



Glasgow City Region Cabinet

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Item 13

27th May 2025

GCR Community Benefits Hub: A Regional Approach to Social Benefits from Contractors: Progress and Phase Two

Purpose of Report

To update Cabinet on progress with the GCR Community Benefits Hub (CBH) which launched in August 2024 and to advise on the status of Phase Two of the scheme which will bring on board Anchor Network members and other stakeholder organisations, providing another stream of contractors to deliver social benefits to community groups registered on the website.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is invited to:

- a) note progress with the GCR Community Benefits Hub scheme and the impending launch of Phase Two;
- b) note the University of Strathclyde will join the CBH scheme as the first Phase Two Organisation, anticipated to go-live in spring 2025.

1. Background

- 1.1. The GCR Community Benefits Hub (CBH) launched in September 2024 with three initial councils East Renfrewshire, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire, with Inverclyde Council joining in December 2024.
- 1.2. The CBH website brings together the community groups and live contractors of participating councils and enables communities to put forward requests for specific goods, services, resource or benefits that can then **be met by contractors delivering public sector contracts**. The main advantage of this is in encouraging and providing a more bottom-up approach to delivering community benefits as part of the public sector procurement process, where communities needs are being directly specified by communities themselves.
- 1.3. The Region's CBH scheme will be developed over three phases. Phase One involves our member councils and their live contractors and community groups. Phase Two, which is set to go live soon, will introduce Anchor Network members (and other organisations) and their live contractors. Phase Three is anticipated to involve a full marketplace model (Go live TBC).
- 1.4. The scheme is underpinned by a Policy which sets out parameters around eligible community groups and requests, with local flexibility, and which was agreed by the GCR CEG.
- 1.5. We engaged the Regional Third Sector Interface (TSI) Group and with community groups and businesses in the scoping, design and testing of the website which was designed with accessibility and ease of use in mind.
- 1.6. Each of the four live councils have their own branded home page and dedicated website link and have been provided with marketing collateral to support them to promote the scheme locally, along with a formal guidance document. The website includes backend functionality and a dashboard for each council area enabling their nominated admin staff to review progress, perform tasks such as approving the registration of community groups / suppliers, authorising requests or printing off reports.

2. Progress to date – Phase One

- 2.1. By the end of March 2025, nearly 150 community groups had registered on the website and 68 contractors across the four live council areas. Of the 127 approved requests by these community groups, 18 have already been delivered and another 14 are in progress. **Appendix One** provides a summary table by council area.
- 2.2. All 18 requests were delivered as part of Community Benefits in contracts. Requests can also be delivered out with contracts, as part of corporate social responsibility ambitions.
- 2.3. Requests delivered in this quarter include funding for youth club activities, funding for volunteer training and delivery of mental health support in a school, the donation of sensory toys for a baby and toddler group, purchase and installation of a new semi-permanent access ramp at a community space, funding to provide hot food as part of a community breakfast program, the donation of food and essential items, a donation to support a Community Garden build day with families, a donation to restore the last tram ever to have left Glasgow for Coatbridge – to put it back into operation, and the donation of paint and equipment to re-paint a community hub.

- 2.4. Community groups complete a feedback form once their request has been delivered and also provide a rating both on the Supplier and on the website. To date the Average Rating for the Supplier is 9.68 out of 10. And the Average Rating for the Hub Process experience is 9.57 out of 10.
- 2.5. North Lanarkshire Council has adopted a soft launch with selected service areas to allow internal procedures, roles, responsibilities and resources to be in place within each service and to align with governance. A full launch will take place in due course.
- 2.6. In terms of next steps, the PMO is progressing with further development work, including finalising the link from the Community Benefit Hub website to our overall community benefits monitoring tool (Cenefits), addressing some bugs on the system with the Developer and are ready to on-board further member councils.

3. Phase Two

- 3.1. The development work for Phase Two has been completed and Phase Two is now ready to go live and will enable Anchors and other stakeholder organisations to join.
- 3.2. There are benefits to introducing further organisation to the scheme beyond our member councils.
- 3.3. Anchor Network members and other stakeholder organisations will work with an extended number of suppliers and often have substantial procurement spend.
- 3.4. The CBH provides Anchors with a source of community benefit opportunities which can be delivered within their contracts by their suppliers.
- 3.5. Currently, there are around 100 requests on the CBH which are outstanding and have not yet been picked up by a registered supplier. Phase Two, as it builds, should provide a larger pool of suppliers from Anchor Network members who are also available to support our local communities and plug this gap.
- 3.6. A policy for Phase Two has already been agreed by the Chief Executives' Group. See Appendix Two.
- 3.7. Subject to approval of the Glasgow City Region Chief Executives' Group, **the University of Strathclyde** is set to join the CBH scheme as the first Phase Two Organisation, anticipated to go-live with a soft launch in spring 2025. Initial projects / contracts which are anticipated to use the CBH for community benefits include the new build of the £30 million Charles Huang Advanced Technology & Innovation Centre (CHATIC) in Glasgow city centre and the ten-year facilities management contract at NMIS in Renfrewshire.
- 3.8. A presentation was delivered at the April Anchor Network meeting to invite members to join the scheme, where appropriate. Following this, a meeting has been set with the University of the West of Scotland.
- 3.9. The Phase Two pilot and the processes behind it will continue to be assessed and reviewed in the coming months, and where necessary changes introduced.

4. Recommendations

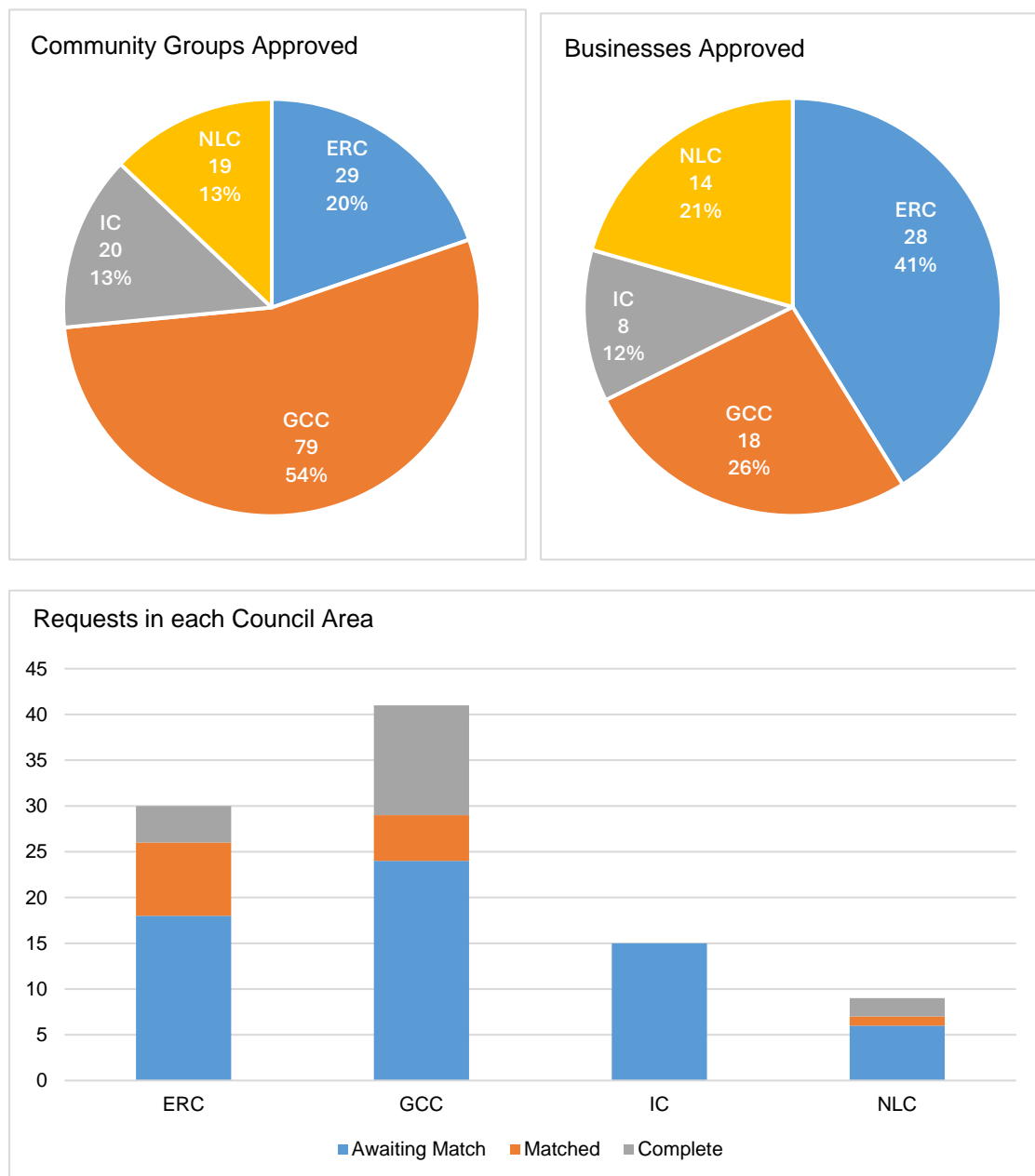
4.1. Cabinet is invited to:

- note progress with the GCR Community Benefits Hub scheme and the impending launch of Phase Two;
- note the University of Strathclyde will join the CBH scheme as the first Phase Two Organisation, anticipated to go-live in spring 2025.

Appendix One: Summary table

	Total (Cumulative)	Total In Quarter	ERC		GCC		IC		NLC	
			Total	In Q	Total	In Q	Total	In Q	Total	In Q
Community Groups Approved	147	54	29	10	79	9	20	20	19	15
Businesses Approved	68	39	28	11	18	9	8	8	14	11
Requests Approved	127	65	30	6	41	3	15	15	9	9
Total Requests Completed	18	7	4	0	12	5	0	0	2	2

Charts showing Community Benefits Hub reporting to the end **March 2025**.



Appendix Two: GCR Policy for Anchor Organisations joining the Regional Social Value Scheme.

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 ¹ 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 ² , sponsorship, donations of equipment, labour or materials, skills development or training ³ .
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. [cont. on next page]

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 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.

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

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.

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.