
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	20 May 2025
Report By:	Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/34/25/TM
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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 Updates have been provided on the following areas:

1. Libraries as community spaces;
2. Staff development (libraries);
3. Children and young people (libraries);
4. Adult services (libraries)
5. The Watt Institution developments;
6. Inverclyde Music Service;
7. Early Adopter Community;
8. Fairer Futures Partnership;
9. Young Person Substance Use Work;
10. Place Standard Tool;
11. Community Conversations;
12. Invergrow;
13. Tesco Partnership with Youth Services; and
14. Update on CLD review staffing

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 Libraries as Community Spaces

Between March and June 2025 Inverclyde Libraries are hosting a series of 12 pop-up energy advice sessions in five branch libraries. These sessions are provided by Wattwise Inverclyde, a new project by Inverclyde Community Development Trust that aims to help residents of Inverclyde with energy advice and advocacy.

As the 80th Anniversary of VE day approaches on 8th May, libraries are hosting drop-in sessions for residents to come along and share family stories linked to the end of the Second World War. Staff will be on hand to assist with recording memories and photographing any associated memorabilia. Stories shared will be used as part of the commemoration services planned in local churches.

In support of Inverclyde Libraries' commitment to promoting sustainability, Scottish Water visited Kilmacolm Library on 4th April and met with some of the children from Kilmacolm nursery to speak to them about the top-up tap situated outside the library. The nursery children headed outside to fill up their Inverclyde Libraries water bottles from the tap and received some goodies from Scottish Water.

In April libraries promoted World Autism Acceptance Month, highlighting the Au-Some weekly quiet times currently scheduled in Inverclyde Libraries, during which noise levels are reduced and sensory resources for adults and children with autism or additional support needs are made available. The service is also Makaton Aware, supporting the Makaton communication programme that combines speech, signs and symbols to ensure that everyone living with learning or communication difficulties has the tools and resources they need to understand and be understood.

In partnership with HSCP MacMillan Advice services, cancer-related drop-ins will be offered in Gourock Library on Tuesday afternoons from 13th May until 12th August. These drop-ins will provide financial and welfare advice for those living with cancer and their families, alongside other relevant information. Although the initial focus of these sessions will be prostate cancer, there is potential to widen provision to encompass other forms of cancer.

3.2 Staff Development - Libraries

Versus Arthritis delivered awareness raising sessions to branch library staff during March, enabling them to better support customers in a health literacy context through an improved understanding of arthritis and its impact on people's lives. This increased awareness will contribute directly to the library service's provision of reliable and current health information. .

3.3 Children and Young People – Libraries

'Reading for empowerment' bibliotherapy sessions took place in all secondary school libraries for International Women's Day. Training on contemporary children's literature was delivered to primary school teaching colleagues in All Saints, St Mary's and Newark Primaries as part of Reading Schools accreditation.

An illustration competition was held in partnership with the Beacon Arts Centre to win a family ticket to *Angelica Sprocket's Pockets*, launched on World Book Day. Author Jake Hope visited South West and Inverkip community gardens to read his book *Lola Loves Walkies*. Author Victoria Williamson visited St Columba's High to speak to all S1 pupils about her book *Hag Stone*. Gourock Library celebrated *Isadora Moon Day* with a craft session.

A full Easter holiday schedule saw free activities across all public library branches, including crafternoons, digital stop-motion, zine making and silent disco. Port Glasgow Library held a Jack and the Beanstalk 'grow your own beanstalk' seed-planting event using seeds donated to the seed library by Inverclyde Climate Action Network (ICAN). As part of the PG250 Celebrations, Dungeons and Dragons workshops are taking place at Port Glasgow Library and Newark Caste, celebrating the history of the town through creative storytelling.

Magic Torch Comics launched the Multiverse Academy graphic novel, created by young people in Inverclyde over the course of a year, in Greenock Central Library. Magic Torch is currently working on three other funded projects: Story Works podcast audio drama over 10 weeks in Greenock Central Library, Chippy McNish comic over 10 weeks in St Stephen's High School and Port Glasgow Library, old cinemas of Inverclyde comic over 10 weeks in Port Glasgow High School.

A representative from the Library Service Development team appeared on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme on 9th April to promote children using their local library during the school holidays.

3.4 **Adult Services Libraries**

Open Book outreach sessions are now being delivered by the Service Development Team on a monthly basis to Crown Care and Muirshiel Adult Daycare Centre. Open Book provides the opportunity for reminiscence, memory-sharing, and encourages socialisation and participation.

World Book Night took place on 23rd April and Inverclyde Libraries delivered free Quick Read books to local partners and give away to library users. Quick reads are written for adults in an accessible and easy to read style which can help increase reading skills and confidence in reading.

Fourteen creative sessions were delivered as part of Inverclyde Libraries' recent Green Libraries Fund project, exploring themes linked to the climate crisis and biodiversity. Outputs from these sessions included creative writing, paintings, and cyanotypes. These will now be collated into a Drying Green Herbarium which will preserve a snapshot of the garden for future generations.

3.5 **The Watt Institution**

The Watt Institution's Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) funded project, 'Re-animating the Past', has been extended until the end of May 2025 to allow additional workshops to be delivered with school groups, adult support groups, and community groups, variously exploring the natural world around us with reference to the Watt's historic collections. This extension reflects the success of the project to date. In addition, a new display has been developed within the Watt Institution's gallery space looking at extinction level events, both natural and those potentially driven by human activity. A film documenting the project and highlighting its outcomes accompanies the display.

The Watt Institution successfully secured £975 from Museums Galleries Scotland to have professional photography undertaken of the improved museum galleries. These photographs will be used for promotional purposes going forward.

3.6 **Inverclyde Music Service**

Inverclyde Schools newly formed Pipe Band entered their first competition, participating in The Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championship. This is a national competition which provided a hugely positive introduction to competitive playing for the young people involved. Although Inverclyde did not place in the competition, their participation is reflective of the investment in

pipes and drums tuition over recent years, with funding received/secured until summer 2026 from both the Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust and the Beatrice Foundation.

The Junior Wind Orchestra demonstrated notable progression at the Scottish Concert Band Festival National Finals at Perth Concert Hall in March. Having been awarded a Silver Plus at last year's national competition, this year they further impressed the judges and received a Gold award.

The Inverclyde heat for the Scottish Young Musician of the Year was held at Inverclyde Academy in March. 20 young musicians performed, with the winner announced as Emily Hathaway from Port Glasgow High School playing the marimba. Emily will compete in the national final at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in May 2025.

In March 2025, Clydevue Academy hosted The Royal Marine Band of Scotland, which provided a day of mentoring to the Senior Wind Orchestra. Members of the orchestra in attendance participated in a series of workshops, before having the opportunity to perform alongside these highly accomplished professional musicians in a short concert for invited guests.

Inverclyde Council's Creative Scotland funded YMI (Youth Music Initiative) programme continues to deliver for all Primary 5 pupils across the authority area. Funding available has also enabled delivery of bespoke music programmes in Garvel and Craigmarloch schools. In addition, the YMI Coordinator is working with six schools to secure bronze 'We Make Music' awards - We Make Music Schools is a scheme that recognises and celebrates the rich variety of music-making activity taking place in primary and ASN schools across Scotland. An application to Creative Scotland to continue YMI provision in Inverclyde has been submitted for 2025/26.

A successful IMS Spring Concert took place on Thursday 27 March, showcasing the musical talents of Inverclyde's young people. The music service is currently teaching 1,540 young people across all disciplines with many performing on the night.

3.7 Early Adopter community 2025/2026

One further year of funding has been approved by the Scottish Government to continue the development of affordable out-of-school childcare in Port Glasgow until March 2026. The after-school service will continue to be delivered by Before and After School Kare (BASK). Parents are now being supported to pay for the service if they are eligible for Universal Credit childcare support or other social security benefits aimed at low-income families.

Support to apply for eligible social security has been provided since January 2025 by a multidisciplinary team, including a family wellbeing worker, community co-design facilitators, advice support workers, and employability workers, in partnership with the DWP. This approach has helped to build trusting relationships with parents, making them more comfortable discussing their household income and seeking support to improve their family's outcomes. The after-school service continues to accommodate up to 35 children per day.

3.8 Fairer Futures Partnership 2025/2026

Funding to continue the development of the Fairer Futures Partnership programme has been approved. The main objectives of the programme are to enhance partnership working and identify solutions and systems which improve access, efficiency, and outcomes for local communities.

The programme will deliver a place-based, person-centred service from the B'Hub within Boglestone Community Centre, placing service users at the heart of its design and delivery. Data will be used to identify community needs and monitor progress, empowering people with

opportunities, choice, and voice within their community. Activities currently being delivered include community engagement, skills development, health and wellbeing initiatives, learning, food support, and financial advice.

The programme has been active since January 2025, with successful engagement events such as Connect drop-in sessions, Easter holiday family time, Family Fun Nights, and Afternoon Tea @ the B'Hub. Trusting relationships are being built within the community and across partner organisations.

In addition to both programmes, Inverclyde Council has successfully secured a capital grant of £500,000 to refurbish the squash courts at the Boglestone Community Centre. This space will be transformed into a dedicated childcare centre for after-school and holiday care in Port Glasgow, named The B'Hive. The new facility is expected to be operational by Summer 2025, supporting the continued delivery of out-of-school childcare in the area.

3.9 Young Person Substance Use

The Young Persons Substance Use Team successfully delivered the S4–S6 substance use education programme across all six secondary schools in Inverclyde supporting approximately 700 pupils in four lessons covering key topics such as alcohol, drugs, vaping, smoking, and risky behaviours.

In January 2025, the team commenced the delivery of lessons for S1–S3 pupils, and they are currently completing the final block of this programme. To date, around 1,100 S1–S3 pupils have received the four core lessons, with this number expected to increase as delivery continues through to June.

This year, the curriculum was revised to provide tailored lesson content for each individual year group, in contrast to last year's broader approach, which combined lessons across S1–S3 and S4–S6. This more targeted approach aims to ensure age-appropriate and relevant messaging for each stage of secondary education.

3.10 Update developing a community safety lens for the Place Standard Tool - Inverclyde Pilot Site

The Inverclyde pilot of the Place Standard Tool, focusing on community safety, successfully took place in March 2025 within the designated Greenock East neighbourhood area. The event, held at Cappielow stadium, was very well attended, with representation from community members, Ward Councillors, and a range of key partners including HSCP, River Clyde Homes, Police Scotland, Your Voice, and CVS. This broad participation underscored the shared commitment to understanding and addressing community safety within our local context. The event was covered by local media in the Greenock Telegraph which can be viewed through the attached link: [Pilot reveals strong sense of community in east end | Greenock Telegraph](#)

Leading up to the pilot event, significant community engagement activities were undertaken by the Inclusive Communities Service. This included:

- door-to-door leafleting: 1040 leaflets were delivered in targeted areas within the east end to raise awareness and encourage participation; and
- drop-in surgeries: 8 informal drop-in sessions were conducted at various community groups, providing opportunities for residents to learn more about the project and express their interest in participating.

The valuable insights and feedback gathered during the pilot event will now be collated and analysed to contribute to the development of the community safety lens for the Place Standard Tool. This learning will also build local capacity within the Council and HSCP in utilising the Place Standard Tool as part of a place-based approach to health improvement. A further update on the outcomes and next steps will be provided upon completion of the analysis.

3.11 **Community Conversations**

Between October 2024 and February 2025, on behalf of the Alliance board, Inclusive communities organised six community conversation weeks, encouraging residents to contribute insights that help shape local priorities and decisions. Feedback was gathered through the community choices platform, focusing on four key themes from the six locality action plans: Your Community, Affordable Out-of-School Childcare, Community Safety, and Learning in the Community.

More than 400 feedback notes were recorded, with contributions from over 120 community groups across Inverclyde and approximately 1,076 community members. Residents participated individually or collectively, fostering engagement and collaborative decision-making. By actively involving the community, Inverclyde Community Choices strengthens local, the feedback will inform future projects, funding opportunities, and policy development to benefit Inverclyde.

An example of the feedback can be found using the following links:

[Port Glasgow Community Conversation](#)
[Greenock East and Central Community Conversation](#)
[Greenock South and South West](#)
[Inverkip and Wemyss Bay](#)
[Greenock West and Gourrock](#)
[Kilmacoll and Quarriers Village](#)

3.12 **Invergrow**

Through UK Government funding, Inverclyde Council secured support for the Invergrow project from 2023 to 2025. This initiative has played a crucial role in strengthening the Inverclyde Food Network and driving forward key actions outlined in the Inverclyde Food Growing Strategy.

In its first funding window in February 2024, Invergrow focused on supporting community growing spaces, receiving 14 applications. Eleven projects were successfully granted funding totalling £31,000, aligning with the priorities of the Food Growing Strategy. As a result, approximately 695 individuals participated in Invergrow activities, benefiting from its positive impact on local engagement and sustainable food-growing efforts.

Continuing into its second year, the project further strengthened community groups by allocating £27,000 to 11 initiatives in March 2025. This funding aimed to bolster volunteer programs, ensuring they had the necessary resources to sustain and expand their efforts in food-growing and community-led sustainability.

3.13 **Tesco Partnership with Youth Services**

A collaborative pilot project has been established between detached youth work services and Tesco Greenock to address issues of anti-social behaviour involving young people within the store. This initiative arose from weekly reports of such behaviour. Commencing Friday evenings from the beginning of May, detached youth workers will engage with young people on-site, offering information about detached winter activities and Youth Zone opportunities, and inviting them to a drop-in youth club in the store café. As part of this partnership, Tesco will provide

snacks, and youth work staff will deliver activities focused on challenging attitudes towards anti-social behaviour and fostering positive interactions with Tesco employees.

3.14 **Temporary staffing arrangements within Inclusive Communities**

Since committee approved the review of Community Learning and Development, several senior posts within the new Inclusive Communities Service have become vacant. These posts form part of the new structure within the service and in order to maintain continuity of service while offering succession planning opportunities for existing staff, a temporary staffing structure is now in place to allow the recommendations from the review to be implemented. This structure is being met from existing resources and has no impact on the substantive structure agreed by committee.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

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

4.1 **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					

4.2 **Legal/Risk**

N/A

4.3 **Human Resources**

N/A

4.4 **Strategic**

All updated provided in this report align to the priorities of the Council Plan and Partnership Plan.

4.5 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

Equalities

- (a) 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.

Fairer Scotland Duty

- (b) 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.

Children and Young People

- (c) 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.

4.6 Environmental/Sustainability

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

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.

4.7 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