
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

30 November 2021

Cabinet

Title: Remembering Together - Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme

Purpose: To report on the North Ayrshire response to the proposed national programme of reflection and commemoration marking the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the Remembering Together, Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme;
- b) Authorises officers to continue to support this approach; and
- c) Agrees to receive a further update on progress relating to the Remembering Together Programme in North Ayrshire at a future meeting.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The First Minister announced in March 2021 that Remembering Together, Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme, will be delivered by Greenspace Scotland at the request of Scottish Government. Remembering Together will involve commissioned artists working with partners, communities, faith groups and those most affected by Covid in all 32 local authority areas to co-produce Covid memorial projects.
- 1.2 North Ayrshire Council has been invited to commission local artists to co-create with communities, with the support of Greenspace Scotland. Early discussions have taken place and an outline approach developed to meet the timescale. The programme is fully funded by Scottish Government through Greenspace Scotland.
- 1.3 Successful, widespread public engagement is fundamental to the success of the programme. This will be the responsibility of the commissioned artists/creative practitioners. The Council and Greenspace Scotland will provide guidance within its artists/creative practitioners' brief and regular online support sessions.

2. Background

- 2.1 Covid-19 has touched lives across Scotland and the world. Experiences vary widely; sacrifices have been made to save lives and support communities; many have lost loved ones; and lives have often been unimaginably difficult. It is a period of time which will never be forgotten.

- 2.2 On the first anniversary of the March 2020 'lockdown', the First Minister announced that the time was right to work together and develop a national programme of reflection and commemoration. It was announced that Remembering Together, Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme will be delivered by Greenspace Scotland. The aim is to create a fitting tribute which offers local people a connection and opportunity to respectfully reflect on the pandemic.
- 2.3 The programme will involve commissioned artists/creative practitioners working with partners, communities, faith groups and those most affected by Covid in all 32 local authority areas to co-create Covid memorial projects. Officers will ensure Locality Planning Partnerships are engaged and involved in the consultation process. North Ayrshire Council was approached by Greenspace Scotland to discuss how the local creative sector could be commissioned to carry out a programme of community engagement to establish what Remembering Together might look like in the North Ayrshire context.
- 2.4 From the early conversations it was clear that there is a need to maintain a flexible and open vision of any final memorial. The outcome of the public engagement might result in community art, music, or theatre. It could be fixed in one place or many places; digital; or mobile. The nature of the memorial will be coproduced through community engagement by the commissioned artist/s.
- 2.5 The programme is fully funded by Scottish Government through Greenspace Scotland. Phase 1 will be supported with £20k (£15k commission to the artists with a further £5k available to partners for access costs) to help to co-create with communities and shape ideas that reflect local people's experiences of the pandemic. The first phase of commissioning is expected to be underway in November 2021 and continue to spring 2022.
- 2.6 Connected Communities has asked for pre-programme discussions with local partners. A Commissioning Group is in the process of being established, including colleagues from NHS Ayrshire and Arran, arts/creative practitioners' groups and community organisations who were key partners in the response to the pandemic.
- 2.7 The Remembering Together website will be launched in late November. A brief has been developed for arts/creative practitioners by greenspace Scotland with input from North Ayrshire Council and it is anticipated that this will be circulated in early January 2022.
- 2.8 In phase 2, funding of circa £100k will be available in each local authority area to realise these projects, which may include commemorative gardens, memorials, artworks or events in parks, greenspaces, or other types of public space. Greenspace Scotland will support the programme through delivery, online support sessions, learning, connecting, and reflecting, ensuring legacy for all involved. This phase will be for 9 months and will immediately follow phase 1. It is anticipated the programme will conclude around March 2023.
- 2.9 There are already a number of Covid memorials in North Ayrshire which have been created by local communities. The Remembering Together Programme is not intended to diminish the importance of, or to replace these. Connected Communities are planning to liaise with existing memorials to establish a linked network through QR codes, similar to the North Ayrshire Heritage Trails. This will link back to current information and support groups.

3. Proposals

3.1 That Cabinet:

- a) Notes the Remembering Together, Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme;
- b) Authorises officers to continue to support this approach; and
- c) Agrees to receive a further update on progress relating to the Remembering Together Programme in North Ayrshire at a future meeting.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 A budget of £15k is available through Greenspace Scotland for commissioning in phase1 of the programme, with £5k ringfenced in a central budget for access, depending on need. This will be followed by circa. £100k in phase 2.

Human Resources

- 4.2 Officers from Connected Communities will provide guidance and support to the commissioned artist/creative practitioner and Greenspace Scotland.

Legal

- 4.3 There are no legal implications at this stage.

Equality/Socio-economic

- 4.4 During the public engagement the commissioned artists/creative practitioners will be reaching into local communities to ensure that there is a widespread opportunity across all localities so that local people who wish to take part in Remembering Together, Scotland's Covid Community Memorial Programme can do so.

Environmental and Sustainability

- 4.5 There are no environmental implications at this stage. Until the nature of the memorial is known, it is not possible to say if a physical place or space has to be identified.

Key Priorities

- 4.6 The proposal contained within the report supports the North Ayrshire Council Plan priority:
- Active and strong communities.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 The participatory approach, with the commissioning role of the North Ayrshire Council, supports community wealth building and employment opportunities for local artists/creative practitioners

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Early discussions with local artists/creative practitioners have taken place regarding the programme and formation of Stakeholder Reference Group. A wide-spread programme of public engagement will be undertaken as part of the phase 1 commissioned work.

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For further information please contact **Rhona Arthur, Head of Connected Communities**, on **01294 324415**.

Background Papers

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