

# Renfrewshire Council Community Empowerment Fund

## Guidance

The Council is committed to building strong, safe and resilient communities and recognises that one of Renfrewshire's greatest assets is the thriving network of local community groups and organisations.

Community groups are increasingly playing a strong role across Scotland in planning and delivering services that meet local needs, complementing those provided by public services. This community provision has a particular strength in developing innovative and flexible activities that are valued by local people and helps to build a real sense of community pride and cohesion.

There is also increasing interest among community groups in becoming owners or custodians of publicly owned buildings and land through options such as community asset transfer. This is helping to ensure that we get as much productive use as possible from the assets in our communities, harnessing the ideas and capabilities of local people.

Renfrewshire Council is committed to promoting and supporting the principles of community empowerment and encouraging interest in community asset ownership and principally, community asset transfer. The Council has committed £1.5 million to establish a Community Empowerment Fund to support community groups to develop their ideas. The total funding is split £0.5 million revenue funding and £1 million capital funding.

Through the Community Empowerment Fund we particularly seek project ideas that:

- Make good use of assets and have the support of local communities.
- Are capable of being viable and sustainable community enterprises.
- Complement existing services in an area by providing additional activity.
- Fit with the aims of the Our Renfrewshire Community Plan and Renfrewshire Council Plan.

### What is the purpose of the fund?

The purpose of the fund is to support community organisations to acquire and develop community assets. The fund will be able 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

The fund is designed to support the development of community organisations and build their capacity to undertake potential asset transfers. As such, it is not required that a group has already acquired an asset to apply for the Community Empowerment Fund, so groups are welcome to apply for the fund before or during the asset transfer process.

## What is Community Asset Transfer?

**Asset transfer** is a process to allow a community organisation to take over publicly-owned land or buildings, in a way that recognises the public benefits that the community use will bring. That may be a discounted price, a grant or other support, or simply the agreement to transfer something the public authority did not plan to sell. If the land is put up for sale or lease and a community body offers the best (or the only) bid, that is just a commercial transaction.

An **asset** is something that has value to someone. In relation to "asset transfer" under the Community Empowerment Act it means land and any buildings or other structures on the land, like bridges, walls or piers. It does not include vehicles or equipment.

More information on asset transfer, including guidance for community bodies, can be found on the Scottish Government website [here](#).

While the primary purpose of the fund is to support the asset transfer of Council assets, there may be circumstances where applications will be considered for non-Council assets. This will be considered where organisations can demonstrate that an asset will be brought into community ownership, and demonstrate clear benefits for the community. Applications for projects seeking to acquire commercial assets for community ownership will be considered, but this can not include a contribution to the cost of purchasing the property.

## Who can apply?

Any constituted voluntary or community organisation can apply.

It should be noted that organisations must be 'Community Transfer Bodies' to be eligible for Community Asset Transfer. While this is not a requirement for applications to this fund, organisations should be aware of and working towards this status.

## When can I apply?

Applications are invited from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 and the fund will remain open. Applications will be approved by Renfrewshire Council's Communities, Housing and Planning Board and will be taken to an appropriate Board. Submission of an application prior to a specific meeting of the board does not guarantee the application will be considered at the next Board, and applicants are advised to engage with the Council in advance of submitting their application.

## How much can I apply for?

Grants will be considered in two categories:

- Funding applications to develop the **project or organisation**, up to a value of £10,000
- Funding applications for costs related to **property**, up to a value of £50,000

In exceptional circumstances, grants exceeding these values may be considered. This might include, but is not limited to:

- The project represents a significant capital project with a robust business case
- The organisation has been successful in leveraging in external funding to Renfrewshire
- The organisation can demonstrate extensive community engagement in support of its project, including strong relationships and partnerships in the area.
- The organisation is recognised as a key strategic partner for Renfrewshire Council, and for example, has a formal Strategic Partnership Agreement in place

## What we are looking for

Projects should promote or improve economic development, regeneration, public health, social wellbeing, environmental wellbeing or reduce socio-economic inequalities

It will be important applicants to the fund will be able to demonstrate the following:

### Able to demonstrate positive impact for local communities

- You have identified the community need for your project, as well as clearly showing the changes your project will bring.
- You can clearly explain the impact your project will have for the community, and how you will know whether you have achieved change.

### The community are involved in the design and delivery of the project

- You can evidence how the community are involved in the development of your idea, and supportive of your plans.
- Your plans show the community will continue to have a voice in the delivery and oversight of your project.
- You are able to demonstrate a clear commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, making sure that different types of people are supported and empowered to engage with your project.

### Good working relationships and partnership with others

- You can demonstrate that you are able to develop and sustain good working relationships with others.
- You have a clear commitment to partnership working.

### The project is viable and sustainable

- You are able to demonstrate how your project can be financially sustainable.
- Your organisation has the appropriate skills, experience and qualifications to deliver the project, or has a plan for engaging people who do

- Your organisation should have suitable governance arrangements in place for the scale of the project, and should have clear succession plans in place for the recruitment of Board members or trustees

#### Strategic fit with the fund objectives and criteria

- You understand how your project fits with the strategic priorities of Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership.
- Your project is complementary to existing facilities and provisions in the local area.

#### Value for money and leverage of additional funding and/or resources

- You are able to demonstrate value for money
- You are able to identify and secure other funding sources to support the development of your project, including the leverage of additional funding into Renfrewshire.

The information required on these issues should always be proportionate and appropriate to the scale and type of project involved. Following the submission of the application, further information may be requested in order to support the application.

#### How are the decisions made?

Applications to the Community Empowerment Fund are made on Renfrewshire Council's standard Application Form for Voluntary and Community Organisations.

Following submission of the application form, officers will work with the applicant to develop a more detailed understanding of the project and organisation and to inform the assessment of the application.

Recommendations will then be developed, with the final decision on the awarding of grants made by Communities, Housing and Planning Board.

Applicants should note that a successful funding application to the Community Empowerment Fund to support development of a project idea is not an indication of the outcome of a subsequent asset transfer request. Each asset transfer request will be considered on its own merits.

Applications for the funding will be considered throughout the year, with approvals made by elected members on the Council's Communities, Housing and Planning Board. Deadlines for the submission of applications are available on the website, but it should be noted that submission of an application by the deadline does not guarantee that a decision will be made at the next available Board.

Please note that information is provided to the Communities, Housing and Planning Board on all applications, whether they are recommended for approval or not.

#### Grant conditions

All grants will be subject to Renfrewshire Council's standard Grant Conditions.

- £1,000 to less than £10,000: All grant payments will be authorised by the Council subject to satisfactory compliance procedures outlined in the Grant Conditions and

subject to scrutiny of any grants claims and receipts/invoices by the Council. Once agreed all grant payments will normally be made in one or two instalments at the Council's discretion.

- £10,000 or more: All grant payments will be authorised by the Council subject to satisfactory compliance with the bookkeeping and accounts procedures outlined in the Grant Conditions and subject to scrutiny of any grants claims and receipts/invoices by the Council. Once agreed, a schedule of grant payment will be agreed and may be paid in advance at the Council's discretion.

Please note: Grants are made payable to applicant organisations or individuals detailed in the main application form. Grants awards are not transferrable to other organisations or entities.

### [Attachments to your application](#)

Organisations and Groups should provide supporting evidence as follows:

- Bank Statement less than three months old.
- Copy of your most recent Annual Accounts or Income and Expenditure Statement. These should be less than 15 months old, dated and signed as approved. (you may provide a link to OSCR/Companies House submitted file)
- New organisations should submit estimates of income and expenditure for the first 12 months
- A signed, dated copy of the organisation's Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association. (you may provide a link to OSCR/Companies House submitted file)
- Any other relevant reports or information to support your application such as supporting evidence (including media coverage, press cuttings, images, past publicity materials, reviews and letters of support) (PDF's preferred)

### [What other support is available?](#)

Advice and support for applicants will be available from Renfrewshire Council Chief Executive's Service, who can also signpost to specialist advice as required on different aspects of community asset transfer and development of community organisations.

Early discussions regarding development of projects is advised.

### [Who do I need to contact?](#)

Telephone: 0141 618 7408

Enquiries email: [communityplanning@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:communityplanning@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

Completed applications should be emailed to: [rcgrantapplications@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:rcgrantapplications@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

By Post: Grant Applications, Community Empowerment Fund, Renfrewshire Council, Cotton Street, Paisley PA1 1JD

Useful links

**Community asset transfer strategy and guidance**

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/6265/Our-Renfrewshire-community-plan-2017---2027>

**Our Renfrewshire Community Plan**

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/6265/Our-Renfrewshire-community-plan-2017---2027>

**Renfrewshire Council Plan**

<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ourplan>