



Report by the Flourishing DIG Chair

West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership Management Group – June 2022

Subject: Flourishing DIG Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update members on the development and delivery of activity being undertaken under the auspices of the Flourishing Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Management Group is asked to note the work undertaken.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Flourishing DIG action plan supports the local outcomes ensuring:
- Our economy is flourishing diverse and dynamic, creating opportunities for everyone
 - Our local communities are sustainable and attractive
 - Increased and better quality learning & employment opportunities
 - Enhanced quality and availability of affordable housing options
- 3.2** This report provides members with an update on the key activity undertaken during the operational year to date.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The COVID Pandemic recovery has been the focus of the Flourishing Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG) partners over the last period and will continue to be a priority as we support our communities and businesses in returning the local economy back into a growth phase.
- 4.2** The Flourishing DIG fully recognises the challenge of the climate emergency and will ensure a clear focus on green jobs and a green economic recovery to the COVID pandemic. The Council's Climate Change Action Plan can provide a foundation for discussion and development of ideas amongst DIG partners in the coming period.

- 4.3** The CPWD Executive Group agreed the key underpinning themes that will inform our future work. The three themes are Sustainability, Wellbeing and community empowerment. The Flourishing DIG will ensure that its action plan explicitly or implicitly reflects these themes and ensure that all partners play their role.

5. Employability

- 5.1** Working4U and partners have been developing a new approach to the delivery of local employability service called 'No One Left Behind' (NOLB). This has seen the development of the strategic employability partnership that includes representation from key agencies such as SDS and DWP, who are now working alongside Working 4U and local employability service providers to co-ordinate efforts for the benefit of local residents.
- 5.2** The local employability partnership has produced a plan to develop and manage employability services. The approach is based on a Scottish Approach to Service design and incorporates measures to ensure that service providers, staff, and service users can feed their views into the process of service design.
- 5.3** The strategic employability group is focused on the most effective use of grant funding for employability and has established a procurement framework to acquire services. We have complemented this with a competitive grant process that has allowed us to draw on a broader range of specialist service provision. The grant process generated interest from 17 organisations and of that group we have supported 14 with grants to deliver employability services and access to training in sectors where opportunities exist (care, hospitality, tourism, driving).
- 5.4** Working 4U has also developed a three year plan to guide the work of the local employability partnership. This followed guidelines set by the Scottish Government to reflect local needs and opportunities. The plan was drafted in April 2022 and acted as a trigger for the release of NOLB grant funding, and will cover the period from April 2022 to March 2025.
- 5.5** In the period 2021/2022 Working4U, despite delivering a remote service, has provided youth and adult employability support to approximately 750 people. Furthermore, through the provision of access to learning and training, 993 people have entered education and training and 457 have secured a qualification. During the course of the year 420 people have secured employment as a result of the support they have received.

6. Business Support

- 6.1** During the period January – March 2022, the Council Business Support team have continued to administer a range of Coronavirus Business Support funds on behalf of the Scottish Government. This recent support included grants for the hospitality and leisure business sectors and financial support for Taxi

Drivers and Operators. In this three month period over **860** grant payments have been processed totalling more than **£1.4 million**. Since April 2020, the team have provided **over £33 million** to local businesses/individuals to provide them with critical financial support throughout the COVID pandemic.

- 6.2** During 2021/22, the Business Support team have provided advice through Business Gateway to support over 200 new start-up businesses. Growth Advisers have also worked closely with over 40 established local businesses to provide them with an action plan for growth. A range of business growth grants are also available to help businesses to recover and grow after the impacts of the pandemic.
- 6.3** The Social Enterprise Challenge Fund was developed in partnership with First Port and Working4Business partners and provides funding of up to £5,000 to assist local social enterprises to grow and diversify. Two social enterprises have been successful in obtaining financial support through this fund totalling £9,300. Working4Business partners assisted with the approval process which included the scoring of the applications and panel interviews.
- 6.4** The Scottish Government have confirmed additional funding to continue the delivery of the national Digital Boost Programme. The Digital Boost programme delivers Information and Communications Technology (ICT) advice to businesses across the country. Once the allocations per local authority have been agreed a tender specification will be developed by West Dunbartonshire Council for both East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas for Phase 7 Digital Boost activity. Since September 2021, The Council has assisted 9 businesses with one to one specialist support through Digital Boost and East Dunbartonshire have supported 10 businesses.
- 6.5** The Working4Business group are organising the next Business Awards event for May 2023. The previous two annual award events were unfortunately postponed due to the COVID pandemic.

7. Regeneration

- 7.1** Regeneration works across our towns continue with support from partners, in particular with the Chamber of Commerce as we promote the 'shop local' campaign. The Council signed up to the Shop Local Gift Card concordat, which, thanks to financial assistance from Scotlands' Towns Partnership (STP), was promoted and managed locally by the Chamber of Commerce, and discussions are underway on how this continues to be resourced as STP funding comes to an end.
- 7.2** As well as delivering projects that bring additional footfall to our town centres, we have taken a strategic approach to town centre regeneration, and the recently approved Alexandria Masterplan and Clydebank Town Centre Development Framework, together with the ambitious Dumbarton town centre proposals contained within our Levelling Up Fund programme, provide a long

term vision for the reimagining our town centres against a backdrop of declining High Street retail. We continue to support and develop projects that improve and bring vibrancy to our town centres, including for example the new Canal-side Activities Centre in Clydebank town centre being delivered in 2022/23, and the now underway public realm and lighting enhancements to the Smollett Fountain in Alexandria to improve the setting and pedestrian activity around this important town centre feature. In Alexandria, this will be closely followed by the development of further Masterplan projects using Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme fund.

- 7.3** The West Dunbartonshire Energy centre has been operational since November 2020 delivering heat to The Leisure centre, Care Home, Titan Enterprise, and Aurora House. The District Heating network is performing well and the newly established West Dunbartonshire Energy LLP is overseeing its growth. The 147 Social Housing units on Titan Boulevard are connected and will be commissioned as flats are completed in August 2022. Clydebank Housing Association has also agreed to connect 45 flat units on Dumbarton Road. Plans continue to secure funding to connect West College Scotland, and the Golden Jubilee University Hospital, and agreement to connect the Clydebank Health Centre. The Council are also pursuing funding from the Scottish Government Green Growth Accelerator fund to enable expansion and connection to the Dalmuir multi story flats and officers continue to work with the Queens Quay landowners to bring in 1,000 new homes.
- 7.4** Good placemaking will continue to underpin the regeneration, development and improvement work in the town centres as we aim to align funding and resources, with Council, DIG partners and external funding, to achieve our ambitions. The improvements we have delivered in the town centres over the past five years have been guided by placemaking and more recently, the move to creating 20 minute neighbourhoods - where people have their day to day needs provided within easy walking or cycling distance. For environmental and health & wellbeing reasons active and sustainable transport is now one of the regeneration priorities; Connecting Clydebank, Connecting Dumbarton and the proposed Green Corridors project in Alexandria Masterplan will contribute to this ambition. Scottish Government's Place Based Improvement Programme funding will help us realise these ambitions over the next five years
- 7.5** Council secured £19.9m Levelling-Up Funding from UK government for an ambitious programme of regeneration of Dumbarton Town centre including the acquisition and remodelling of the Artizan shopping centre, the refurbishment and reuse of Glencairn House as central library and museum, and Connecting Dumbarton, which will see pedestrian and cycle links improved between train station and town centre. The City Deal Exxon project is progressing as planned as are the plans to convert the brownfield Carless site into a Scottish Marine Technology Park in co-operation with the Malin Group.

8. People Implications

8.1 There are no personnel issues.

9. Financial and Procurement Implications

9.1 There are no specific financial implications arising as a consequence of this report.

10. Risk Analysis

10.1 There are no specific unassessed risks relating to this report

11. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

11.1 Equalities Impact Assessments are carried out in all key action areas as required.

12. Consultation

12.1 Ongoing consultation activity with both providers and service recipients is undertaken allowing for flexibility of approach as needs throughout period of pandemic and as we recover.

13. Strategic Assessment

13.1 The contents of this report could impact on all community planning strategic priority areas.

13.2 The activity being developed and supported by the Flourishing DIG will continue to contribute and reinforce our efforts to develop a strong economy that provides access to opportunity for all in West Dunbartonshire.

Name **Peter Barry, Chief Officer Housing & Employability**

Person to Contact: **Michael McGuinness**
 Michael.mcguinness@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
 0777 442 8294

Background Papers: Flourishing DIG Action Plan 2020-22

Wards Affected: All