

## The Highland Council

Resources Committee – 25 November 2015

Request for Funding – Cuillin FM Transmitter Repair Project

Report by the Chief Executive

Agenda Item	31
Report No	RES/126/15

### Summary

This report seeks Members' approval to provide a contribution of £10,000 from the Chief Executive's Corporate Development Budget and £5,000 each from the Ward 6 & 11 Discretionary Budgets towards a £44,196 project for Cuillin FM Community Radio Ltd. The funding will be used to carry out major and essential repair works to their main transmitter mast on the Isle of Skye, following a lightning strike at the end of 2014.

H.I.E has previously contributed £3,215 to cover payment of the initial mast climb to establish a detailed assessment of the damage caused.

Struan Community Trust has agreed £6,000 and Dunvegan Trust up to £15,000, both in principle, pending a successful application to sources of other funding.

A full repair of the transmitter is required to ensure that Cuillin FM can fulfil its licence obligation with Ofcom. Cuillin FM has no reserves to meet this obligation as all funds are reinvested in the daily operation of the station.

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Cuillin FM is a successful and popular community enterprise that has served Skye & Lochalsh for over 10 years. It is currently run by a Board of 5 non-financial Directors, a team of 40 volunteers help run the station on a weekly basis and for the past 6 years they have employed a full-time station manager. Cuillin FM is one of the most active community radio stations in the Highlands and Islands, providing a daily output of both live broadcast and a sustaining service, with the capacity to undertake live outside broadcasting such as their award winning shinty commentary.
- 1.2 The radio station broadcasts from its purpose built construction on land owned by Highland Council and they have expressed an interest in purchasing the site. They are currently in the early stages of discussions with the Council, potential funders and finalising a 5 year business development plan.
- 1.3 In 2012 the station secured funding to establish two additional transmitters in their listening area. At the end of 2014 they were allocated a frequency from Ofcom, allowing them to carry out work at one of the sites. Unfortunately, the damage sustained by their main transmitter at the end of 2014 has reduced the signal strength by such a degree that communities on the outer reaches of

their license are not currently able to receive the station.

- 1.4 This has the potential to leave the station in breach of their obligations to Ofcom and failure to repair the damage to the transmitter could jeopardise their licence and future opportunity to broadcast.
- 1.5 Due to the station's substantial monthly outgoings, including rental of the mast that they transmit from, they do not have the reserves to cover the cost of the essential repairs.
- 1.6 As such, the station have received funding from H.I.E, to secure the services of Phase DSCS, the only Ofcom approved broadcast engineers in Scotland that the station could employ to carry out the detailed assessment of the repairs required.
- 1.7 This application relates to the funding required to complete the repair work.

## **2. Fit with Council Programme**

- 2.1 Cuillin FM supports the "Highland First" themes: Community Led Highland, Well Served Highland and A Fairer Highland.
- 2.2 Cuillin FM can also assist in achieving the priorities of the "Single Outcome Agreement" through the National Outcome: We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- 2.3 Cuillin FM can contribute to The Highland Community Planning Partnership joint actions: To improve access to services for hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and For older people to be geographically and socially connected and for them not to become isolated.

## **3. Budget**

- 3.1 A full budget for the project is presented as **Appendix 1**. The total cost for the repair element of the project is £40,076.
- 3.2 Funding of £3215 has been provided by H.I.E. to carry out the detailed assessment of the repairs required.
- 3.3 Struan Community Trust has agreed £6,000 and Dunvegan Trust up to £15,000 both in principle, pending a successful application to sources of other funding.
- 3.4 Ward 6 & 11 Members support a £5,000 contribution being made from both Ward Discretionary Budgets.

## **4. Implications**

- 4.1 There are no resource implications beyond the grant sum requested and no

revenue consequences arising from The Highland Council's involvement. There are no legal implications and no negative equality or climate change/carbon clever implications and no additional risks to The Highland Council.

- 4.2 Cuillin FM supports The Highland Council's "Gaelic Language Plan 2012-16" theme: Gaelic in the arts, media and heritage by committing to a minimum of 3 hours Gaelic broadcasting each week.
- 4.3 There are positive rural implications to be gained from Highland Council support of this application. In particular, in support of socially connecting older people who may be restricted from participating in community life. For example, Cuillin FM broadcasts a weekly church service, live events such as Remembrance Sunday, shinty commentary and helps communicate essential information during severe weather events.

### **Recommendations**

1. Members are asked to approve a total contribution of £20,000 from The Highland Council, towards a total project cost of £44,196, to Cuillin FM Community Radio Ltd.
2. The Highland Council's contribution to be made up of £10,000 from the Chief Executive's Corporate Development Budget and £5,000 each from the Ward 6 & 11 Discretionary Budgets.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015

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**CUILLIN FM TRANSMITTER REPAIR PROJECT****Financial Information****Costs:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
1 Mast Climb for Damage Assessment	£4,119.76
2 Fix for Service to Main Antenna Stack	£40,076.40
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>£44,196.16</b>

**Funding:**

Own Funds	£904.76	Approved
H.I.E.	£3,215.00	Approved
Struan Community Trust	£6,000	In Principle
Dunvegan Trust Up To	£15,000	In Principle
Highland Council Ward 6 Discretionary	£5,000	Current Application
Highland Council Ward 11 Discretionary	£5000	Current Application
Highland Council CEO Discretionary	£10,000	Current Application
<b>Total Project Funding</b>	<b>£45,119.76</b>	