

**The Highland Council**

**Resources Committee**

**3 December 2008**

Agenda Item	
Report No	

**Tain Common Good Fund application – Tain Rose Garden**

**Report by Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Corporate Manager**

**Summary**

This report outlines a recent application to the Tain Common Good Fund for £26,000 towards developing the Tain Rose Garden and gives the Committee the necessary background information about the project to make a decision on the application.

**1. Background**

1.1 Applications over £10,000 to the Tain Common Good Fund are required to be considered by the Resources Committee.

1.2 An application has been received from the Tain Initiative Group for £26,000 from the Tain Common Good Fund towards their £82,000 project to take a barren area of land within Tain Town Centre and transform it to create a centre piece garden for the use of all the community and visitors to the area.

**2. Tain Town Centre**

2.1 Tain Town Centre is primarily contained on the main High Street and Tower Street, with a number of narrow streets leading off the High Street. Access through the town to the surrounding areas is through the High Street. Situated at a lower level on the High Street is a large area of land, which is known locally as the Tain Rose Garden. This area was previously a large private garden but was gifted to the community in the early 1960s. At this time the garden was re-designed as a Rose Garden and was officially opened by HRH Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother in 1966. Tain is a historic conservation town and the land to be re-developed falls within the conservation area.

2.2 In the last 20 years the garden has suffered from a lack of investment and has become an area of unused and neglected land in the centre of the town. The area is also cut off from the High Street by a large wall and the one access, a series of narrow steps, is not obvious, with the result that visitors and even community members do not use the green space as they are not aware that it is open to the public. There is no immediate disabled access to the area.

2.3 This project to develop a highly visible and important area of green space at the heart of the town is seen as a major development and is hugely important

for the current and future regeneration of Tain. The project will create a feature of cultural importance for coming generations and a sense of pride of place within the community.

### **3. The Tain Initiative Group**

3.1 The Tain Initiative Group, the group taking the lead in this project, was set up in 1996. In 2003 the group became a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The group is entirely community led but has the support and advice of the various agencies in the area. The Tain Initiative Group has been responsible for the successful implementation of a large number of projects for the social, environmental and recreational benefit of the community and visitors and has the experience and capacity to deliver this project.

### **4. National recognition**

4.1 At the start of this year the Tain Initiative Group found out they were successful in joining the BBC Beechgrove Garden Community Garden Scheme which gave them invaluable assistance with planning and implementing this project.

4.2 The scheme provides a top quality landscape designer to work with the community to design a plan for the project, full on-going designer support throughout the lifetime of the project and films a Beechgrove Garden programme about the project which will not only promote the project but the town of Tain as well. The project however has to remain entirely community led and the local community must secure the necessary funding and manage the project from start to finish. The project design and landscaping proposals are now complete. The Beechgrove Designer has produced a full project specification in consultation with the community. Once all the funding is in place it is hoped work can start before the end of the year.

### **5. Community Consultation**

5.1 The community has indicated, through local surveys and public consultation conducted by the Tain Initiative Group, that they see the development of this project as a major priority for the social, recreational and economic regeneration of the town. The area of land is highly visible from the town centre and this project would create a local facility to help instil 'pride of place'. The project would also complement past and current projects, undertaken by local voluntary groups, to improve the town centre.

5.2 The three local Councillors fully support this application.

5.3 The Tain Community Council is discussing this application at their meeting on Monday 24 November. Its comments will be reported verbally to the Committee.

### **6. Funding**

- 6.1 The Tain Initiative Group has already secured £26,000 of private and public funding. The £26,000 applied for from the Tain Common Good fund along with £30,000 applied for to the Highland LEADER programme which is about to be launched will provide the £82,000 needed to allow the project to go ahead.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 That the Resources Committee approve the £26,000 applied for by the Tain Initiative Group for the Rose Garden Project.

Signature:

Designation: Caithness, Sutherland & Easter Ross Corporate Manager

Author: Carol Elliot, Tain & Easter Ross Ward Manager

Date: 4 November 2008