

The Highland Council

Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee – 10th June 2015

Agenda Item	3.
Report No	NBS 09/15

Carbon CLEVER Update

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report updates Members with details on the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund that relate to Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey, the CORE Nairn project, and the installation of solar powered real time bus stop displays in Badenoch and Strathspey.

1. Background

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Highland Council in June 2013, Members agreed to an initiative to achieve a carbon neutral Inverness in a low carbon Highlands by 2025, Carbon CLEVER. Achieving such an ambitious target will require strong engagement from a wide range of stakeholders across the private, public and third sectors, and residents and communities of the Highlands.
- 1.2 A cross cutting theme of the Highland Council's programme for 2012-2017, Working Together for the Highlands, is that it will maintain its commitment to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration and work with everyone to achieve a Carbon CLEVER Highlands by 2025.
- 1.3 Opportunities for developing a Carbon CLEVER Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey were presented and discussed at a meeting of this committee on 25th September 2014.
- 1.4 This report presents updates on projects which are being led by the Climate Change Team, Highland Council to help achieve the vision of a Carbon CLEVER Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey.

2. Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund

- 2.1 Details of the £200,000 Carbon CLEVER community grant fund were approved at a meeting of the Council's Resources committee on 25th February 2015. The fund provides financial support to communities and organisations implementing innovative capital projects which tackle climate change.
- 2.2 Each Area Committee has been granted a fund allocation, and for Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey, this is £20,000 for 2015/16.
- 2.3 The application process follows the Council's Single Grants and Discretionary Funding application process, and applications will be assessed on how well they meet the key principles of Carbon CLEVER:
 - Carbon emission reduction
 - Leadership
 - Engagement
 - Value for money

- Economic benefit
- Raise awareness and promote behaviour change

2.4 The closing date for applications in Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey is 12th August, 2015, with recommendations being made to Area Committee on 23rd September, 2015. Two applications have already been received for the grant fund and through conversations with interested groups it is expected that this number will rise considerably before the relevant deadlines. No applications have so far been received for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey region.

2.5 Applications will be assessed by the Climate Change Team with advice from the appropriate Ward Manager. A paper will then be prepared for consideration at Area Committee. Funding can be carried forward into 2016/17 if required and it is noted that Members for Ward 21 are interested in the scope for community involvement in allocations, through participatory budgeting. Options for using this approach can also be addressed in the report for the September meeting.

2.6 More information on the grant fund is available on the Highland Council website or by contacting the Council's Climate Change Team: carbonclever@highland.gov.uk

3. Collaboration on Resource Efficiency (CORE) Nairn

3.1 The CORE Nairn project is funded by Resource Efficient Scotland. The project aims to explore how public sector organisations and venues can work together to become more resource efficient, reduce carbon emissions, whilst taking into consideration local circumstances and opportunities.

3.2 The project has involved the recruitment of public sector organisations/buildings, a series of workshops and meetings, and for each participating building a resource efficiency action plan (REAP) has been developed.

3.3 The REAP documents contain a proposed action plan to improve the energy and resource efficiency of the buildings. By conducting these studies at the same time it enables a coordinated and collaborative approach to be adopted.

3.4 15 sites have participated in the project to date:

Site	Occupier
Nairn Fire Station	Fire Scotland
Nairn Town and Country Hospital	NHS Highland
Logie Primary School	Moray Council
Fort George (Historic Scotland)	Historic Scotland
Dallas Dhu Distillery	Historic Scotland
Maybank Nursing Home	Highland Council
Whinnieknowe House	Cross Reach
Auldearn Primary School	Highland Council
Nairn Leisure Centre	Highlife Highland
Nairn Library	Highlife Highland

Croy Primary School	Highland Council
Nairn Police Station	Police Scotland
Nairn Academy	Highland Council
Rosebank Primary	Highland Council
Millbank Primary	Highland Council

3.5 Building improvements of £603,101 were identified by the studies which could generate savings of £156,440 per annum. The organisations involved in the project are now implementing the actions outlined in the REAP documents. This includes upgrades to lighting, heating controls, insulation, water saving devices, and installing renewable energy technologies. The Energy and Sustainability Team, Highland Council, are taking a leading role in improvements to the buildings and investigating a joint procurement.

3.6 The project has proved extremely successful in connecting organisations in and around Nairn. There is significant interest to investigate further opportunities for collaborative working and to consider expanding the membership of the group. Additional support to the project has been allocated by Resource Efficient Scotland to explore these opportunities in 2015.

3.7 A meeting will be held in Nairn on June 24th 2015 between the project partners to discuss progress. It is hoped that following improvements across the buildings involved in this project an event will be held in Autumn 2015 to raise awareness of the approach taken and its success. Local ward Members will be invited to this event.

4. **Solar Powered Real Time Bus Stop Displays**

4.1 Seven solar powered real time bus stop displays are being installed in Badenoch and Strathspey. This project is being led by HITRANS using funding secured through the Atlantic Area REPUTE project. At a meeting of the Resources committee, 26th November 2014, Members agreed to allocate £10,000 to this project from the Carbon CLEVER capital budget allowance.

4.2 Four of these displays have now been installed and the remaining three are due to be commissioned shortly. The displays provide bus users with accurate information on when buses are due, and are powered using renewable energy.

5. **Implications**

5.1 Resource Implications: Implications associated with the Carbon CLEVER Grant Fund have been considered at meetings of the Resources committee. Financial support for the CORE Nairn project is being provided by Resource Efficient Scotland. Capital expenditure for building improvements owned by the Highland Council identified through the project will be spent from approved capital budget allocations overseen by the Council's Energy and Sustainability Team.

5.2 Legal Implications: The Highland Council has an obligation to support national efforts to reduce carbon emissions to meet the targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. In relation to the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund, accounting rules relating to spending of capital grants to third

parties will be implemented.

- 5.3 Equalities Implications: To ensure that the grant fund is accessible to all, support will be available throughout the process. Applications will be screened on a case by case basis for equalities implications. Projects which are granted funding will be required to have necessary equality policies in place, and this will be outlined in award notices.
- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon CLEVER Implications: All the projects listed in this report will lead to reductions in carbon emissions. This will help to achieve a Carbon CLEVER Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey.
- 5.5 Risk Implications: There is a risk that there are no competent applications for the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund for the Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey area committee. This risk is being reduced by the ongoing promotion of the grant fund and by working with applicants to ensure their applications are suitable and competent. There is scope for unallocated funds to be carried forward to support proposals that might have a longer lead in time.
- 5.6 Gaelic Implications: The grant fund follows the Council's policy on signage and branding. The application form seeks to assess project contributions to the promotion of Gaelic language. When fully operational, the bus stop displays will display messages in English and Gaelic.
- 5.7 Rural implications: The grant fund is open to community groups and organisations throughout the Highlands. Applications will be approved by Members at Area committees, ensuring the fund benefits the whole Highland region. The deployment of bus stop displays will make travelling by bus in Badenoch and Strathspey easier and more enjoyable.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Note the application deadline for the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund with respect to Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey and that a future report will be presented to this committee with regards to funding projects;
2. Note the progress to date with the CORE Nairn project;
3. Note the progress with the installation of solar powered real time bus stop displays in Badenoch and Strathspey; and
4. Discuss ideas for actions and projects that could be developed to support a Carbon CLEVER Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 27/05/2015

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Background Papers: [Resources committee 25/02/2015, Item 10](#); [Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee, 25/09/2014, Item 8](#).