
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	23 January 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/03/24/TM
Contact Officer:	Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	Communities Update Report - Overview of Local and National Initiatives		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Education and Communities Committee with developments in relation to the Communities part of the Committee.
- 1.3 A number of updates are provided relating to community safety; community learning and development and cultural services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Communities Committee notes the updates provided in this report.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 Updates

3.1 Fire Skills Course

Inverclyde Council is providing funding and support to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) to run a 5-day Fire Skills Course for ten young people in Port Glasgow during March 2024. The aims of the project are for the young people to learn important life skills which includes safety, discipline, respect, CPR, communication and teamwork. This follows on from SFRS delivering a successful course in East Renfrewshire Council during November 2023. The course was delivered by the East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (ERRI) Community Action Team with support from Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service.

3.2 Battery Park lighting

Following a successful bid to the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) ground works have commenced on the installation of energy-efficient street lighting around the Battery Park. Tracking and ducting works began in November and lighting columns are expected to be delivered early in the new year. The bid to the SPF was made with the intention of improving the safety perception of using the park in the darker evenings and mornings in response to issues raised within Inverclyde Council's 'Public space, activity and women's safety survey'.

3.3 16 days of Activism

The '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence' campaign concluded on 10 December 2023. Members of the local Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership collaborated to raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV) throughout the campaign. The Beacon Arts Centre and Shipbuilders Sculptures in Port Glasgow were lit up in purple, symbolising the campaign's message. Inverclyde Council shared social media posts, changed its Microsoft Teams backgrounds, and displayed 16 Days banners to show its support. Police Scotland promoted GBV prevention messages and shared information on resources for abuse victims.

Inverclyde Women's Aid staff attended West College Scotland to provide information on its services. The Municipal Buildings in Greenock flew a purple flag on the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Inverclyde Alliance discussed the theme "Imagine a Scotland without GBV" using the poem "Imagine" by Myra Ross.

A candlelit service at St Mary's Church honoured those who have been impacted by GBV. Inverclyde Women's Aid staff attended the Homelessness Centre to offer drop-in support. Inverclyde Council created a Women's Safety Charter and received an accreditation award for Equally Safe at Work. The 'Red Shoe Display' at the Beacon Arts Centre and Gourock train station commemorated the 62 women who lost their lives to GBV in Scotland over the past 10 years. Inverclyde Women's Aid hosted a coffee morning to raise awareness about its services. The Lyle Fountain was lit purple for Scottish Women's Aid on Human Rights Day, which marked the end of the campaign. The range of partnership activity was promoted on a campaign page on the Council's website. <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/16-days>

3.4 Inverpride Network

The Inverpride network is now fully constituted with office bearers, coproduced code of conduct, grievance process and logo. Now known as the Inverpride Network, the network is now planning and hosting their own meetings without the support from CLD. The network is currently linking in with LEAP Sports Scotland with regards to exploring the opportunity to have an LGBTQ+ friendly activity session in Inverclyde. The network is also linking in with local organisations such as the Inverclyde Shed and Beacon to help host their monthly meetings. In 2024 the network is planning on applying for funding support the development of the network.

3.5 Period Poverty Products

The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 was introduced to secure the provision of free period products throughout Scotland. The Act places legal duties on local authorities to make period products available for free both in schools and more widely for those who need to use them. Inverclyde Council is allocated £89,000 per annum to provide free sanitary products to the community through the following methods.

In addition, Scottish Government has opened an opportunity for Local Authorities to apply for additional funding through a “Bid In” fund to ensure continued delivery of access to free period products until 31 March 2024. Inverclyde Council has applied for a further £14,000 from the Bid In fund to further engage young people and the wider school community in learning, training, and development on period poverty and learning around reusable products including menstrual cups.

This learning has been requested through various engagement opportunities across the community. Schools will then receive a stock of reusable period products including pants and menstrual cups to encourage uptake from both an environmental perspective and from a period poverty and wellbeing perspective. The funding will also be used to establish Period Ambassadors in the secondary schools who will provide buddy support on menstruation, periods, and wellbeing. To purchase and deliver “My First Period Pack” to schools which will provide an introduction range of products, education, and information to 777 young people in Primary 6 and Primary 7.

3.6 Scottish Government Announces Independent Review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) in Scotland

Recognising community learning and development’s role in the Scottish education and learning system, the Scottish Government has announced an independent review of Community Learning and Development (CLD) in Scotland. The review, which will be led by Kate Still, aims to assess current CLD provision across the country and identify areas for improvement. It will also consider the role of CLD in supporting the Scottish Government’s wider education and skills ambitions.

CLD covers a wide range of activities, including literacy and numeracy skills; language learning; health and wellbeing; social inclusion; and employability.

The review will focus on the following key areas:

- The skills and training of CLD practitioners;
- The impact of CLD practice on marginalised learners; and
- The effectiveness of CLD in supporting the Scottish Government's education and skills priorities

The review will also consider the role of technology in CLD and the challenges and opportunities of delivering CLD in a digital age. The independent reviewer will be supported by a steering group, which will include representatives from the CLD sector, education providers, and learners. The steering group will help to shape the review’s scope and methodology and provide feedback on the findings later in 2024.

3.7 Inverclyde Libraries Highly Commended at SLIC Awards 2023

Inverclyde Libraries Service was Highly Commended in the Library Service Excellence Award category at the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) Awards 2023 in November. The

service was recognised in particular for its efforts in delivering the Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing initiative, supporting individuals in communities across Inverclyde to access health literature; self-manage health concerns; and prevent ill health.

3.8 MGS – successful funding bid

An award of £50,000 has been made to the Watt Institution by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) following a successful funding application to its Museum Development Fund. This award will enable the team at the Watt Institution to extend recent digital engagement activity, with a particular focus on the Natural Sciences collection as one of the museum's founding collections. With many specimens collected locally in the nineteenth century, the Natural Sciences collection tells a unique story of the impact of climate change in Inverclyde. Using digital technologies, the collection will be made more accessible; overall collections care and management will be improved; and activities will be delivered to engage existing and new audiences in learning opportunities that explore the collection and develop digital skills.

3.9 Connecting Scotland – successful funding bid

An award of £5,000 has been made to Inverclyde Libraries Service by the Connecting Scotland digital inclusion programme following a successful funding application. Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government initiative, managed by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). It supports organisations, individuals and communities with improved access to devices and skills support. The funding received will be used to expand Inverclyde Libraries non-traditional lending collections held in branch through the purchase of mifis, tablets and chromebooks. These devices will be used by the service to further develop their learning offer in ways that are responsive to the needs of Inverclyde's residents, supporting digital inclusion.

3.10 NLHF – successful funding bid

An award of £249,830 has been made to Inverclyde Council's Cultural Services team by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) following a successful funding application to its Grants for Heritage programme. This award will be used to deliver the Inverclyde Heritage Strategy, launched in 2019. The Covid 19 pandemic impacted the timelines associated with delivery of this strategy and this funding will allow the service to revisit the strategy priorities in a post-pandemic context. Recruitment will take place early in 2024 for a Heritage Coordinator to lead this project. Direct engagement with the communities of Inverclyde will be a key focus of this project to ensure that the stories and places most important to them are told and celebrated, and that opportunities to build and develop new heritage-focused projects are explored and supported.

3.11 Watt Institution – Museum Accreditation

The Watt Institution has achieved renewal of its Accredited Museum status. Museum Accreditation is the UK-wide nationally agreed standard of good practice for museums. In Scotland, the scheme is administered by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS). As an Accredited Museum, the Watt Institution is recognised for its accountable collections management and collections care, as well as the work it does to engage with new and existing audiences. Museum Accreditation provides a framework for driving performance within organisations; raising the profile of collections; increasing access; and strengthening applications for external funding (key sources of which are conditional on Accreditation). Over the coming year, the Watt team will continue to work with MGS to demonstrate continuous improvement across its museum operation, to the benefit of the audiences it serves.

3.12 IMS Christmas Concert

The Inverclyde Music Service Christmas concert took place in Greenock Town Hall in December, with a record number of young people performing across various groups, ensembles, and bands. Highlights included the expansive Voice choir, with over 100 participants; the debut of the Inverclyde guitar group, with nearly 50 players; a confident first performance by the junior training band; and an accomplished closing performance by the senior band. The progress of the IMS piping and drumming groups was also showcased – this element of the Inverclyde music tuition offer continues to be funded by the Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust, alongside the Beatrice Foundation. The team was delighted to welcome David White – the Chair of the Beatrice Foundation – as part of a near sell-out audience on the night. The team now have ten rehearsal sessions programmed in before they return for the Spring concert in 2024.

3.13 The Early Adopter Community for Affordable Childcare

A funding proposal has been submitted to Scottish Government to expand and develop the affordable childcare service to a further two localities (Greenock Central/East and Greenock Southwest). This will progress the good practice that has been implemented in Port Glasgow Affordable childcare which includes after school and holiday childcare. The service will continue to take a whole family approach to supporting families living in poverty to improve their household outcomes. If the bid is successful, a full report will be submitted to a future meeting of the Education and Communities Committee.

3.14 The Warm Hand of Friendship

In December 2023, Inverclyde Council awarded a total of £100k to local community groups and organisations to create warm spaces, food, companionship and entertainment during the Winter of 2023/24. This is the second year of the Warm Hand of Friendship Initiative and 52 local groups were successful in their applications for funding.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

4.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

4.3 **Legal/Risk**

N/A.

4.4 **Human Resources**

N/A.

4.5 **Strategic**

N/A.

4.6 **Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People**

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

4.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

4.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 N/A.