

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Community Challenge Fund Applications Panel** held in the Convener's Hospitality Room, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, on Friday, 28 February 2014, at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Dr D Alston

Committee Chairs

Mr D Fallows

Mrs B McAllister

Mr A Christie

Officials in attendance:

Ms M Morris, Assistant Chief Executive

Ms L Lee, Committee Administrator

Dr D Alston in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Hendry (OCB), Mr J Gray, Mrs C Wilson, Mrs F Robertson and Mr G Phillips.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Meeting of 2 October 2013

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** Minutes of meeting held on 2 October 2013.

4. Assessment Criteria

The Panel **NOTED** that copies of the Assessment Criteria agreed by Highland Council at its meeting on 25 October 2012 were available for reference if required.

5. Community Challenge Fund - Applications

There had been circulated Report No. CCF1/14 dated 21 February 2014 by the Deputy Chief Executive on progress with applications for the Community Challenge Fund. Report No. CCF3/14 comprising a briefing note on the Kirkmichael Heritage Centre Project, was tabled. In this regard, Members were advised that, following officer advice, the Kirkmichael Trust had submitted a revised application which presented their proposals in a way which complied more closely with the scheme criteria. The project was expected to save the Council money by removing maintenance costs and the need for any future emergency work on the building.

The Panel **NOTED** that the Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company was up and running, and that the Kyle and Lochalsh Community Trust was expected to go forward in the very near future; and that Officers would be

contacting the Lochalsh Sports Association, Lochaber Sports Association and Kinlochleven Community Association in the coming weeks to see how these applications were progressing and to offer assistance if required.

The Panel **APPROVED** the recommendations detailed in Section 3 of the report, as follows:

- i. Application from the Kirkmichael Trust: to recommend to Council that it **agree** a one-off grant in the sum of £10,000 for the purposes specified and subject to the conditions set out in the report;
- ii. Expression of Interest from SUDS: the application be **not approved to the next stage**, and
- iii. Expression of Interest from Strathpeffer Community Council: the decision be **deferred** meantime; Officers from Community Services and the Ward Manager to meet with the Community Council to discuss the idea further.

6. Community Challenge Fund

There had been circulated Report No. CCF2/14 dated 20 February 2014 summarising progress since the launch of the Community Challenge Fund in January 2013. It outlined the findings of a review of the Fund over the course of the first year, and proposed several ways to take the Fund forward. The report would be submitted to the Council on 13 March 2014 as the annual report on the Fund, subject to incorporation of any additional points agreed by the Panel in discussion.

Discussion covered a range of issues, including ways in which the Fund could be promoted; alternative options for supporting communities with preparing applications; the definition of deprivation; the forthcoming Community Empowerment Bill and the need for the Council to develop a policy for asset transfer and to simplify the application process. On being asked, Members confirmed that they wished the eligibility criteria to remain as set out in the report.

The Panel **NOTED** the update on the Community Challenge Fund and the review findings and **AGREED** to recommend to Council:

- i. the proposals outlined in section 4 of the report for taking the Fund forward – i.e. promoting the Fund, building capacity within community groups to access the Fund, and supporting staff to help with its implementation;
- ii. that use of consultancies other than HISEZ should be permitted in exceptional circumstances, such as where access to specialist support was required; and
- iii. that the criteria be widened to include preventing new demands for services arising from deprivation, as outlined at section 4.4; with deprivation being defined in such a way that particular streets and specific rural areas would be able to meet the eligibility criteria.

The meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.