

## The Highland Council

### Resources Committee – 25 February 2015

Agenda Item	<b>9(b)</b>
Report No	<b>RES/10/15</b>

#### **Merkinch Community Centre– Application to Capital Discretionary Budget, 2014/15**

#### **Report by Director of Finance and the Head of Policy and Reform**

##### **Summary**

Merkinch Community Centre provides an essential and valuable service to the local community. The Community Centre is self-financing and seeks £15,000 capital support from the capital discretionary budget to replace the single glazed windows for the playroom and the Skinner room in the building and to purchase a bicycle rack and new signage.

#### **1. Funding request**

- 1.1 Merkinch Community Centre Management pride themselves on the high standard of facilities and service they offer. The centre is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors, a group of dedicated volunteers and is supported by High Life Highland. All income raised within the centre is reinvested into either programme delivery or improving the facilities
- 1.2 Management deliver a wide range of affordable activities and programmes. The centre has on average 27,500 users per annum. They are constantly trying to enhance and improve the facility and recently they installed a new kitchen with funding from the Big Lottery Fund.
- 1.3 Highland Council's Energy Team have undertaken a survey of the building. One of the recommendations to save energy is to replace the large single glazed steel framed windows on both of the above rooms. The majority of the groups who use these rooms fall into the category of vulnerable adults and pre-school children.
- 1.4 Other improvements planned are to purchase a bicycle rack and new signage.
- 1.5 The total cost of the project is £30,000. The City of Inverness Area Committee approved £15,000 towards this project from the Inverness Common Good Fund in December 2014, provided match funding was available from Highland Council Capital Discretionary Fund.

#### **2. Implications**

- 2.1 The project will improve energy efficiency and encourage active travel, contributing to the Carbon CLEVER initiative. As a community centre used by a range of community groups including people with disabilities, there should be positive equality impacts. Legally the works proposed are the responsibility

of the tenant and not the Council as landlord so the Council capital programme for its estate is not appropriate. New signage will have appropriate Gaelic interpretation, as set out in the Council's policy on signage. There are no rural implications.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The allocation of £15,000 can be met from the uncommitted sum of £944,000 held within the Capital Discretionary Fund. If this request is approved there will be a revenue cost of approximately £1,500pa for the period of the borrowing. This is provided for within the Loans Fund Budget.

### **4. Recommendation**

Members are asked to approve the award of £15,000 from the Capital Discretionary Fund for the year 2014/15 as match funding to the contribution from the Inverness Common Good Fund towards the total project cost of £30,000.

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