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**ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UNIT**

**24<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021**

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**SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FUND – EXTENSION OF TIME TO SPEND FUNDS**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to ask members to consider a further extension for groups awarded funds from the Supporting Communities Fund 2020/21 due to the impacts of Covid guidance and uncertainty.
- 1.2 It is recommended that Council agrees to further extension from 31st March 2022 to 31st December 2022 in order to give groups the time to deliver their projects and spend the funds.

**SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FUND – EXTENSION OF TIME TO SPEND FUNDS**

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Council made a decision at a meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to agree a time extension until March 2022 for the groups who received the Council's Supporting Communities Fund in 2020.
- 2.2 Due to the uncertainty of on -going Covid restrictions, a number of groups across Argyll and Bute have contacted Community Development to request a further extension.
- 2.3 Following discussions with those groups, a reasonable timescale in which to spend the funds on the same project is proposed as the end of December 2022.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Council agree to an extension until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 for groups to complete their projects and spend their allocated funds originally awarded in 2020.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Council agree that any Community Group awarded the funding in 2020 and who is unable to spend the funds by December 2022 returns the funds to the Council for redistribution in the Supporting Communities Fund decisions in spring 2023.

**4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 There are four groups who have approached the Council's Community Planning and Development Service to request a further extension to the period of time in which they have to spend their funding from the Council's Supporting Communities Fund.
- 4.2 The reasons for the extension requests are due to the Covid 19 regulations restricting planned face to face activity and alternative methods being looked at and where there are no alternative methods, time given for the event to take place at its scheduled time in the calendar year.

- 4.3 We expect other groups may come forward who had received funding in 2020 and who have currently until March 2022 to spend their funds.
- 4.4 We wish to proactively support groups to have the time that they need given the limitations from award of their funding in March 2020 until the present time.
- 4.5 The proposed extension to spend funds on the same project as originally applied for would be offered to all groups awarded the Council's Supporting Communities Fund in 2020.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The recommended further extension from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, will allow groups time to prepare and plan for a safe environment to deliver their respective projects taking into consideration Covid restrictions.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy : Consideration has been made to the current policy context.  
The funded projects are to positively impact on policy areas such as climate change mitigation, child poverty, and covid-19 impact.
- 6.2 Financial: Managed within budget of Community Planning and Development
- 6.3 Legal: Eligibility checks are made to ensure organisations in receipt of funds are valid.
- 6.4 HR: Uses existing resources within Community Planning and Development.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: n/a
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: Improves monitoring and impact of grant outcomes to inequality groups
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: The SCF supports organisations in their community impact.
- 6.5.3 Islands: Community organisations based on islands have benefitted from the council's SCF.
- 6.6 Risk: n/a
- 6.7 Customer Service: Paper application forms available for those who are digitally excluded

**Chief Executive's Unit - Pippa Milne**

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24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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