



Management Board Meeting

Development and Improvement Groups (DIGs): Highlights and Issues Report

FOR INFORMATION ONLY	X
FOR DECISION	

Name of DIG	Flourishing Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG).
Date of report	26/01/2024
Name and email of lead contact	Peter Barry

1	Highlights of activity and progress since last meeting
---	--

Regeneration

Dumbarton

Levelling Up Programme

- Glencairn House - tenders were returned in December 23 and are currently being assessed. It is expected that works will start on site in Spring 24.
- Connecting Dumbarton - works nearly completed, artwork in the underpass remains to be installed.
- Masterplan for redevelopment of the Artizan was approved by Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee Committee on 1 November 23. Planning application for Phase 1 works expected in March 24.
- Design Team progressing the detailed designs for the Artizan Redevelopment Masterplan
- Demolition of units to rear expected to commence in February 24

Alexandria

- Restoration of Smollett Fountain underway, works expected to be completed by early March 24. T
- Discussions on a potential Business Improvement District ongoing, the traders were successful in securing £20k of seedcorn funding from the Scottish Government towards BID development. Officers are supporting the process as and when required.

- Shared Prosperity Funded shopfront improvement grants applications being received however progress is slower than anticipated. The businesses struggle with providing the required evidence, however the guidance has been amended to make the process easier.
- Alexander Street improvements project has commenced and Page & Park were appointed as a lead consultant. The project originated from the Masterplan and is part of the Green Heritage Corridors projects. It will be funded from the Place Based investment Programme fund.

Clydebank

Queens Quay District Heating Network

- Legal and commercial discussions regarding the West College Scotland and Golden Jubilee connections ongoing
- First phase of works to connect a further 46 Clydebank Housing Association flats on Dumbarton Road underway

Town Centre

- Planning application for the Clydebank Canal-side Activities Centre progressing. It is expected that works will start on site later this year.
- £20M UK Government funding from Long-Term Plan for Towns announced for Clydebank Town Centre. A new Town Board chaired by an independent Chairperson will be established to oversee the delivery. A report seeking approval for the governance arrangements will be submitted Regeneration and Economic Development Committee on 7 February 24.

Exxon

- Planning application approved in January.
- Council officers continue to seek additional funding from City Region to contribute towards the costs of the project.
- Discussions ongoing on the construction contract terms so that construction can commence as soon as possible.
- Stage 2 application for Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land Fund for greenspace and footpaths submitted 2023, outcome should be known soon.

-

Scottish Marine Technology Park

- Council continuing to work with the Malin Group to support the relocation of their business to Carless and to help with the identification of additional funding for land remediation
- Planning application now submitted
- Work complete on the flood mitigation project, and Malin Group have appointed a designer for the Quayside, both of which are being funded by Clyde Mission and the Council, the latter being subject to a further development agreement.

- With support from the Council Malin and Strathclyde University working on a bid to the City Region Investment Zone, to be submitted by end March – see below for more detail.

Place Based Investment Programme Grants

- Regeneration and Economic Development Committee on 1 November 23 approved allocation of £471k of PBIP funds towards Community Grants
- Small Grants (up to £5k) will be decided through Participatory Budgeting process, Large Grants will be assessed by a panel of Council Officers. Grants will be awarded by mid-March 24.

Business Support

- The number of start-ups assisted through Business Gateway remains on track to meet the annual target of 180. The number of businesses supported up to the end of Quarter 3 total 151.
- The business grants available through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund are continuing to receive applications and are on track to meet year-end budget targets. The grants include a Recovery & Growth grant, Early Stage Growth grant, Working Towards Net Zero grant & Enhancing West Dunbartonshire's Tourism Events & Attractions grant.
- A Food & Drink Challenge Fund has been developed in partnership with the Working4Business group to provide a competitive grant of up to £5,000 to food and drink manufacturers and producers that can evidence potential growth projects which will create local jobs. Panel Interviews have been arranged for late January to assess applications.
- Working in partnership with Glasgow City Region and Strathclyde University to provide businesses with green business advice through the development of carbon baseline assessments. This support will be funded through UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The start date for referrals is now expected to be February/March 2024 due to a delay in finalising the grant agreement with Strathclyde University.
- The action plan for the Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 was approved at the IRED Committee meeting on 1 November 2023.

City Region/Scottish Government/UK Levelling Up

- Glasgow City Region will be one of two Investment Zones in Scotland and as a result will benefit from a package of funding and tax relief measures estimated to be worth £160M over 10 years. The details of the offer will be co-produced by City Region and Member Authorities, Scottish Government and UK Govt (DHLUC). Phase two is now live and involves an open call for detailed project applications from eligible businesses and organisations. The Phase 1 Expression of Interest process has allowed the GCR to refine the 'Priority Clusters'. Phase 2 will therefore focus on: Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Sciences, and Digital & Enabling Technology.

- The opportunity has been publicised by our Comms team, and a more targeted approach to eligible businesses has been undertaken by Business Support

Employability/Learning/Income Maximisation - *(to be updated before CPWD)*

- Working4U is responsible for delivering services that help people to address the barriers that prevent them from considering work as an option; improve their skill sets and secure employment. This rests on input from employability (*Work*), community learning (*Learn*) and debt/benefit support (*Money*) services.
- In 22/2023 Working4U provided *work, learning and money* support for over 9,000 people. Of those:
 - 373 people were supported through apprenticeships and in work progression;
 - 1,469 to enter education or training;
 - 756 people were supported to gain a qualification;
 - 420 people were supported (against a target of 400) secured employment.
- Community learning and development services contributed to this success by providing access to community-based learning that focussed on the most marginalised people/families in our community. This included support for:
 - Adult/Youth Literacies;
 - Community-based vocational courses;
 - Digital Learning;
 - ESOL; and
 - Family Learning.
- The Working4U debt and benefit support services assisted residents to:
 - Manage £1.88m of debt;
 - Secure £8.12m of benefit entitlements.
- Collectively these services are addressing poverty and disadvantage by supporting people to increase income through work and benefit entitlement, reduce their cost of living and address barriers to work and learning opportunities.
- West Dunbartonshire Council is the lead agency for the management and delivering services. Grants have been distributed to private and Third sector organisations to support the No One Left Behind and UK Shared Prosperity aims.
- Since April we have established the processes for the use of No One left Behind funds (Scottish approach to the delivery of employability services) and UK Shared Prosperity Funds.
- UK Shared prosperity provides funding that prioritises activity around
 - Community and Place (Community Team – addressing perceptions of crime and community empowerment);
 - Supporting Local Business (grants to develop and grow business and innovation);
 - People and Skills (employability support);
 - Multiply (developing basic skills in maths among residents and workforce).

- In the forthcoming period we will continue to work with partners through the Local Employability Strategic group, Adult Learning Partnership and Information and Advice partnership to co-ordinate activities that will support people to maximise income, reduce costs and overcome barriers to opportunity.

2 | Outline of any issues/risks and how these are being managed

Regeneration

Inflation and rising costs are a challenge in project delivery. We are looking at adjusting scope to make projects affordable, or seeking additional funding where possible.

Tight timescales associated with external funding pose a challenge to project delivery. We are seeking support from external consultants where appropriate, and work collaboratively with other teams to identify solutions. We also continue to engage with the funders.

Business Support

A delay in finalising the Extend Plus grant agreement with Strathclyde University has led to a further delay in referring businesses for carbon baseline assessments. The team have compiled a waiting list for businesses and will start making referrals as soon as we have confirmation of a start date.

Employability

The risks for the employability service centres on the ability to secure reliable external training providers capable of delivering services in the local area. We are managing this by providing each grant recipient with a key contact and providing them with the opportunity to identify delivery challenges at an early stage.

3 | Outline of the main outputs expected before next meeting

Regeneration

- Alexandria, Smollet Fountain renovation – project completed
- Alexandria, Alexander Street – public engagement completed, Stage 3 design underway.
- Clydebank, Activity Centre – planning permission anticipated. Delivery contract progressed and timescales confirmed.
- Clydebank, Long-Term Plan for Towns – Chairperson and Town Board appointed, development of Investment Plan underway.

- Dumbarton, Artizan – demolition contract underway
- Dumbarton, Artizan – Stage 3 design completed, planning application for Phase 1 works submitted.
- Exxon contract signed
- SMTP Stage 2 Investment Zone bid completed

Business Support

- Start making business referrals to Strathclyde University to receive carbon baseline assessments which is aimed to be available from February/March 2024.
- Continuing to promote the new business support programmes within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Complete the panel interviews for the Food and Drink Challenge Fund.

Employability (To be updated after pre-agenda)

- Working4U has continued to manage grant support services and deliver *Work, Learn, Money* activities and from April to September we have assisted 4,425 people: Of these we have
 - Assisted 300 people through apprenticeships and in-work progression;
 - Supported 565 into education and training;
 - 365 have gained a qualification;
 - 198 have secured employment.
- In addition we have:
 - Assisted people to secure £4.18m of additional benefits; and
 - Manage £627,181 of debt.
- As such, we have achieved the targets to date for these activities (September) and are on-track to achieve our targets for the year.

4	What are your requirements of partners in the Community Planning Management Board to achieve the outcomes of the DIG?
---	---

Placemaking

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.

Business Support

The on-going commitment and support from the community partners will help to maximise the impacts of the business support activity being developed and implemented through the Flourishing DIG. This will assist with reinforcing our efforts

to develop a strong local economy that will provide access to opportunity for all in West Dunbartonshire.

Employability

We will continue to deliver the NOLB, Parental Employability support programmes and UK Shared prosperity activity. We will continue to work in partnership through the Adult Learning Partnership and local employability partnership. We ask the partners to continue with their contribution to the local employability group by attending or sending representation where appropriate to the strategic group; the creative design group (service providers) and the frontline community of interest. These groups are making a positive contribution to identifying and addressing challenges in West Dunbartonshire.

5 | Please outline any good news story you wish to share

Employability – to be updated

A group of adult learners from West Dunbartonshire have been recognised nationally for their work to raise the profile of adult learning opportunities in the area.

The West Dunbartonshire Learners' Voice (WDLV) group won an award at the Adult Learners' Week Awards which celebrated achievements in community based adult learning.

The group – made up of learners and volunteers attending courses run by the Council's Working4U Adult Learning and Literacies team – were praised for their resilience and commitment to promoting the voice of learners through their weekly meetings.



The Working4U Jobs Fair on Tuesday 3rd October 10am-12pm at Clydebank Town hall was attended by 209 local residents looking for support with their employability skills and access to learning opportunities. Attendees had the opportunity to speak to 25 employers who had live vacancies as well as W4U Employability staff and partners to find out about jobs, training, qualifications and how to register for support. The event was considered to be a success and future events are planned for the forthcoming period.