there are areas which require further clarification with regard to Gaelic Education. There are currently a number of areas of challenge:

- Lack of available Gaelic Teachers
- Funding to support the implications of Gaelic provision Education Bill
- Meeting the needs of the parents including the potential for changes in favour of parents' right to request Gaelic Medium Education

Guidance for local authorities is required and is being considered by COSLA.

3.4.10 Ardrishaig Primary

Argyll and Bute Council has recently established a dual language Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) provision at Ardrishaig Primary. We have been successful in recruiting a Childcare and Education worker at the school to deliver dual language learning. Part of her remit is to also to promote Gaelic language awareness and language learning provision within the local community. The medium to longer term sustainability of this provision will be monitored during the coming months.

3.4.11 Learning Needs

A small working group of teachers and educational psychologists has been set up to concentrate on creating resources to help children who have significant learning needs within Gaelic Medium education. This group have made a good start and hope to share information nationally.

3.5 HOUSING

3.5.1 Welfare Rights.

The amount of money generated by the Welfare Rights Officers as a result of all their income maximisation activities from 01/04/15 to 31/12/15 was £1,994,737. This means the service is on target to achieve the same amount of income as last year. We have achieved 94% positive outcomes for clients in Argyll and Bute during quarter three and consequently have assisted vulnerable people to increase their income despite the introduction of more rigorous assessments and DWP sanctions.

3.5.2 Local Housing Strategy

Preparation is underway for the next Local Housing Strategy which will cover the period 2016 to 2021. Stakeholder engagement and consultation is ongoing.

Before being finalised the final draft will be submitted to the Scottish Government for peer review. Underpinning the strategy is a comprehensive housing need and demand assessment which has received very positive feedback from the Centre for Housing Market Analysis. Indeed the supporting technical paper on housing for particular needs is to be circulated to other authorities as an example of best practice.

3.5.3 Homelessness

The delivery of homeless services has been subject of an internal audit which has concluded that there was a high level of assurance and no recommendations.

3.5.4 Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)

The SHIP is currently being reviewed as part of the two year review process. The review includes an analysis of the SHIP programme from 2011-15 including cost comparisons across the housing market areas. It will need to take into account the revised Scottish Government targets for affordable housing and the revisions to the Scottish Government's subsidy benchmarks.

3.5.5 Health and Social Care Integration

Housing staff are working with the new Integration Joint Board (IJB) to ensure that the strategic plan and local housing strategy are closely aligned. The Housing Contribution Statement was prepared and submitted to the IJB for consideration within the wider strategic plan. There is an emphasis on forward planning for people with particular needs whose housing needs cannot be met within the existing housing stock. Focussed work has been done to identify the long term needs of people with learning disabilities and staff are currently supporting the Children and Families team to meet the needs of previously looked after children.

3.5.6 Tenancy Support Contracts

Negotiations are underway with tenancy support providers to re-negotiate the contracts in light of budget decisions taken by the Council.

3.5.7 Energy Efficiency

The government has announced that energy efficiency has been designated a national infrastructure priority. The refreshed Infrastructure Investment Plan, published on Wednesday 16th December, reflects this commitment, which will be delivered through Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP).

The new programme is now in its first phase and over the next two years, the government will be working with stakeholders to develop it. The process for this will include building on existing activity whilst testing new approaches and preparing for the effective implementation of the powers over domestic energy efficiency obligations set to be devolved through the Scotland Bill. The second

phase of the programme will begin in 2018, after new powers have been devolved.

The Scottish Government see local authorities as having a central role to play in the development of SEEP. The aim of SEEP is to improve the energy efficiency rating of domestic and non-domestic buildings over a 15-20 year period, contributing to broader ambitions around reducing fuel poverty, energy demand and harmful green-house gas emissions. SEEP will build upon the successful Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area-Based Schemes and the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (which was launched last year). This programme cuts across services within the Council. It is not proposed that we participate in the pilot in 2016/17 as there is insufficient capacity to do so but it is an area which will require to be resourced in future years.

3.5.8 New Development- Tayvallich

I was delighted to attend the official opening of the 2 houses in Tayvallich at the end of March. The official ceremony was conducted by Councillor Colville, as Chair of the MAKI Area Committee. This ACHA project is another good example of the Council supporting and enabling developments in rural locations.

4.0 CONCLUSION

As Policy Lead for Community, Culture, Gaelic and Strategic Housing, I am pleased to be a part of the work of council services which are taking action to ensure that Argyll and Bute is a great place to live work and visit. These efforts make a significant contribution to our Single Outcome Agreement.

Councillor Name: Councillor Robin Currie

Policy Lead for: Community, Culture, Gaelic and Strategic Housing

Date: 1st April 2016