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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>21 March 2023</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>PR/11/23/TM</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Tony McEwan</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712828</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Parklea Branching Out Community Garden Hub – Funding Gap</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement of the Policy and Resources Committee for the Council to provide up to £250,000 funding in support of the Parklea Branching Out (PBO) Community Garden Hub project.
- 1.3 PBO was awarded Regeneration Capital Grant Funding of £1.1million in 2022 by the Scottish Government to construct a community garden hub at their site at Parklea, Port Glasgow. At this time, PBO had raised £151,000 from other external funding sources and their own reserves, to help fund the project, which was initially estimated to cost £1.3million.
- 1.4 Following a return of tenders in February 2023, total costs for the project now sits at £1.72m, leaving a shortfall of £403,000. PBO has now written to the Council requesting financial support from the Council in order that it can accept the tender for the work by the Scottish Government deadline of 31 March 2023.
- 1.5 A meeting was held between officers and the Scottish Government on 15 March 2023 where the Scottish Government officials agreed to provide an additional £201,000 of funding if the Council committed to funding £200,000 towards the funding gap for the project. Given the current financial volatility within capital contracts, officers recommend that Committee allocate a further £49,000 at this time, i.e. £250,000 in total, on the understanding that this further funding will only be released if required.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- notes the content of this report and the imminent deadlines for the area to secure a significant capital grant;
  - agrees to provide the Parklea Branching Out capital project to construct a community garden hub with up to £250,000 to address the estimated funding shortfall whilst noting the agreement by Scottish Government to allocate a further £201,000 towards the project; and

- delegate authority to the Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development to agree the terms and conditions upon which the additional funding will be released to Parklea Branching Out, in consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Governance.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities and Organisational Development**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 3.1 The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF), is delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government, COSLA and local government and supports locally developed place-based regeneration projects that involve local communities; helping to support and create jobs and build sustainable communities. Applications to the fund are made on an annual basis with the Council supporting each application, where appropriate.
- 3.2 Parklea Branching Out (PBO) has, for over 26 years, provided services to Inverclyde residents who have a wide range of learning disabilities and the organisation has strong links to both the local community and to the Council and its partner agencies. In 2022 PBO applied to RCGF to build a new hub with training kitchen and new indoor and outdoor community spaces. PBO hopes to achieve the following outcomes with the new project:
- To offer improved quality and range of services;
  - To improve the financial stability of the organisation; and
  - To improve career opportunities for its clients and employees.
- 3.3 PBO, with support from the Council, was successful in its bid to the RCGF in 2022 and was awarded £1.1 million. Through match funding, it sought to build a new facility at an initial estimated cost of £1.3 million.
- 3.4 A recent tendering exercise by PBO has resulted in an increased cost of the facility of £1.7 million, leaving a shortfall of £403,000. A further complicating factor is that the tender must be accepted by the end of March 2023, to meet the RCGF award's deadline.
- 3.5 PBO has now written to the Council requesting financial support towards the shortfall as it recognises it will not be able to attract further external funding before the deadline. The Council met with the Scottish Government on 15 March 2023 which agreed that if the Council committed to funding 50% of the investment gap, it would provide £201,000 additional funding, provided the tender was accepted before the end of March 2023.

### **4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 Given the significant and positive impact PBO has had on the local community, and the potential for greater impact should it be able to build its new facility, it is proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee agrees to provide funding of up to £250,000 to PBO to enable the Community Garden Hub project to proceed. The extra £49,000 reflects the volatility in capital project delivery costs and will only be released by officers if required.
- 4.2 Subject to the Committee's decision, a suitable funding agreement will be entered into between the Council and PBO, and it is recommended that authority is delegated to the Director of Education, Communities and Organisational Development to agree the terms and conditions upon which the funding will be released to PBO, in consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Governance.

### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial	x		
Legal/Risk		x	
Human Resources		x	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	x		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		x	
Environmental & Sustainability	x		
Data Protection			x

## 5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Capital Programme	Contingency	2023/24	Up to £250,000		Funded from £4.0m Reserves allocation approved March 2023

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

A suitable funding agreement will be entered into with Parklea Branching Out to regulate how and when the Council's funding contribution will be paid out.

## 5.4 Human Resources

None.

## 5.5 Strategic

Parklea Branching Out provides a valuable service for the Inverclyde Community and supports our priorities in relation to equalities, inclusion, employability and reducing the impact of climate change.

## 5.6 Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty

This project will have a positive impact on residents who have a learning disability.

### (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 EqlA 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 EqlA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqlA is not necessary/screening statement.

(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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

## 5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

PBO as a garden based project has a positive environmental impact.

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.

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Corporate Management Team have bene consulted on this proposal and are supportive.

## 7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.