Glasgow Community Planning Partnership

Garscdadden/Scotstounhill Area Partnership

Report by Head of Policy and Corporate Governance

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Next stages for Community Engagement on the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund (NIIF) Programme

Purpose of Report:

This report provides an update on the next stages for Community Engagement on the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Improvement Fund (NIIF) Programme

Recommendations:

The Area Partnership is asked to
Note:
a) the contents of the report;
Consider:
b) How the process of NIIF allocation should continue
c) How the partnership wishes to split the remainder of the £1m allocation
d) What support is required from the Communities Team

Area Partnerships Briefing Paper
Next stages for Community Engagement on the NIIF Programme
February 2025

1. Current NIIF landscape

There is a mixed picture across all Area Partnerships (APs) regarding costings and allocations for the NIIF, understandable given the initial lack of clarity for the programme. Even within the pilot wards there are still funds to allocate. Each AP is different in terms of levels of engagement of community councils and other community reps. So, for example, some will have geographic areas of the ward with either no, or inactive, community councils. Even within those wards with good community council coverage, there are varying levels of participation and engagement outwith the meetings.

A handful of APs have allocated nothing/very little and carried out limited community engagement – waiting for a version of the participatory budgeting (PB) process that was carried out in the pilots. Some have allocated more significant sums but have deliberately held some funds back for specific purposes e.g. to engage with young people, or geographic areas of the ward with no community councils, or areas where the AP has less understanding of community wants/needs.

- At present , Approved funding of £10,000 towards a long-term fix at the Knightswood Park pond is the only NIF funding allocated from the Partnership

2.Challenges

The variation across the city: we have a mixed picture, which is a challenge for internal delivery within the council. However, at this stage, there is little point on dwelling on all of this and what we need to do is take a pragmatic approach to moving forward, with the resources that we have and as good community engagement as we can.

Staffing capacity within NRS: to carry out the costings, which can be technical and time consuming, meaning we already have a backlog of currently requested costings. This is causing frustration at some APs. New NRS NIIF co-ordination officers are now in place, but it will take time to get all the information collated for each ward and new processes streamlined.

Generation of ideas: some of the ideas gathered by communities are vague and very difficult to cost, so we need to make sure that the right information is given to avoid delays.

Timescale: all the funds for each AP must be allocated by March 31st 2027.

Community engagement: following all the agreement on shortlisted ideas and understanding of costings, ideally, the AP will want to carry out some level of wider community voting process.

Allocation across the ward: for those APs with substantial funds still to allocate, how do we do it fairly? By population, or deprivation?   Or simply an even split across the community council areas? The latter may be more challenging in areas without community councils.

CSO - a place to add any specific details regarding challenges in their own ward

2. Solutions

The new NRS team will provide a progress paper to the April round of APs, with an up-to-date picture on the costings and allocations agreed for each ward. They will also provide information on the new internal processes for the NIIF and templates for the recording of ideas, so that we can avoid delays due to lack of clear information.

In the meantime, at this February meeting, each AP should decide on their process going forward, so that come April, they are ready to proceed. In the case of some APs, it will be a straightforward continuation of whatever they have been doing up until now to finish allocation.

In the case of APs with larger funds still to allocate; it is recommended that the process begins with a meeting with all the community councils of the ward, to gather their ideas jointly. Their ideas list, based on community knowledge and experience, will be a starting point and this could quickly be expanded with ideas from local third sector and community organisations active in the area.

This means that between now and the April round of meetings, we will have a community council ideas list, alongside any other proposals raised by communities, such as Local Place Plans (LPP) and Liveable Neighbourhood (LN) Projects.   In the case of LPPs and LNs – there will need to be some prioritisation of what is put forward – these plans have many different outcomes, and they can't all be funded. If the remaining funds of an AP are earmarked for a theme or place, it is discussed and agreed in February how that will be moved forward – and the Communities team will co-ordinate the actions around this with other partners such as Glasgow Life.

Finally, our data analyst has created a NIIF calculator to assist with allocation across the ward. It means the £1m can be split in different ways between the community council areas of the ward – population and deprivation can be factored in at different levels, or not. It is arguable that infrastructure issues affect everyone, regardless of deprivation, however, there may be some areas of the ward that need more improvement than others. It is for each AP to decide how they want to use this data.

Again – maybe a short paragraph of local recommendation?

Issues to be agreed:
- How does the AP want the process of NIIF allocation to continue?
- How does the AP want to 'split' the remainder of the £1m allocation?
- What support do you need from the Communities Services Team?