Glasgow City Region Cabinet

Report by: Director of Regional Economic Growth

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Community Benefits Hub: Regional Approach to Social Benefits from Contractors

Purpose of report:

This report provides the Cabinet with an update on the launch of the new Community Benefits Hub website, next steps in its roll out across the Region and future opportunities and developments.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is invited to:

   a) note progress in the launch and planned roll-out of the Community Benefits Hub website / scheme;
   b) note the policy for Phase Two anchor network members.

1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides the Cabinet with an update on the launch of the new Community Benefits Hub website, next steps in its roll out across the Region and future opportunities and developments.

1.2 Following approval in late 2022 by the Chief Executives' Group (CEG) of the policy for the new Regional Community Wish List scheme **(See Appendix One)** and of a series of actions to progress its development, this report provides an update on the launch of the new scheme, planned next steps and future developments.

2. Background and context

2.1 In June 2021 Cabinet approved the Regional Sustainable Procurement Strategy, which included a commitment to introduce a **Community Wish List** approach to meet the specific needs of local communities via suppliers. The accompanying task was for the GCR PMO and Procurement Support Group to undertake work to scope the delivery of a Regional wish list approach.

2.2 Community Wish Lists are becoming commonly used by the public sector to enable communities to make specific asks for goods, services or resources which are then met by contractors delivering public sector contracts. This provides a bottom-up approach to delivering community benefits as part of public sector procurement, where communities' needs are being directly specified by communities themselves.

2.3 Work has been underway for some time to move this forward, with research undertaken on UK schemes in place, a working group set up made up of staff from the eight councils working in the areas of Procurement / Community Benefits and Communities (and Third Sector Interface (TSI) rep), engagement activities with suppliers and communities, processes and parameters established / agreed for how the scheme will work, and the eventual procurement of a contractor to build the website and back-end for Phase One.

2.4 A phased approach was agreed by the CEG. **Phase One** involves the member councils, with local community groups registering and posting up requests for goods and services which can then be met by live contractors of the participating councils. The agreed policy defines parameters around recognised Community Groups and eligible requests, allowing for local flexibility. Back-end functionality allows nominated staff from each local council to easily review and authorise registrations from their own community groups and suppliers, approve requests from communities and also matches by council contractors willing to deliver the request. Requests can be met as part of a contractual community benefit or not. Requests which are not matched within a time period can be pushed out for delivery by contractors from any council area.

2.5 Each member council has their own front-door branded website / link, a summary dashboard and access to detailed reporting functionality **(see Appendix Two)**. Short guidance videos for community groups and suppliers have been developed and collateral / comms messaging provided to local councils to support them to promote their local schemes. There is no cost to member councils. Support services and hosting has been procured for three years, funded by GCR PMO. There are also no licence costs associated with the website.

2.6   **Phase Two** will welcome additional non-council organisations, with an initial focus on the Anchor Network members. This is expected to provide extensive opportunities to local communities since contractors aligned to Anchors can meet requests from community groups from any area. The build for Phase Two of the website is underway and was procured with Phase One. Working closely with the University of Strathclyde (UoS), a draft policy for Phase Two has been developed and has also been considered by the CWL Working Group **(See Appendix Three)**. Subject to local approval by the CEG and the UoS, we will engage initially with colleagues there as part of the development work on the website, testing and eventual launch of Phase Two. We will then look to roll-out further Anchor organisations.

2.7   At a future date, **Phase Three** (to be procured) will introduce a marketplace model, with further functionality added to allow registered suppliers to post up **Offers** of goods and services which can then be picked up by registered community groups. Businesses which are not live contractors may also be invited to participate and meet requests / make offers. A policy will be prepared first for approval of the CEG.

3.   Community Benefits Hub Launch / Progress

3.1.   Following extensive testing with member councils, suppliers and community groups, Phase One of the new website / scheme was launched in early August 2024 with three initial councils: **East Renfrewshire**, **Glasgow** and **North Lanarkshire**.

3.2.   **East Renfrewshire** already had an established local scheme in place promoted on the ERC website. ERC has now moved over to using the new Regional Community Benefits Hub website. Communications have been issued to community partners, schools and employability services. And plans are underway for posters and flyers in community spaces, as well as local PR and social media activity. A number of matches are also underway.

3.3.   The **Glasgow** Communities Team carried out an initial soft launch to increase participation and bed in processes with supporting staff. Details have now been shared with Glasgow Communities funded projects. Glasgow will formally launch the new website in November across Community Planning and Area Partnerships and through their social media channels.

3.4.   **North Lanarkshire** is drafting internal processes and preparing comms for suppliers and community groups. An initial number of suppliers have been identified and the intention is to match community groups requests initially with selected suppliers on a manual basis.

4.   Roll-out across the Region

4.1.   The ambition is to roll-out uptake of the website across GCR councils in the next few months to get the scheme firmly embedded into our Procurement and Community Benefit processes and to enrich and maximise the offering of available support from council contractors to local community groups.

4.2.   The current picture on this is shown below in Table One.

Member Authority	Committed	Status
East Dunbartonshire	Yes	Due to significant operational priorities, unable to be an early adopter. Timing tbc.
Inverclyde	Yes	Will join before the end of 2024.
Renfrewshire	No	No commitment to adopt a regional CWL approach at this time. The Council's Community Wealth Building action plan commits to revisit the approach by March 2025
South Lanarkshire	Yes	Go-live will be dependent on bedding-in changes to the way SLC resources its existing wish list. This will also allow time for an assessment of the initial rollout of the system to better inform its implementation locally.
West Dunbartonshire	TBC	WDC is exploring / reviewing internally and a decision is anticipated soon.

Table One

5. Future Developments

5.1. This is the first regional scheme of its type in the UK. With the anticipated roll-out to local councils, the introduction of Phase Two in the not-too-distant future and inclusion of a growing number of Anchor Network partners, it should provide a powerful and transparent channel for local community groups to have specific asks met and supported by an ever-increasing number of registered contractors, either as part of contracts or through contractor corporate social responsibility ambitions.

5.2. The future Phase Three marketplace model will build on this, and it is likely that further opportunities will arise due to its profile, volume of registered community groups and functionality / ease of use.

6. Recommendations

6.1. The Cabinet is invited to:

   a) note progress in the launch and planned roll-out of the Community Benefits Hub website / scheme; and
   b) note the policy for Phase Two anchor network members.

Appendix One: GCR Policy for a Regional Approach to Social Benefit from Contractors via a Community Wish List scheme

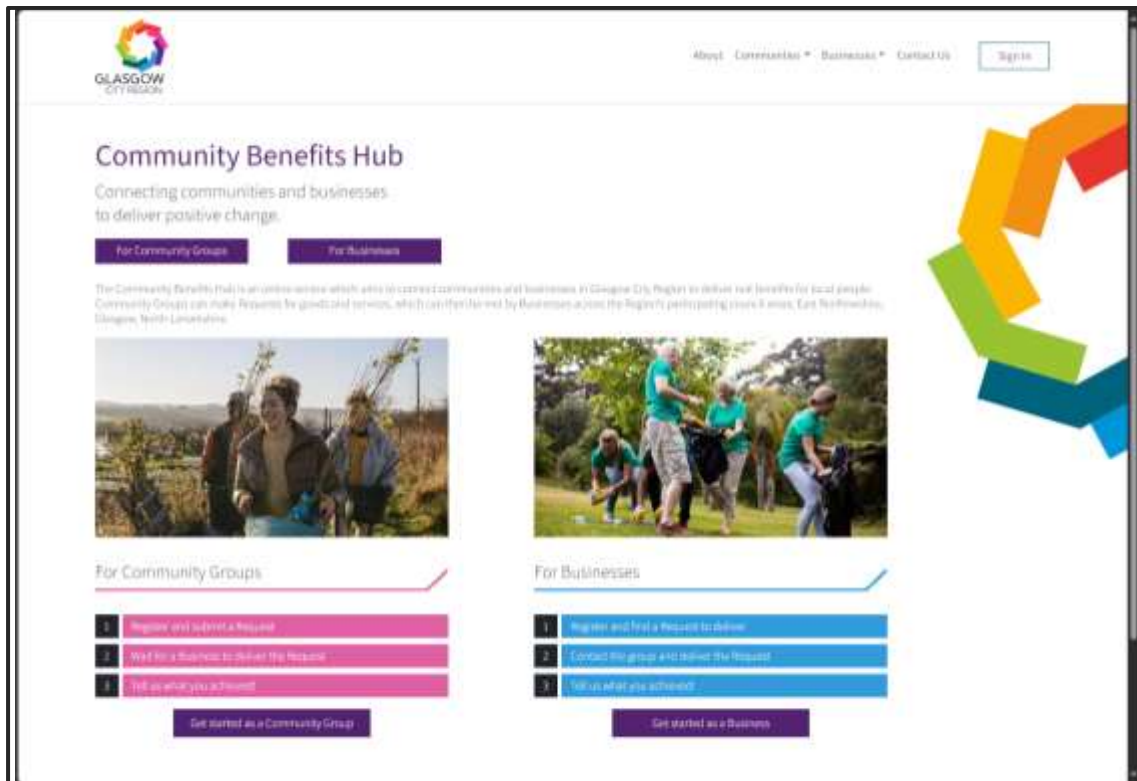|	
A.	Community Wishes are sought from not-for-profit organisations (such as schools) and constituted Community Groups providing services within the Region[1]
B.	Community Wishes of a Community Group based within a specific Council area should be met by suppliers with a live/active contract with the Council for that area and this can be either be a City Deal or business as usual contract.
C.	Community Wishes of a Community Group based within a specific Council area which have not been met within *a set period of time* (to be agreed) from a supplier with a live/active contract with the Council of the same area will be made available to suppliers with a live/active contract in other parts of the Region to meet.
D.	Community Wishes can include requests for financial contributions[2], sponsorship, donations of equipment, labour or materials, skills development or training[3]
E.	Community Wishes must deliver direct benefit within one or more of the GCR's 8 local authority areas and be aligned to stated local/regional priorities.
F.	Community Wishes being met as part of a City Deal contract will be monitored and reported via the Cenefits system and GCR processes set out within the Buyers Guide will apply to these wishes.
G.	A Regional website will be used by Community Groups to request Community Wishes and by suppliers to view requested Community Wishes.
H.	The management and administration of wish fulfilment will be undertaken by Council staff within the area the Community Group and Council with the live/active contract is based in.

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[1] non-constituted groups will be able to apply by going through a Constituted group, can be directed to help to develop a Constitution or through special arrangement/agreement with officers from the local council area. CW should not be submitted by political parties or Groups involved in party-political activities.
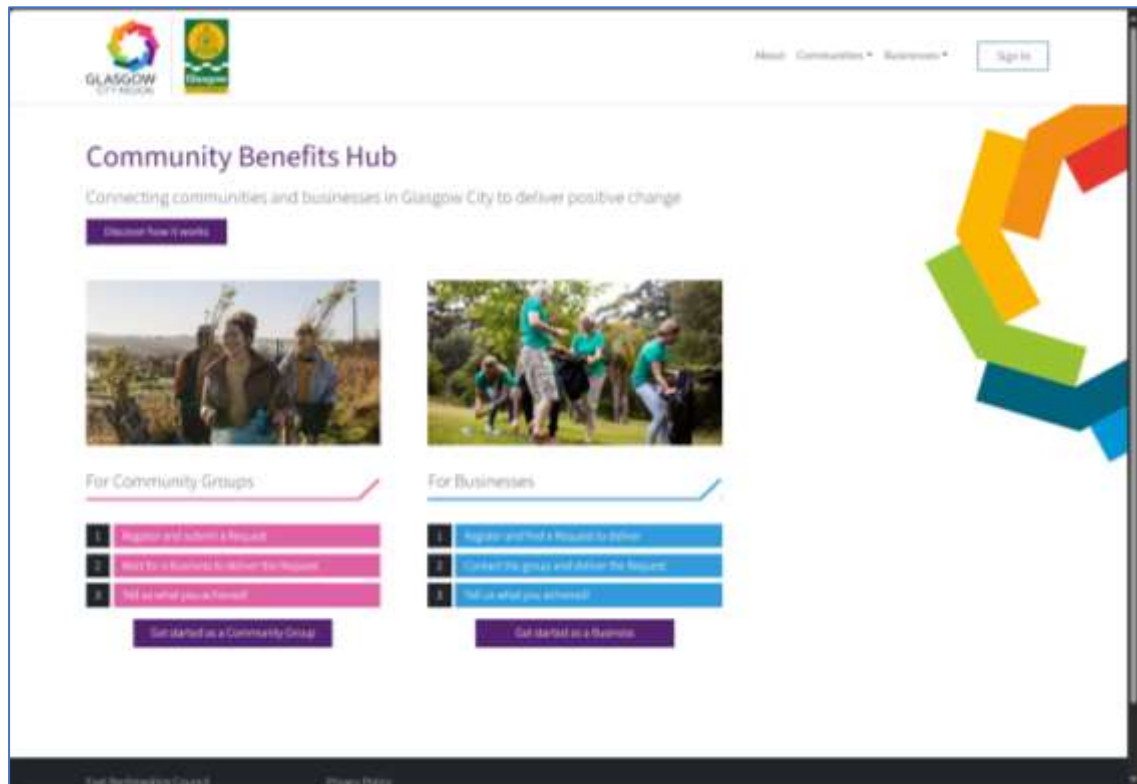
[2] Individual Councils may apply a cap on the amount of financial contribution which can be requested.

[3] Political parties or party-political activities, foreign travel and organisations based overseas will not be supported.

Appendix Two: Community Benefits Hub website / back-end

Website Home Page: Regional

Website Home Page: Glasgow City Council

Local Authority Dashboard: Glasgow City Council (as viewed by a Glasgow City Council admin)

Requests Page: East Renfrewshire (as viewed by a business/supplier)

Appendix Three: Policy for Anchor Network members

1. Anchor organisations are members of the **GCR Anchor Network** and will be invited by the **GCR Chief Executives' Group** to join the GCR Social Value Scheme / website to support meeting Requests posted by Community Groups by their Suppliers.

2. Anchors will confirm that they work to the agreed Policy for Anchor Organisations and the Operational Guidelines.

3. Anchors will join as Phase Two of the Social Value Scheme.
   This will follow Phase One, when the scheme has been successfully implemented to work for Local Councils.

   Phase Two does not require all Local Councils to be participating, as they will join at different times.

4. Community Requests will be provided from not-for-profit groups (such as schools) and constituted Community Groups providing services within the Region[4]

   Groups that are linked to the Anchor Organisation and fall within the above definition can also submit Requests through the website.

   These Groups must first Register before submitting Requests.

   Both registrations and requests from these Groups will be reviewed and authorised / rejected by the Local Council area in which the Group is based.

   The Anchor may need to provide evidence of the Group's existence to Local Councils.

5. Community Requests can include Requests for financial contributions[5], sponsorship, donations of equipment, labour or materials, skills development or training[6]

6. Community Requests must deliver direct benefit within one or more of the GCR's 8 local authority areas and be aligned to stated local/Regional priorities.

7. Anchor Organisations will only invite their Suppliers with a live contract (which may also be the Suppliers of other Local Councils) to Register on the website and will authorise (or reject) their registrations. And they will indicate which contract the Supplier is working on.

   The Suppliers authorised by Anchor Organisations will be allowed to fulfil the Requests of any Community Groups in all Local Council areas.

   This is different to Suppliers registered to Local Councils.

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[4] non-constituted groups will be able to apply by going through a Constituted group, can be directed to help to develop a Constitution or through special arrangement/agreement with officers from the Local Council area. CW should not be submitted by political parties or Groups involved in party-political activities.

[5] Individual Anchor organisations or Councils may not allow or may apply a cap on the amount of financial contribution which can be requested. The University of Strathclyde does not authorise financial requests from their related Community Groups.

[6] Political parties or party-political activities, foreign travel and Organisations based overseas will not be supported.

If the Request is being delivered as part of a contractual community benefit – the Anchor Organisation will authorise that the Supplier can deliver that Request. (And the Local Council in which the Community Group is based will be notified).

If the Request is NOT being delivered as part of a contractual community benefit – the authorisation that the Supplier can deliver that Request will be sent to the **Local Council in which the Request is based,** including all information about the Supplier.

8. The Anchor Organisation will assign staff to support the Administration functionality of the website in relation to the above.