
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	31 August 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/33/21/RB
Contact Officer:	Ruth Binks	Contact No:	01475 712748
Subject:	Communities Recovery Update and Anti-Poverty Initiatives		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of Covid-19 recovery activities. It provides an update on activities to date and also those being considered as part of Covid-19 recovery planning. The paper also provides a progress update on Anti-poverty initiatives.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report gives an update and overview of the pertinent actions for the partnership recovery plan linked to Education, Culture and Sport. These include updates on:

- Summer of Fun 21
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Culture Collective
- Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
- Outdoor Festival (MELIORA)
- Small grants and waivers of fees
- Inverclyde Leisure
- The Beacon Arts Centre

- 2.2 This report also gives an update and overview of progress of the following initiatives linked to anti-poverty:

- Listening events
- Period Poverty

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the updates in this report

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 **COVID – RECOVERY** After the second lock down, comprehensive organisational and partnership recovery plans were produced to facilitate Inverclyde's recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic. The anticipated spend by the council for the partnership recovery plan was approved at the May 2021 Policy and Resources Committee and the proposed activities were subsequently approved at the Alliance Board in June.
- 4.2 **ANTI – POVERTY** Prior to Covid-19 pandemic the Council, along with the Integration Joint Board, allocated £1million for specific action to address inequalities and deprivation with a focus on initiatives to address unemployment and employability, support for people experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drugs, mental health or people who are experiencing food insecurities.
- 4.3 In March 2021, Inverclyde Council completed a series of Community Listening Events and on-line surveys across the 6 localities, to discuss with key stakeholders how we can better support communities in Inverclyde and specifically, those which are affected most by deprivation. This informed the specific actions agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in May 2021.

5.0 COVID - RECOVERY

5.1 Summer of Fun 2021

The Scottish Government allocated £201k to education authorities for activities over the summer holidays. This was in addition to other initiatives already being supported by Inverclyde Council such as playschemes, free swimming etc. The Scottish Government had also provided funding for free childcare for families who met specific criteria to help with employment over the school holidays. A comprehensive summer programme was developed by the service in partnership with Inverclyde Leisure, local sports clubs, the Ranger Service at Clyde Murshiel and the Beacon, with almost all events taking place for free. Initial feedback from the Summer of Fun 21 has been overwhelming positive.

The Scottish Government commented that the Council put together a very impressive activities programme in such short time and feedback from young people and families has been positive. A full evaluation of the Summer of Fun will be submitted to the next Education and Communities Committee.

5.2 Duke of Edinburgh

The Duke of Edinburgh award (DofE) is a personal development award for young people aged 14 to 25 years. It has 3 levels - Bronze, Silver and Gold. Over the 5 year period of the license, participation in and achievement of the DofE Award by young people in Inverclyde has increased year on year and our participation rate is amongst the highest in Scotland and is reflective of the high levels of support provided by the DofE Support Group.

The Authority has been advised by DoE that our participation rate per head of population (aged 14-24), along with our completion rate keeps Inverclyde among the top 4 authorities in Scotland. The DofE team within the CLD services has been supporting the wider Covid-19 response with their colleagues throughout 2020-21 while maintaining its ongoing support to the DofE Centres as per attached appendix.

Additional Covid-19 Recovery Funding has been allocated by the Council to support an increase in participation rates and provide support those young people who were prevented from engaging due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The Duke of Edinburgh operating license is reviewed annually and renewed every 5 years. Following 5 years of successful operation by CLD, Inverclyde Council's license will be renewed again in September 2021 for a further five year term.

5.3 Culture Collective

In March 2020, Creative Scotland commenced a pilot programme to establish a network of creative practitioners, organisations, and communities, working together to create a positive difference locally and nationally in response to Covid-19. A consortium of Inverclyde partners including Inverclyde Council, Beacon Arts Centre, RIG Arts, CVS Inverclyde and Kayos Theatre Group successfully bid to be one of the 26 projects across Scotland. Inverclyde's project received £275,000 for 18 months' of arts activity across the area (March 2021 – September 2022).

The aim of the project is to investigate key areas identified by the Arts Sub-Group of the Inverclyde Cultural Partnership and specific to the needs of Inverclyde – health and social care (and in particular, adult mental health); young people; community regeneration; environmental/outdoor/site-specific work; and engaging with under-represented audiences with low arts engagement and/or barriers to access. The project will support over 40 artists and creative practitioners to, amongst other things: investigate the impact of Covid-19 on Inverclyde's creative sector; develop their practice; develop Galoshans; support Scotland's Year of Stories in 2022 with a Writer-in-Residence; test pilot community events; test pilot health and social care projects; develop a sustainable model of community-led theatre; explore the connections between green spaces and mental health recovery; test out new performances at Gourock amphitheatre; and test pilot new street theatre.

Since the project began in late March 2021, a Creative Producer and Activities Co-ordinator have been appointed, a programme steering group has been set up; funding has been disbursed to partners; partners have made a start on their activities; and the first batch of artist call-outs (freelance contracts) have been advertised.

5.4 Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

Although Covid-19 has delayed the progress of this strategy, work has been taking place on the strategy and it is anticipated that the strategy will be taken to the next Alliance Board for approval.

5.5 Outdoor festival (MELIORA) update

The Council approved funding to support the delivery of major events in 2022 and officers have been exploring opportunities to deliver major events under the Meliora theme and three events have been developed:

- British Pipe Band Championships
- Illumination event and performance (in partnership with the Beacon Arts Centre)
- Inverclyde outdoor obstacle course event (in partnership with Inverclyde Leisure)

Following a request from Councillor Rebecchi at the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 25 May 2021 officers have held discussions with the Chief Executive of the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Championships (RSPBA) which highlighted the opportunity to host the British Pipe Band Championships in 2022.

As part of the areas recovery events a bid was submitted to the RSPBA to host the event in Inverclyde at Battery Park in 2022 and that bid has been successful.

Currently the event is scheduled for Saturday 21 May 2022 and officers will agree the final details of how the event dovetails with the existing Gourock Highland Games held in May to support community recovery through the delivery of outdoor events and to maximise the promotion of Inverclyde as a visitor location.

In addition to this a partnership with the Beacon Arts Centre will develop plans to deliver a multi-media illumination and performance event in June as part of the wider Meliora festival.

The event would be based around the Custom House, docks and waterfront area at the

Beacon Arts Centre incorporating an exciting multi-media lighting festival, outdoor and indoor performances and cultural activity.

In partnership with Inverclyde Leisure a new Inverclyde outdoor obstacle course event is being planned for June 2022 at Battery Park.

The Battery Park space will be transformed into a large special outdoor obstacle course with functional training space to encourage physical activity and exercise and the obstacle course will consist of 25 obstacles including: Flying Monkey Bars, Adjustable Walls for all ages, A-Frame Ladder, Ninja Walls, Crawl and Cargo Nets, Balance Boards, Walking Beams, Ropes, Climbing Frames and Carry Tyres. Individuals and teams taking part will be encouraged to take part to raise funds for charity with the nominated charity The Inverclyde Community Fund operated by CVS Inverclyde. The event would be run over two days with day 1 being a free event for Inverclyde school children and day 2 being an individual and team event.

The timing of events for the Meliora Festival will be in May and June 2022 with the Gourrock Games and British Pipe Band Champions held in May 2022 and the sports event in partnership with Inverclyde Leisure and the multi-media and performance event in Partnership with the Beacon Arts Centre both held in June 2022.

A small working group has been established to plan the delivery of events and to provide effective links to other areas of recovery event planning including locality events and town and village centre events and the plans for commemorating the HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 when full details are published.

5.6 Small Grants and Waivers of Fees

CVS will be responsible for a awarding up to £10,000, to help smaller organisations to restart again after post COVID-19. Officers are working closely with CVS Inverclyde on the agreement to allocate of the funding in September 2021.

5.7 Inverclyde Leisure

IL have had a proactive approach to getting facilities open as quickly as possible and ensuring that customers have confidence in the facilities and services on offer. They have undertaken an extensive marketing campaign to promote membership return and initial feedback suggests that this is progressing well. Partnership working between the Council and IL remains strong and this has included a comprehensive programme for the summer.

Activities and services currently on offer include:

- GROUP FITNESS CLASSES
- ALL SWIMMING POOLS
- ALL FITNESS GYMS
- ALL SOFTPLAY CENTRES
- ALL CAFÉS
- ALL SAUNA & STEAM ROOMS
- CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES – BALANCABILITY -FOOTBALL COACHING ETC
- CARDIAC REHAB CLASESS
- ICE SKATING & LESSONS
- CLUB VENUE HIRE -JUDO – KARATE – BADMINTON ETC
- PITCH BOOKINGS – FOOTBAL, RUGBY ETC
- SQUASH
- COMMUNITY EVENTS IN CONJUNCTION WITH INVERCLYDE COUNCIL
- PLAYSCHMES
- EXERCISE REFERRALS
- SWIMMING LESSONS
- PERSONAL TRAINING
- INFLATABLE SESSIONS
- GOLF
- EVENTS

- X-HEIGHT CLIMBING
- VACCINATION CENTRES
- SUMMER OF FUN ACTIVITIES
- WEDDINGS ETC

IL continues to ensure safety measure are in place and continues to follow relevant guidance. These additional measures include:

- Enhanced hygiene measures
- Enhanced cleaning
- Face coverings indoors when not participating in an activity
- Updated risk assessments.
- 1m physical distancing in indoor areas
- Restricted max occupancy in buildings.

As restrictions are lifted this will give more opportunity to expand programmes for customers and further enhance the services on offer.

5.8 Beacon Arts Centre

Beacon Arts Centre re-opened to the public in June 2021 for a number of small-scale activities, including exhibitions, outdoor opera performances at East India Harbour and Summer of Fun activities. Indoor live performances will resume from early September, in line with any ongoing Scottish Government restrictions, and a diverse programme is planned, including the pantomime.

Since August 2020 the Beacon has been available for hire for the recording of live performances for streaming, and has been used by a wide range of Scottish theatre companies, including Scottish Ballet, Scottish Opera and the Citizens Theatre, for this purpose. The venue has also been used as a TV filming location, which has provided a vital source of income during the period of closure.

The Beacon has participated in the *Summer of Fun* programme, delivering participatory events for children and young people from early years to age 18. This programme has been popular and successful. A *Festival of Fun* for all ages took place at the Beacon and East India Harbour on 11 August, including a range of outdoor performances, live music, magic and circus skills workshops.

Creatability, a Creative Scotland funded programme for neurodivergent and/or disabled young people started on 26 July for one week and will return from September as weekly classes, running until March 2022.

Funding from the Weston Culture Fund has enabled the engagement of a number of temporary posts to deliver a programme of community engagement and creative ageing activities. It is aimed to deliver these in partnership with third sector organisations across Inverclyde, engaging with new, hard-to-reach communities. This funding will also support the delivery of performances in community venues. The programme runs until March 2022 and funding opportunities to allow this work to continue are being explored.

The Beacon is leading the Inverclyde Climate Beacon for COP26 Partnership, which includes Inverclyde Libraries, RIG Arts and Belville Community Garden Trust. Climate Beacons for COP26 is a Scotland-wide collaborative project between climate change or environmental organisations and arts, heritage or cultural organisations to stimulate long-term public engagement in the lead-up to and following COP26.

The projects run by the Beacon as part of Inverclyde's Culture Collective programme will commence in September 2021.

Creative Learning classes including Beacon Youth Theatre, Dance for Parkinson's and Platinum Dance, are planned to resume from September 2021.

A preferred bidder for the cafe and events at the Beacon has been selected and negotiations are underway, with a plan for the re-opening of the café by October 2021. In the meantime, small events and a theatre bar will be run by the existing team.

The outcome of an application to Round 2 of the Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund is awaited. This funding provides opportunities to engage freelance artists and creative practitioners to deliver arts activities by end December 2021. Funding is also available to support performing arts venues facing insolvency by September 2021, which is not the case for the Beacon.

Challenges in relation to recovery include:

- uncertainty around audience confidence and willingness to return to indoor performances and classes and the impact of this on income generation and forecasting
- producer confidence in touring (due to financial viability concerns resulting from audience confidence issues and the challenges created by the requirement for self-isolation in the event of COVID outbreaks) – resulting in difficulty in creating a full and well-balanced programme
- increased cost of managing COVID safety

Longer term recovery plans include producing and co-producing work for touring, developing the performance programme to widen engagement, expanding the range of creative learning and participatory activities, identifying new and building on existing income streams and implementing a new fundraising strategy.

6.0 POVERTY AND COMMUNITIES

6.1 In March 2021, Inverclyde Council completed a series of Community Listening Events and on-line surveys across the 6 localities, to discuss with key stakeholders how we can better support communities in Inverclyde and specifically, those which are affected most by deprivation. This informed the specific actions agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in May 2021.

As a result of the engagement and participation with communities of interest and communities living in the same area, the key messages were that services should support:

- respectful, community-led activity and targeted interventions which mitigates food insecurity across all communities. The Zero Waste Pantry was seen as a key project which has reduced stigma around affordable shopping;
- programmes which target support for households who are financially insecure and struggling to pay utility bills such as heating and lighting by offering advice, assistance and financial assistance to enable them to manage their energy bills in future;
- a holistic approach to service provision to reduce the need for people to have to repeat personal information, especially in relation to their adverse life events, financial management, employment and welfare support (welfare rights, debt advice, and benefits information). The humanitarian support line in response to COVID-19 was seen as a welcome development;
- good quality, fair employment that provides security and opportunities for all. People from all localities recognised the need for employment opportunities which provides a decent wage, rather than having depend on benefits as a way out of poverty. Employers who give low pay, insecurity of hours and earning need to be challenged locally;
- a targeted local employability programme which will result in paid employment, not only be aimed at our young people, but also at those who are affected by longer term unemployment due to adversity, addiction and mental health. The support should be offered for as long as is needed to help sustain employment;

- early intervention and holistic support for families experiencing adversity, stress, mental health and isolation including digital access; and
- the provision and maintenance of 'safe spaces' for people to access support at the heart of their communities.

6.2 Free Sanitary Products

Free sanitary products have been available in public buildings and schools in Inverclyde since 2018. Since the Covid-19 pandemic began, Inverclyde extended the offer of free sanitary product service to include an online platform, which delivers a range of available products including environmental friendly and re- useable products. More than 370 people have benefited from this vital online service throughout lock down period. There has also been 1,651 home delivery requests through survey monkey. As public buildings and schools start to open up with Covid-19 restrictions lifting products will once again be available and this will be communicated across the community.

Following the passage of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021, COSLA and Scottish Government have agreed an Evaluation Framework for this year 2021/22 and again in 2025/26 which will inform future funding allocations to local authorities.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

There are no financial implications from this report

Financial Implications:

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					

7.2 Legal

N/A

7.3 Human Resources

N/A

7.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES

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, no Equality Impact Assessment is required
---	--

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

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

(c) 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

7.5 Repopulation

N/A

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 N/A

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A