Item 2

21st April 2023

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership
Canal Area Partnership

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability

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Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund – progress update

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Area Partnership with an update in relation to the process to support the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund, highlight issues to date and provide recommendations as how best to move forward as efficiently as possible.

Recommendations:

The Area Partnership is asked to note the contents of the report.

Introduction and progress to date

1. The Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund provides an opportunity to implement participatory budgeting at scale with an approved budget in 2021/22 of £23m, allocated £1m per ward. The budget assigned the decision making with regard to spend to Area Partnerships.

2. The suggested high-level process to support this was to follow the previous Parks Development Fund, as approved in the 2020/21 budget, where officers presented to each Area Partnership costed options that had already been surveyed, internally prioritised accordingly to strategic priorities and ready to implement, albeit alternative options were invited.

3. Options reports in relation to the Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund were presented to all Area Partnerships in Spring 2022, across a number of infrastructure categories, and feedback from some was that this process required wider community input to determine what residents would like to see the money spent on.

4. it was suggested that options presented could be circulated to Community Councils and other Partnership Organisations for their feedback and some have done so or are in the process of doing so.

5. Also, in parallel, the Centre of Civic Innovation within NRS is developing a citizen engagement model to support this process as well as future initiatives. The draft recommendations from this piece of work are expected at the end of May 2023, albeit Area Partnerships are not required to wait for this to be concluded before committing plans for some or all of their £1m allocation.

6. It is worth noting that this funding is capital expenditure and therefore can be carried forward to be spent in future financial years.

7. The team are keen to support the process in as meaningful a way as possible within existing resources business as usual activities and departmental priorities and are therefore proposing to pull together a high-level costing menu to assist with decision making as well as suggesting a desktop exercise until projects are approved by the Area Partnership before meeting onsite or a financial tolerance as it is impractical to deploy staff for small scale investment across all wards. We are also proposing the development of a template and process for submissions to ensure consistency as currently these are being directed to a number of staff in a range of formats which is proving challenging to manage.

8. This is a capital fund and the intention is that it is spent on physical improvements in communities. This could include, but is not limited to, roads, footways, lighting, trees, street furniture, CCTV or park equipment.

Summary

Wider community involvement in decision making will continue moving forward and this process has and continues to be a learning experience for all involved in participatory budgeting. It is important that we all work together to improve the process and experience by understanding what works well and what requires to be changed, by analysing feedback from all involved, in order to manage expectation as well as possible to deliver the best outcomes for citizens from this significant investment opportunity. We would welcome any feedback or additional suggestions that Area Partnerships have to inform this process.

Recommendations

9. The Area Partnership is asked to note the contents of the report and feedback any additional suggestions it may have to inform the process moving forward.