

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

**Report by
Chief Education Officer &
Chief Officer Shared Services Roads & Neighbourhood
(West Dunbartonshire & Inverclyde)**

Council: 29 September 2021

Subject: Leamy Foundation

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update Members that officers will continue discussions with the Leamy Foundation to establish how we can best work together.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked:

- To note that officers will continue to engage with the Leamy Foundation with a view to reaching shared goals; and
- To note that there is potential for the Council to enter a partnership agreement with the Leamy Foundation for 2 years from October 2021 to October 2023.

3. Background

- 3.1** At a meeting of Council on 23 June 2021, the Chief Education Officer presented a report on the work that the Leamy Foundation performs and how that work is funded. Members noted the report and information it contained and agreed the following:

“Council confirms that we hope to consider the Leamy Foundation a Strategic Partner and Council officers will engage with the Leamy Foundation to continue to identify approaches to working together on shared goals; and that a report will be brought back to Council no later than September to detail the approaches to working together on shared goals although, these would all be subject to overcoming the significant challenges in terms of Procurement Law.”

- 3.2** In August 2021 Council Officers met with the Leamy Foundation to begin discussions around shared working approaches and goals.

- 3.3** The Leamy Foundation is a local charity based in Alexandria. The Leamy Foundation aspires to create positive, confident and connected communities promoting active community food growing and developing natural heritage outdoor learning resources.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Shared Goals

The Leamy Foundation and Council officers met in August 2021 and discussed partnership approaches relevant to the Council's Food Growing Strategy and Strategy for Excellence and Equity.

4.1.1 Food Growing Strategy Goals:

- develop and manage Growing West Dunbartonshire group (35 Community food growing groups), including chairing Monthly meetings;
- deliver annual spring events;
- increase the number of community based "learning for sustainability" food growing resources;
- increase number of community involvement activities;
- reduce carbon footprint via locally grown food and reduced food waste;
- develop a network of community based and led social prescription gardening resources and activities throughout West Dunbartonshire. (89% of participants reporting improved wellbeing); and
- secure external investment for Community food growing groups;

4.1.2 Delivering Excellence and Equity Goals:

- deliver curriculum projects to support capacity building of schools and early learning centres to provide children and young people with learning contexts to support an understanding of global ecological issues and to develop awareness of ways in which they can contribute as young citizens to reducing the carbon footprint;
- deliver the 'Learn and Grow' project supporting outdoor learning focussing on sustainable food sources with children, young people and families;
- support the Holiday Hunger initiative delivering family Learn and Grow holiday programmes; and
- engage with pupil nurture groups using outdoor learning and food growing to support mental and emotional wellbeing building resilience, and confidence.

4.1.3 Alexandria Town Centre

The Leamy Foundation have been contributors, along with other members of our community, towards the recently approved Masterplan for Alexandria. Their support has been in relation to projects developing green corridors and improved connections from the town to the River Leven. The Foundation will be able to contribute towards projects as they develop, in particular our drive towards the '20 minute neighbourhood' ambitions of the Council and our place making works.

- 4.2** The recently approved Alexandria masterplan identifies a number of key projects and as funding is sourced there may be opportunity for the Leamy Foundation to play a role in supporting this Town centre regeneration works.

4.3 Partnership Agreement

Council Officers from Greenspace and Educational Services will now work towards producing a partnership agreement with the Leamy Foundation building on joint goals.

- 4.3.1** The goals of a potential partnership for Greenspace would be to include:

- increase the number of new community volunteers, family and community leaders;
- reduce the Net Zero Carbon impact via use of locally grown food, reducing food waste; and
- Create community food growing hubs in each of West Dunbartonshire's three main towns.

- 4.3.2** The goals of a potential partnership for Educational Services would be to include:

- ensure all educational establishments have a growing space and support from Learn and Grow;
- increase the number of 'Learning for Sustainability' food growing resources/ activities in schools/ELC; and to
- increase the number of Learn and Grow family projects targeting areas of high deprivation.

- 4.3.3** The partnership could form one overarching Council agreement.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications arising from this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** As the final details have yet to be confirmed with the Leamy Foundation the detailed budgetary allocations are not yet finalised. However, it is anticipated that any costs associated with a potential partnership would come from within existing resources.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Without the benefit of the usual financial and organisational checks which would be carried out under a regulated procurement exercise, there is a risk to the delivery of programmes. It is therefore intended that as part of the process in preparing the future report to Council, the financial stability of the Leamy Foundation is a consideration.
- 7.2** The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires that for regulated contracts (those for goods and services over £50,000 and over £2m for works) are advertised on the Public Contracts website and that all potential bidders are to be treated in an equal and transparent manner. The Act also provides remedies of damages and set aside/amendment of contracts for breaches of the legislation. Accordingly if the Council were mindful to conclude a partnership, it may only be possible to do so to a limited extent or alternatively it may only be possible following a formal procurement process.
- 7.3** The Leamy Foundation has no known links to Serious and Organised Crime which would have significant political and reputational ramifications for the Council.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken and there are no issues of concern relating to this report.

9. Environmental Sustainability

- 9.1** This report is relevant to the Council's Climate Change Strategy by addressing an approach which is anticipated to promote the following aims:
- 'Learning for Sustainability' food growing resources / activities in schools / ELCC and local communities;
 - Community volunteers, family, and pupil leaders; and
 - Reducing the Net Zero Carbon impact via use of locally grown food, reducing food waste.

10. Consultation

- 10.1** All Chief Officers, Legal Services and the Corporate Procurement Unit have been consulted on the contents of this report.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 This report aligns with the strategic priorities of the Council for 2017 - 2022.

Laura Mason
Chief Education Officer
11 August 2021

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Appendix:

None

Background Papers:

Equalities Impact Assessment

Report to Council - 23 June 2021

Wards Affected:

All Wards

