

**South Ayrshire Council**

**Report by Director of Strategic Change and Communities  
to Cabinet  
of 28 November 2023**

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**Subject: Financial Inclusion Strategic Development**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to advance work for the progression of activity supporting Financial Inclusion, culminating in a Financial Inclusion Strategy.

**2. Recommendation**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:**

- 2.1.1 agrees that the unallocated funds from the Covid 19 Recovery project (£1.055m) and LACER funding are utilised to support Financial inclusion activity across a range of Council Service Departments and key partners via the Financial Inclusion Strategic Development Partnership;**
- 2.1.2 agrees that the Council's financial inclusion work is strategically aligned to the new Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and delivered through the Financial Inclusion and Growth Strategic Delivery Partnership; and**
- 2.1.3 agrees that, subject to meeting the assessment criteria, identified projects considered for support under Financial Inclusion be brought back to the Cabinet for final approval and endorsement.**

**3. Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 29 August 2023, Cabinet agreed that £1.055m of Covid 19 reserves are remitted to the Financial Inclusion Member/ Officer Working Group (MOWG) to support the wider agenda of sustainable financial Inclusion.
- 3.2 South Ayrshire Council and its partners recognise the importance of ensuring that all of our citizens have the skills, knowledge and support to help make the most of their money and share in the region's growth. Critical to any developing strategy on Financial Inclusion will be working in partnership through our Community Planning partnerships, to provide access to good quality advice and affordable financial products and services that can support people across our wider communities.
- 3.3 Key considerations in developing our strategic approach will be:

- Breaking the cycle of debt and dependency;
- Reducing Child Poverty across South Ayrshire;
- A reduction in the number of people in crisis through early intervention.
- Preparing people for employment, training, education and volunteering opportunities and creating opportunities, that will assist our communities to thrive through economic development and local wealth building activity.

3.4 In April 2023 the Community Planning Partnership Board agreed a new structure that recognised the importance of locality-based service delivery but also acknowledged that some issues remain ‘population wide’ and require a collaborative multi-agency approach.

3.5 These population wide issues are addressed by five Strategic Delivery Partnerships (SDPs) who report directly to the Community Planning Board and are chaired by representatives from the Council and other partner agencies. One of the SDPs is focused on Financial Inclusion and Growth and is chaired by the Service Lead for Thriving Communities.

3.6 The Community Planning Partnership is in the process of refreshing it’s Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and financial inclusion has been identified as a key priority. The draft LOIP priorities are due to be considered by the CP Executive in November with public consultation planned early in 2024.

3.7 Work is also taking place within the CPP to develop a new Child Poverty Strategy (supported by Public Health Scotland) – once developed and approved, reporting on the strategy will take place via the Financial Inclusion and Growth SDP, ensuring alignment of the strategy and ongoing Financial Inclusion work and the Children’s Service Plan.

#### **4. Proposals**

4.1 To assist with the ongoing cost of living and support with financial inclusion, it is proposed that Service Leads are asked to consider and submit proposals for review by the Director of Strategic Change and Communities, that support financial inclusion, by utilising the Financial Inclusion funding (formerly Covid Recovery monies).

4.2 SAC proposals will be initially assessed by Assistant Directors and the Financial Inclusion MOWG will be consulted for their views on these proposals. The Director of Strategic Change and Communities will then bring back a report to the Cabinet confirming the final proposals it is proposed the Council supports from the Financial Inclusion funding for approval. An assessment matrix has been developed in order to consider proposals.

4.3 The Council has an important role to play in increasing financial inclusion but it is recognised that collaboration with partners on agreed priorities will be vital in reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for the residents of South Ayrshire. It is therefore proposed that the Financial Inclusion and Growth (SDP) will also be invited to identify areas of work or projects that align to the LOIP priorities and can be delivered in collaboration with partners including the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector. Projects will be assessed by the members from the Financial Inclusion and Growth SDP and

progress will be monitored by the SDP and reported to the CPP Board and the MOWG.

- 4.4 It is therefore proposed that the Council collaborates with CP partners to develop shared strategic priorities and associated actions through the LOIP development process in support of any Financial Inclusion Strategy.

## **5. Legal and Procurement Implications**

- 5.1 Legal will draft any agreements with third parties or grant agreements where provided with instructions by the service to do so.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Work supporting projects supporting Financial Inclusion will be funded through £1.055m of Covid 19 reserves as agreed by Cabinet in August 2023.

## **7. Human Resources Implications**

- 7.1 Not applicable.

## **8. Risk**

### **8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations***

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations

### **8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations***

- 8.2.1 There is a risk that if the recommendations are rejected then the uncommitted Covid 19 reserves will remain unused in the support of the wider financial inclusion agenda.

## **9. Equalities**

- 9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

## **10. Sustainable Development Implications**

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

## **11. Options Appraisal**

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

## 12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services.

## 13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, ICT and Procurement, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

13.3 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Julie Dettbarn, Chair of the Financial Inclusion MOWG, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided by the Financial Inclusion MOWG.

## 14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Director of Strategic Change and Communities will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Assess and determine project priorities	31 January 2024	Assistant Director - Communities
Align with SDP CPP priorities	30 April 2024	Assistant Director - Communities

**Background Papers**     **Report to Cabinet of 29 August 2023 - [Covid-19 Recovery Project and LACER Funding Review](#)**

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**Date: 21 November 2023**

**South Ayrshire Council  
Equality Impact Assessment  
Scoping Template**

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. [FSD Guidance for Public Bodies](#) in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018 and revised in October 2021. See information here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

### 1. Policy details

Policy Title	Financial Inclusion Strategic Development
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Jamie.Tait@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

**2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts**

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	-	✓
Disability	-	✓
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	-	-
Marriage or Civil Partnership	-	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-	✓
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	-	✓
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	-	-
Sex – (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys)	-	-

Sexual Orientation – person’s sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	-	-
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children’s Rights	-	✓

**3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage i.e. The Fairer Scotland Duty (This section to be completed for any Strategic Decisions). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.**

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	-	✓
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	-	✓
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	-	✓
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	-	✓
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parent’s education, employment and income	-	✓

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:**

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the ‘Three Key Needs’ of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium or Low)
<b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	High
<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b> between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	High
<b>Foster good relations</b> between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	High

Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	High
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	High
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	High

### 5. Summary Assessment

<b>Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required?</b> (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as <b>Medium and/or High</b> )	<b>NO</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Rationale for decision:</b>  <b>Members' decision on this has no specific equality implications</b>	
<b>Signed :</b> George Hunter                      Assistant Director Communities  <b>Date:</b> 13 November 2023	