



Glasgow City Council

City Administration Committee

**Report by Councillor Anne McTaggart, City Convener for
Communities and Equalities**

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Item 1

5th December 2024

Glasgow Communities Fund – Phase Three

Purpose of Report:

To set out progress made on the implementation and review of the Glasgow Communities Fund and to provide recommendations on the approach to the next phase of the Fund.

Recommendations:

Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress to date on the implementation and review of the Glasgow Communities Fund; and
- Approve the proposed approach for the application process for Phase Three of the Fund.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Glasgow Communities Fund (GCF) was introduced by the Council in October 2020 to provide a programme of grant funding support to third sector organisations to deliver on the aims of the fund, being:

- Building the skills, capacity and resilience of individuals and communities;
- Supporting activities and services that enable and empower communities to become involved in the social, economic and cultural life of the city; and
- Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people with protected characteristics.

1.2 In delivering the above aims, the fund is guided by the principles set out below, which are underpinned by a focus on **early intervention** and **prevention** and **innovation**:-

- Communities are best placed to identify and deliver solutions that meet their needs; and
- Community led organisations are vital to creating, empowering and sustaining resilient communities.

1.3 The current phase (two - herein referred to as GCF2) of the fund provides a programme of 3-year funding from 2023-2026, supporting a diverse range of services at a city-wide and local level.

1.4 This report (a) sets out progress to date on the implementation and review of GCF2 and (b) the proposed approach for the application process supporting GCF Phase 3 (herein referred to as GCF3).

Background

1.5 The 3-year GCF2 programme from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026 was allocated on a geographic basis as follows:-

Geographic Area	% Share	GCF Funding allocation (2023 - 2026)	Annual Allocations
City Wide	30.00	£14,797,072	£4,932,357
North-East Sector	25.93	£12,790,354	£4,263,451
North-West Sector	20.38	£10,053,757	£3,351,252
South Sector	23.69	£11,682,390	£3,894,131
GCF total (2023 – 2026)	100.00	£49,323,573	£16,441,191

1.6 In addition to the sector allocations above, £6,548,169 of funding was ringfenced to support Financial Inclusion and Legal Support activity delivered

by organisations within the Glasgow Advice and Information Network (GAIN), over the three-year funding period.

- 1.7 The operational framework for implementation of GCF2 was approved by the City Administration Committee on [4 August 2022](#) and further endorsed by the Committee on [12 January 2023](#).
- 1.8 Funding decisions on the city-wide and sector recommendations were approved as follows:-

Sector	Date	Approving Body
City-Wide	12 January 2023	<u>City Administration Committee</u>
North West	19 January 2023	<u>North West Sector Partnership</u>
North East	19 January 2023	<u>North East Sector Partnership</u>
South	20 January 2023	<u>South Sector Partnership</u>

- 1.9 All GCF2 applicants were signposted via Glasgow Council for Voluntary Sector (GCVS) to the Council's capacity building partners who had devised a bespoke framework of support in response to the demand for GCF2. Capacity building partners initially focused support on unsuccessful applicants and those who worked with clients with protected characteristics.
- 1.10 Unsuccessful applicants to GCF2 were provided with individual feedback on their application on 28 February 2023, further follow-up feedback, including meetings, were provided in response to individual requests.

2.0 GCF2 - Implementation and progress

- 2.1 Grant award packages were issued to 220 successful GCF2 applicants in January 2023, together with a request for submission of a revised delivery proposal in line with grant levels awarded. 88% of organisations reported no required adjustments on the delivery outcomes set out in their original applications, only revised programme costs.
- 2.2 The operational framework supporting GCF2 is continuously being reviewed and developed, some highlights are provided below:
- Each funded project has a **named contact/support officer** in the Grants and Monitoring Team;
 - The Performance Management Framework (PMF) has been **reviewed and developed in consultation** with funded organisations and Council family lead officers;
 - **81% of funded organisations** engaged in a consultation survey where **94% of respondents supported the proposed PMF**;
 - A **Mid-Point Review** was introduced to the PMF, essentially a 'temperature check' on the first six months of each funded year;

- **Capacity within the Grants and Monitoring Team** has been enhanced during June 2024 following the transfer of the grants function to Economic Development as part of a service reform;
- Introduction of a **programme of 'in-person' visits** to funded projects by a dedicated team of five Monitoring Officers, at least once annually;
- GCF now has a **dedicated webpage** on the Council's site, currently under review and development;
- Facilitation of a **Funders in Glasgow Group** which is covered in para 7.0; and
- Delivery of a **Celebration and Learning Event** on 25 September 2024 which is covered in para 8.0 below.

2.3 **Grants Management System** - In addition to above, Economic Development is involved in the procurement of a new Grants Management System (GMS). Officers have been working with colleagues from the Strategic Innovation Technology Team to engage with the Council's IT partners to procure and deliver a grants management solution that will be used to support funding programmes across Economic Development and the wider Chief Executive's Department.

It is anticipated that the new solution will be available for phased implementation mid-2025, providing benefits to both the Council and funding recipients, specifically GCF grant recipients from 2026/27.

3.0 **GCF stakeholders**

3.1 Committee will be aware of the commitment to review the current phase of GCF and to build learning from that review into the planning and design of any future phase of the Fund. To deliver on that commitment, officers have engaged with the key stakeholders as follows:-

- Community and third sector representatives
- Council family strategic leads
- Third sector organisations
- Elected Members

3.2 **Community representatives** – In November last year and earlier this year, officers from the Grants and Monitoring and Communities Teams met with some community and third sector representatives involved in the Sector Review Panels. These discussions were positive, providing valuable insight into their experience of the process.

3.3 **Council family strategic leads** - Engagement with colleagues from across the Council family, including, where possible, those directly involved in the GCF assessment process, is ongoing. Strategic lead colleagues have shared their experience of the GCF2 process and have indicated their support for involvement in the development and assessment of the GCF3.

3.4 **Third sector organisations** – officers heard directly from **72 organisations** at three on-line workshops in October/November 2023. Following the workshops, a survey was opened up and promoted via GCVS’s networks. Anonymous feedback was provided by **119 organisations** on the 4 key areas covered by the review:-

- Communication and Engagement
- Programme Design
- Application Process
- Timescales

3.5 A report submitted to the [WECCE](#), City Policy Committee on 30 May 2024 included a comprehensive report on the outcome of engagement with third sector stakeholders which can be accessed [here](#).

The engagement outcome report evidenced support for many aspects of the current GCF framework together with acknowledgement of and support for improvements delivered in GCF2. The report captures ‘areas for improvement’ which are being considered as part of the ongoing development of the GCF3, some recommendations have already been actioned.

3.6 **Elected Members** – Members were consulted by survey on strategic aspects of the GCF between 28 May and 10 July (extended due to the general election). A report on the outcome of this engagement strand was shared with Elected Members in November 2024.

3.7 Officers are extremely grateful to all stakeholders for their valuable input to the review so far.

4.0 **GCF engagement review outcomes**

4.1 This section summarises the engagement outcomes against the 4 key areas set out in paragraph 3.4.

4.1.2 **Communication and engagement** - survey responses indicate a high level of satisfaction (**81%**) with the Council’s approach to communicating and engaging with stakeholders on GCF2. Officers are now working with GCVS to develop a communication and engagement plan for GCF3 that recognises and builds on the feedback from stakeholders.

4.1.3 **Programme design** – stakeholders were consulted on the GCF programme design, including strategic priorities, ring-fencing, 3-year funding commitment, consortium bids, funding thresholds and capacity building support. Summary feedback is presented in the table below, aggregated where applicable:-

82.5% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that GCF objectives and criteria should remain broad
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57% agree that GCF should have more clearly defined funding priorities
There was no clear majority in support of further ring-fencing beyond the current arrangement for Financial Inclusion and Legal Support services, with less than 50% on aggregate responding positively
98.5% of respondents support a 3-year funding commitment
58.8% of respondents were unsure about GCF supporting consortium bids , with only 15% agreeing this would be a positive introduction
63% supported the current funding thresholds
56% reported satisfaction with the capacity building support framework

- 4.1.4 In addition to the above, engagement with Elected Members evidenced strong support (**93.3%**) for GCF funding decisions to demonstrate clear alignment with SIMD data and local ward priorities to support evidence-based funding decisions. Further, **86.6%** indicated support for a formula being built into the assessment process to enable investment in as many priority proposals as possible, noting that organisations should be made aware of this at the time of applying.
- 4.1.5 **Application process** – responses evidence overall positivity with the GCF application process (**73%**) with only 8% responding negatively.
- 4.1.6 **Timetable** – **83%** of respondents indicated support for the indicative timetable below:-

Timeline	Dates
18 Month review period	June 2023 – September 2024
1 st Phase of Stakeholder Engagement	October – December 2023
Distil and analyse reports and learning	December 2023 – June 2024
2 nd Stage of stakeholder engagement	August 2024
Framework approved	October/November 2024
Application Process	January – March 2025
Assessment Process	March – August/September 2025
Recommendations made	October/November 2025
Go Live	1 April 2026

- 4.2 Committee is asked to note that officers are working through the recommendations and actions shared with third sector stakeholders and Elected Members respectively in the engagement outcome reports. Some of the actions have already been delivered, some will be ongoing throughout the remainder of the GCF2 programme and others will be reflected in the GCF3 framework.

5.0 GCF3 budget allocation

5.1 The budget allocation for GCF3 will not be confirmed until later in 2025 following the formal budget setting process. This position will be made clear to applicants during the fund promotion and engagement process and in the application guidance.

6.0 Proposed GCF3 framework

6.1 Drawing on the outcome of engagement with stakeholders, this section sets out the proposed framework for GCF3 in alignment with the 4 key engagement areas set out in paragraph 3.4.

6.2 **Timetable** – due to a cluster of operational activities during 2024 (service reform-new team/GCF engagement/implementation of the Holiday Programme/ delivery of the Celebration and Learning event) some slight adjustments to the indicative GCF3 timetable in paragraph 4.1.6 are required. These changes are set out below:-

Framework approved	5 December 2024
Application Process	8-10 week application window starting from early February 2025
Assessment Process	April – August/September 2025

6.3 **Application process** – officers will build on the effectiveness of the GCF2 framework, developing the GCF3 application process in line with the recommendations/actions set out in the engagement outcome report, including:-

- Development of a comprehensive communication, engagement and support plan in consultation with GCVS, which supports effective and timely communication with applicants throughout the process;
- Development and refinement of the on-line application process, and clear guidance and support for applicants throughout the application window; and
- Extended user testing of the application form.

6.4 **The GCF3 Programme** – all GCF2 projects have been mapped against the Council’s Strategic Plan for 2022-2027, and further aligned to Council family strategic priorities (the latter is a live exercise).

6.4.1 Analysis of the GCF2 programme demonstrates clear alignment with Grand Challenge one of the Council’s Strategic Plan:-

Grand Challenge one: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities	
Mission 1.1	End child poverty in our city using early intervention to support families

Mission 1.2	Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families before and through school
Mission 1.3	Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities
Mission 1.4	Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant

6.4.2 It is considered that the GCF3 would align exclusively to Grand Challenge one. Officers have been collaborating with Council family strategic leads on the development of GCF3 programme themes which support the missions of Grand Challenge one. The GCF3 themes being developed collaboratively with Council family colleagues are set out below:-

- **Supporting Children, Young People and Families**
- **Promoting Culture and Creativity**
- **Developing Community Infrastructure**
- **Improving Health and Wellbeing**
- **Challenging Violence Against Women and Girls**

6.4.3 As is the case with “poverty”, analysis of the GCF programme demonstrates that activities and/or services that support those facing additional barriers due to their Protected Characteristics and Intersectionality are supported throughout each of the themes above. By embedding and recognising equality and intersectionality in each of the programme themes, correlation with Grand Challenge one is strengthened.

6.4.4 Officers are currently working with Council family colleagues on a detailed themed framework to support the application process, it will include:-

- Explanatory detail for each of the themes, covering the theme aims, focus and expectations;
- Examples of funded activity that would align with each theme; and
- Theme specific outcomes.

6.4.5 It is proposed that the theme specific outcomes will develop and expand on the GCF’s existing six overarching outcomes contributing to the Fund’s two priority areas: **Improving Communities** and **Resilient Communities**, namely:-

- People and communities have access to services, support and opportunities that improve their lives and wellbeing;
- People and communities are more self-reliant and are better able to identify ways to improve and take control of their lives and wellbeing;
- People are better able to gain the skills, capacity and confidence to play an active role in their communities;
- People and communities are better able to influence and participate in decision making and service development;
- People and communities are better able to identify and deliver solutions that meet their needs; and

- People and communities are better able to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of Glasgow.
- 6.4.6 Through strong collaboration with Council family lead officers on the GCF3 framework, it is considered that the theme specific outcomes will enable funded organisations to better demonstrate the impact of their funded projects. Further, the framework will recognise and complement existing and emerging Council family strategies and related outcomes.
- 6.4.7 It is proposed that officers within the Grants and Monitoring Team will be identified as ‘theme leads’ where officers will seek to promote connectivity and networking amongst funded projects and stakeholders within and across the programme themes.
- 6.4.8 In response to feedback from stakeholders, together with commitments made in GCF2, it is also proposed that:-
 - The existing **funding thresholds** will remain at £20k minimum and £200k maximum annually;
 - **No further ring-fencing** will be introduced in GCF3, this reflects feedback from stakeholders and recognises that the budget will not be confirmed until 2025;
 - The GCF3 will provide a **3-year programme** of funding from 2026-2029, subject to confirmation of budgetary provision in 2025; and
 - Applicants will need to evidence commitment to **Fair Work principles**, including paying GCF funded staff the real living wage.
- 6.5 **Financial Inclusion and Legal Support Activity** – the proposed GCF3 framework assumes support for the Financial Inclusion and Legal Support activity currently delivered through the GAIN network, will remain a separate strategic funding programme, managed separately from the GCF core.
- 6.6 **GCF Assessment process** – Council family colleagues have indicated a firm commitment to be involved in the development of the GCF3 assessment process. The assessment framework will be developed collaboratively with Council family colleagues early in 2025. An outline of the assessment framework will be provided in the GCF3 application guidance material. Assessment criteria will include, but not be limited to the following:
 - Evidence of directly delivering on the missions supporting Grand Challenge one
 - Evidence of project need and impact in terms of SIMD/ward/local data and demographics (including ‘poverty programme’ booster wards)
 - Equality impacts
 - Capacity of applicants
 - Governance and Finance
 - Partnership working and local connectedness
 - Local accountability
 - Sustainability

- Innovation

6.7 Officers are working with colleagues from the Communities Team to consider how ward/local priorities could be effectively incorporated into the GCF3 assessment process. Further engagement with Community representatives involved in the GCF2 Sector Review Panels will also be undertaken.

7.0 Funders in Glasgow Group

7.1 Committee is asked to note the formation of a “Funders in Glasgow” group which brings together representatives from the Council, Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, Glasgow Life, GCVS, National Lottery Communities Fund, Scottish Government, Inspiring Scotland, Impact Funding Partners, Corra Foundation, Robertson Trust, The Alliance, Virgin Money Foundation and Children in Need.

Co-chaired by officers from the Council and the National Lottery Communities Team, the objectives of the group are:-

- To better understand and share intelligence/data of the issues affecting Glasgow;
- Explore opportunities for more effective partnership working between stakeholders in the Glasgow grant funding landscape;
- To explore how to potentially scale and sustain work in Glasgow through cross engagement with all local and national public sector bodies and organisations;
- To identify how to attract greater investment into the city;
- To assemble and maintain high-level information on funding streams available to Glasgow;
- To consider ways of improving the journey for organisations seeking grant funding in Glasgow;
- To promote effective funding practice and share learning;
- To find ways to work more efficiently;
- To reduce unintentional duplication and identify gaps; and
- To better understand if working in a collective way is making a difference.

7.2 The Group meets quarterly, this year meeting on 25 April, 30 July and 29 October, and next scheduled to meet on 4 February 2025. At its last meeting, the Group agreed to form a working group to take forward some of the objectives relating to funding streams available to Glasgow. The Group has agreed to self-review annually, a further update on the Group will be provided to Committee in 2025.

8.0 Celebration and Learning Event

8.1 In response to feedback from third sector organisations, the Council hosted the first ever Celebration and Learning event for organisations funded by the Glasgow Communities Fund and Glasgow’s Holiday Programme.

On 25 September this year, 204 delegates representing 144 third sector organisations came together at the City Chambers to celebrate the impact of the projects they deliver and to connect with and learn from each other.

They were welcomed by both the Council’s Chief Executive, Susanne Millar and Councillor Anne McTaggart, City Convener for Communities and Equalities, who shared some highlights from the funded projects, illustrating the impact across the city.

8.2 The aim of the event was to celebrate the success of projects funded by the Council city-wide and to offer a networking opportunity for organisations to meet and learn about other projects supported by the two funding programmes. The event was relaxed and informal, consisting of presentations, speakers, pop-up stands, table discussions at an ‘inspiration café’ and ending with a buffet lunch.

8.3 To deliver on feedback from organisations that they’d like to participate in the event, organisations were invited to express an interest in hosting a pop-up stand and/or a table discussion at an ‘inspiration café’ (a café style discussion allowing for sharing of positive, impactful, inspiring stories about services being delivered by the funded projects). The ask was - ‘join a table, join the chat and be inspired!’ The response from projects was overwhelming, resulting in:-

- **18 stands hosted by funded projects** and 2 further stands hosted by the Council’s Glasgow Helps/Poverty Pathfinder teams and the Glasgow 850 team;
- **The inspiration café**, facilitated by Economic Development’s project team, was delivered by **23 table hosts representing funded projects**. Hosts told their story for 10 mins then invited discussions around the table. Feedback from individuals on ‘what inspired them’ was captured and will be shared with all stakeholders; and
- The **Glasgow 850 team** then facilitated an interactive workshop session looking at how community groups could get involved with Glasgow 850 celebrations. The 850 team were inundated with enquiries after the event.

8.4 Following the event, delegates were surveyed on their experience, using a scale of 1-5, with 5 indicating the highest level of satisfaction. Below is a summary of feedback provided:-

Feedback subject	Average % score of 4 and above
Event organisation including communication, registration, venue, staff support, duration and catering	85%
Event programme including pop-up stands, speakers, presentations/visuals and Inspiration Café	86%

	“Yes” answers
Did the event meet your expectations? (16% answered ‘somewhat’ and 1% answered ‘no’).	83%
Would you be interested in attending similar events in the future? (5% answered ‘maybe’)	95%

8.5 Feedback from the event survey will be shared with funded projects on the GCF webpage. Options for future similar events will be considered in 2025.

9.0 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: Budgetary provision for GCF3 will not be confirmed until after the formal budget setting process. Outcomes will be maximised through targeted use of resources and joint working and resourcing with partners

Legal: No new legal issue

Personnel: No direct personnel issues

Procurement: There are no procurement implications

Council Strategic Plan: This proposed programme of activity funded by the Glasgow Communities Fund supports the Council’s Strategic Plan, specifically:-
Grand Challenge 1 – Mission 1 – “End child poverty in our city using early intervention to support families”; **Mission 2** – “Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families”; **Mission 3** – “Improve the Health and Wellbeing of our local communities”; and **Mission 4** – “Support Glasgow to be a city that is active and culturally vibrant”.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council’s Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify. Yes, the proposal has the potential to impact on the council Equality Outcomes in relation to the following improvement aims:
 Improve economic outcomes for people with Protected Characteristics; and
 Improve access to council Family services by people with Protected Characteristics.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

No impacts identified at this stage.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

It is anticipated that future funding recommendations will have a positive impact on third sector jobs, skills, local communities, social and community cohesion

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

It is anticipated that future funding will contribute to the continuing regeneration of Glasgow with many of the supported projects also led by local communities and community organisations

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

It is anticipated that future funding recommendations will have a positive impact on third sector jobs, skills, local communities, social and community cohesion

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

No contribution to Glasgow's net zero carbon target at this time

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No privacy or data protection impacts identified.

10.0 Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

- 10.1 note progress to date on the implementation and review of the GCF2; and
- 10.2 approve the proposed approach for the application process supporting GCF Phase 3, as set out in paragraph 6.0.