



## Report by the Flourishing DIG Chair

Community Planning West Dunbartonshire: 18 November 2021

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**Subject: Flourishing DIG Update - Sustainability**

### **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 sustainability 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 met recently to agree the key underpinning themes that will inform our future work. Separate communication will be issued on the details of this, but in summary 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 an appropriate role.

## **5.0 Employability**

**5.1** Working4U and partners have been developing a new approach to the delivery of local employability service called No One Left Behind. 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 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 that will allow us to draw on a broader range of specialist service provision. In addition to this, as we approach Phase 2 of the No One Left Behind – a new approach to local employability we will establish the process for awarding grants to service providers delivering support through the replacement for the Employability Fund.

**5.4** Working 4U is also taking the lead in developing a three year plan to guide the work of the local employability partnership. This will follow guidelines set by the Scottish Government, but will reflect on local needs and opportunities and will allow us to focus our efforts on local priorities. This plan will complement the three year Community Learning and Development plan which commits us to work in partnership to maximise access to learning opportunities and support, on average, 1,200 learners with 700 securing a qualification.

**5.5** We have identified 300 vacancies through the creative use of the 'Kickstart' programme and have provided wraparound support for participants. To date we have supported over 150 people into employment through this approach. In addition to this, in the period between April 2021 and June 2021 we have supported 472 people to develop their employability skills through the use of Young Persons Guarantee, Parental Employability Support Fund and No One Left Behind (Phase1) resources. This represents good progress with our approach that we will reinforce as part of our contribution to COVID-19 recovery.

## **6.0 Business Support**

**6.1** Since March 2020, the Business Support team have successfully administered a range of Coronavirus Business Support Grant funds on behalf

of the Scottish Government. To date, the team have provided **4,179** grants totalling **over £31 million** to local businesses/individuals to provide them with critical financial support throughout the pandemic.

**6.2** A Business Recovery programme has been developed and promoted to local businesses to assist them to recover after the lockdown period. The Business Recovery programme includes a range of free webinars, 1-2-1 expert help and grant support to assist businesses to adapt their properties, purchase capital equipment and to encourage them to review their business strategies and improve their on-line presence.

**6.3** The Council's Business Support team provides a range of discretionary business grants to local businesses to assist them to grow and create local jobs. During 2020/21 the team supported:

- 81 businesses have been supported with grant support to assist them to grow and create local jobs
- 33 business employees have been supported with a training grant to assist with training costs
- 42 businesses have received a start-up grant to assist them to start-up their own business

**6.4** The Business Support team have been assisting with the Shop Local campaign which has been developed in partnership with the Regeneration team and Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce. The business support being offered and promoted to Town Centre businesses includes:

- General advice and support
- A range of free webinars
- Digital one-to-one surgeries - a private one hour session with a digital expert
- Free market research and market reports
- Specialist Expert Help

A Town Centre COVID Adaption Grant is also available to retail and service businesses which are located within West Dunbartonshire town centre areas to assist with the costs of adapting their premises in order to meet the Government requirements for Covid-19 physical distancing and safety

## **7.0 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. Together with place based regeneration, recently approved Alexandria masterplan and support to our local businesses as they recover from the Pandemic.

**7.2** The West Dunbartonshire Energy centre started delivering heat in November 2020. The Leisure centre, Care Home, Titan Enterprise, and Aurora House

were the initial four customers connected. The District Heating network is performing well and the newly established West Dunbartonshire Energy LLP is overseeing its growth. The 147 Wheatley flatted units on Titan Boulevard are current connected as the development nears its completion and we are progressing with Clydebank Housing Association for flats on Dumbarton road seeking to connect. Plans continue to secure funding to connect West College Scotland, the Golden Jubilee 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 flats and officers continue to work with the Queens Quay landowners to bring in 1,000 new homes. The Energy centre has recently won a European Heat Pump award and many more awards of recognition are anticipated in the next year as the facility is showcased globally during COP26.

**7.3** 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. Building on the successes of previous charrettes in Clydebank and Dumbarton, our collaboration with local community groups, citizens and stakeholders has been instrumental in the production of Alexandria Masterplan and Clydebank Town Centre Framework. 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.

**7.4** Council has recently secured £20m levelling up funding from UK government for the ambitious regeneration of Dumbarton 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 at present. The introduction of Pandemic specific funding has assisted delivery during the 2020-21 financial year, however as the interruption and subsequent restrictions continue into the 2021/22 financial year, financial implications may come into focus.

## **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 the pandemic progress change.
- 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.

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**Date:** 29 October 2021

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**Background Papers:** Flourishing DIG Action Plan 2020-22

**Wards Affected:** All