

Management Committee

Date: 22 June 2023

Building Back Stronger – learning from the support and relationships with community organisations throughout Covid-19

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review the learning from the support and relationships with community organisations throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This report will make recommendations for structures of working with communities and community organisations to help support needs arising as a result of Covid-19.

2.0 Recommendations

4.0 Detail

Support Structures

Covid Community Response Group Meetings - Regular communication between the Council and community providing the opportunity for peer support and networking

Since the beginning of the Test and Protect response in 2020, the Community Development team co-ordinated monthly meetings with the Covid-19 Community Response Groups. These meetings aimed to bring together groups who supported the emergency response in their communities to share information and examples of best practice. They importantly provided an opportunity for Argyll and Bute Council Community Development to identify and respond to needs arising. The online meetings were initially held within each of the four administrative areas of Argyll and Bute to support local issues. Following common challenges identified there was a move to support Argyll and Bute wide meetings from August 2021 to increase opportunities for networking and shared support.

Benefits
<p>Opportunity for peer support and sharing of good practice. Examples included sharing of policies and procedures for reopening community facilities and resources to support volunteers.</p> <p>Able to identify shared needs arising in order to provide a comprehensive response e.g. in response to volunteer fatigue and concerns about volunteer res access t volunteers were offered free counselling service.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Council Community Development were able to build strong trusted relationships with response groups which allowed for assistance to be requested efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Online meetings made it easy to bring together organisations from different locations across Argyll and Bute.</p>
Challenges

Some issues and

and Protect support. Evaluation of the support offered over the period 2020-2022 was extremely positive, further information and testimonies can be found within the Community Learning and Development annual report case studies shown in Appendix 2. When the meetings ended, there was a desire shared by the groups who attended for there to be continued opportunities for community organisations from across all areas to meet, network, share learning and best practice.

Recommendation: Offer regular peer to peer support and networking opportunities for community organisations from across Argyll and Bute.

Covid-19 Micro Grants Fund - Targeted funding for identified needs

Through the support meetings, we were able to understand that there was a need for recovery funding in particular for village halls. At Council on 24 June 2021 it was agreed that an amount of £30,400 be made available to support impacts of Covid-19 on community groups and in particular village halls. The Covid-19 Micro Grants Fund was created and organisations were invited to apply for up to £500 to help community facilities to re-open safely and support their community-led recovery activities. Activities the fund supported included provision of cleaning materials or personal protective equipment, training of staff and volunteers, as well as events to bring the community together. Within an 11 week period, the fund was developed and launched, applications were assessed and 63 organisations were awarded funding.

Benefits

A quick, streamlined process from application to award taking best practice

Simple application form

Funding criteria targeted specifically to meet the needs identified

Challenges

Staff resource commitment required to ensure the quick turnaround

Maximum award of £500 meant impact of individual project was limited for some ambitions such as larger village hall repairs and improvements

Recommendation: Provide ongoing targeted support to community organisations to access funding to address the needs identified.

As part of the end of project monitoring process, community organisations were asked, 'Does your organisation require any further Covid-19 support?' Some examples of the key challenges still faced included:

Identified Need	Partner Supporting
Low footfall along with smaller groups folding and not restarting has led to reduced income for community facilities Ongoing need for promotion and signposting of existing provision	Argyll and Bute Council Community Planning and Community Developme

said we are doing' updates were provided

	<p>Key Contact: Fergus Walker Email: fergus.walker@argyll-bute.gov.uk Tel: 01586 555237</p>
--	---

Non-Covid-19 Related Health Matters

Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership

Specific to healthcare provision during the pandemic which has since returned to business as usual. The World Health Organisation has declared an end to Covid-19 as a public health emergency.

Key Contact: Kristin Gillies
Email: Kristin.gillies@nhs.scot

Recommendation: Continue to target partnership who

Argyll and Bute Outcomes Improvement Plan – Comprehensive engagement, with a focus on supporting non-digital participation and seldom heard groups.

next 10 year Outcomes

Improvement Plan.

The support was aimed at those with barriers to digital participation, as identified by Connecting Scotland. This included low income households, people aged 60+ and disabled people, additional groups targeted were people in areas with poor/no connectivity and those without essential digital skills.

Paper forms were distributed widely along with self-addressed envelopes to enable free returns. Interactive sessions were delivered using creative methods to support those with additional support needs and limited literacy. Community Development supported over 40 sessions which offered the opportunity for approximately 520 people to take part.

The consultation had 1978 responses in total and the overall priorities identified were transport and infrastructure, housing, community wellbeing and financial inclusion.

Remembering Together – Taking time to reflect and commemorate as we move forward.

Remembering Together is a Scotland-wide project, delivered by Greenspace Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government, which seeks to collect and input acts of reflection, remembrance, hope and healing within communities following the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim of the project is to co-create community artwork across the 32 local authorities which commemorates experiences.

CHArts (Argyll and Bute) in partnership with Greenspace Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council, commissioned a consultant to deliver the first phase of the project in the area

which focused on engagement and the development of initial concepts for the next delivery phase.

The project gathered feedback from 78 people across 8 events at the end of 2022. The results showed that there was interest in having a community day, and in having nature/ flora and fauna as part of a memorial.

Wider feedback from this engagement included:

Confusion over why a memorial is being created for a virus that is still very active throughout communities and that

Resources	Argyll and Bute Council Community Development
Prevention	Aims to prevent further impact of Covid-19 on communities and community organisations and help to build back stronger
Equalities	Those with protected characteristics targeted within all engagement and support structures referenced

For more information, contact:

Rona Gold
 Communities and Partnership Manager
 Argyll and Bute Council
Rona.Gold@argyll-bute.gov.uk
 01436 658862

Kirsty Moyes
 Community Development and Building Back Stronger Team Leader
 Argyll and Bute Council
Kirsty.moyes@argyll-bute.gov.uk
 01436 657635

References

[CPP partner covid update_caring for people.pdf \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](#)

[Covid Recovery Strategy: for a fairer future](#)

[Argyll and Bute Living Well Strategy](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Background

Appendix 2 – Exert from Community Learning and Development Partnership Annual Report 2021-2022

Appendix 3 – Argyll and Bute Council’s Covid-19 Micro Grants Evaluation Report

Appendix 1 -

Argyll and Bute Recovery Framework

The Argyll and Bute Recovery Action Plan outlined the key themes and the actions to recover from the COVID-

Building Back Better (strengthening communities) was identified as one of the key work streams. The main purpose of this work stream was to build on community resilience evidenced through the pandemic and develop the best ways to respond,

