

Report

Report to:	Community Wealth Building Commission
Date of Meeting:	27 October 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Social Enterprise Sector Support in South Lanarkshire
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- ◆ Provide an update on the proposed support for the social enterprise sector following the allocation of resources under the “Get South Lanarkshire Working” theme in the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Commission is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):

- (1) that the contents of the report are noted.

3. Background

3.1 As part of the 2021/2022 Revenue Budget, members approved a sum of £3 million towards economic recovery under the heading “Get South Lanarkshire Working”. This report provides an update on a proposal to use a portion of this funding to develop a social economy strategy as part of activity to support economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 Members’ high-level ambitions for the £3 million were broken down into three headings – “Social Enterprise and Business Support”, “Locate in South Lanarkshire” and “Tourism Cooperative and Strategy”. This paper provides an update on the first of these headings.

4. Social Enterprise and Business Support

4.1 It is proposed that funding of up to £1.5m is used to support social enterprises and ensure that they are receiving targeted assistance to start up and grow. This will supplement the Council’s business support programme. It is important to note that social enterprises are businesses (albeit ones where the profit is to be reinvested into the business) with the aim of any support being to ensure that they become and remain a sustainable business that can compete to win business in the open market.

4.2 To support this sector, it is proposed to augment the Economic Development Team with an additional Grade 3 economic development business adviser whose remit will be to support social enterprises.

4.3 The new social enterprise adviser will promote the social enterprise business model and will take the lead on developing a social enterprise strategy and action plan for South Lanarkshire which will link the sector with the range of support available not

only from the Council directly, but also from Business Gateway and other business support organisations and social enterprise networks.

- 4.4 The new post has been advertised with a closing date before the end of October, with interviews expected to be held during November and an appointment to be made, subject to a suitable candidate being identified, by the year end.
- 4.5 The detailed allocations of the balance of the £1.5 million budget, after the recruitment, will be used for projects and initiatives which will be determined as part of the new strategy and will include for example:-
- ◆ Supporting targeted training programmes for the social enterprise sector.
 - ◆ Delivering and facilitating networking events.
 - ◆ Producing, consulting on, and monitoring a Social Enterprise Strategy.
 - ◆ Providing a match-funding pot for funding bids aimed at supporting third sector activity.
 - ◆ Establish a Social Enterprise Steering Group.
 - ◆ Expand Capacity of Social Enterprises to bid for Public Sector contracts.
 - ◆ Community Benefits maximised.
 - ◆ Repurpose neglected Town Centre Assets.
- 4.6 This new approach will enable SLC to strengthen its participation in the Lanarkshire Social Economy Partnership - the benefits of shared intelligence across North and South Lanarkshire has proved invaluable in helping Social Enterprises gain prompt access to data and there remains a willingness to share data, with relationships and trust established over a number of years of joint working.
- 4.7 It should be noted that economic development officers already work closely with a number of social enterprises and third sector bodies across a range of projects. These include town centre schemes in Hamilton and East Kilbride to name but two initiatives, where it is hoped that third sector organisations will join with private businesses and the public sector in taking up former retail space- thus improving access to local services for residents, increasing town centre footfall and thereby fulfilling the objectives of the “20-minute neighbourhood” as well as contributing to the physical regeneration of our towns. Thus, the additional resources mentioned in this report will add to and enhance work already underway.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Introductory discussions have been held with some of the principal partners who will be involved in the development of the strategy, including the Council’s Community Empowerment and Engagement Team in Finance and Corporate Resources, the new Chief Executive of VASLan, and the Business Gateway contractor, Elevator, who will all contribute to the development of the strategy and with subsequent implementation.
- 5.2 Further engagement will also include other partners and stakeholders including existing social enterprise and voluntary sector organisations to ensure a comprehensive strategy is developed with the input and commitment from the sector as it stands currently.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1 One Grade 3 Economic Development officer will be recruited and will be funded from the budget allocated for this work. The recruitment process is currently underway.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The budget available for the investment in this area is £1.5million. The proposed spend will span the period from 2021-2024.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. There are no direct implications for sustainability at this time, though the aims of the strategy will be consistent with the Council's sustainability strategy.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 A risk associated with the Council's Investment programme is that there is an overspend. However, the risk has been assessed as low given the proposed recruitment of a dedicated officer and the budget management applied across the Resource. The risk is managed through four weekly Budget Monitoring Meetings at which any variance is analysed. In addition, the probable outturn exercise ensures early warning for corrective action to be taken where appropriate.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function, or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 10.2 There is also no requirement to undertake any consultation in terms of the information contained in this report, however, development of the proposed strategy will involve consultation which will be detailed appropriately in a subsequent report.

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

12 October 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, Effective, Efficient and Transparent

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:- Pauline Elliott

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