

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CIA/02/24

Committee: City of Inverness and Area

Date: 5 February 2024

Report Title: Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Community Regeneration Funding is an umbrella term for a number of funds that are available for communities/organisations to access in Highland. It comprises elements of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund along with the Highland Coastal Communities Fund and the Place Based Investment Programme, both of which are Scottish Government Funding streams to support economic regeneration and sustainable development in Highland. Area Committees are awarded devolved allocations according to approved formulae and decision making on which projects should receive funding sits with elected Members.

Within Inverness the following allocations are available for distribution in 2023/24:-

- Highland Coastal Communities Fund (capital/revenue) - £10,517
- Place Based Investment Programme (capital) - £387,318
- UK Shared Prosperity - £130,955 (£96,498 capital/ £34,457 revenue)

Total funds available - **£528,790**

1.2 Broad eligibility criteria for the fund is as follows:

All projects are expected to be able to meet at least one of the following priorities:-

- economic recovery;
- community resilience;
- mitigating the impact of the climate/ecological emergency; or
- addressing the challenges of rural depopulation

Projects should be able to demonstrate that they are:-

- sustainable/viable;
- providing value for money;
- providing additionality; and
- able to evidence positive impacts and wide community benefit

1.3 In line with the process agreed at the City of Inverness and Area Committee (CIA), the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub Committee (ICGFSC) met on 22 January and considered the detail of the requests for funding. The ICGFSC recommendations on which projects should be approved and the funding amount for each approval are provided below in order that CIA Members can take a final decision on funding awards.

1.4 In summary the position in Inverness at CIAC is as follows:-

- Available Funding – £528,790 (£483,816 capital/ £44,974 revenue)
- Number of applications considered at ICGFSC – 13
- Total value of grant requests - £538,962.55 (£430,799.55 capital/ £108,163.00 revenue)

Members are asked to note that three applications invited forward at expression of interest stage were not progressed to ICGFSC as follows:-

- CRF2163 Beaully Shinty Club, Fencing at Braeview Park - application approved by Local Action Group for Community Led Local Development funding.
- CRF2148 Aird Community Trust, Kirkhill Community Centre Energy Works – application withdrawn.
- CRF2265 Knocknagael Ltd, Knocknagael Green Hub - significant change from the project outlined in the approved expression of interest.

Members are asked to note that the ICGFSC recommend approval of £430,799.55 capital funding for the following projects:-

1. The Highland Council: Whin Park project - £100,000.
2. Free North Church: Restoration Project - £40,000.
3. Safe Space Inverness: Safe Space Inverness - £33,800.
4. Glen Urquhart Men's Shed Group: Workshop & Office Refurbishment - £10,000.
5. 2nd Inverness Scout Group: Hall Insulation Project - £36,514.55.
6. Culduthel Woods Group: Culduthel Woods Path Restoration Project – £12,000.
7. Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Development: ICT Community HUB - £50,000.
8. The Ledge SCIO: Clean Air /Warm Air - £58,485.
9. Cultarlann Inbhir Nis: Insulating the East Church - £90,000.

This leaves a balance of £53,016.45 remaining which ICGFSC recommends ringfencing within the 2023/24 allocation to deliver area priorities identified through work to develop an area-based plan, subject to full applications being brought to a future committee meeting for consideration.

Members are asked to note that the applications for revenue funding were in excess of the revenue funds available therefore ICGFSC Members were required to undertake a prioritisation process to agree the recommended funding awards. As such, the ICGFSC recommend approval of £44,974 revenue funding for the following projects: =

1. Merkinch Partnership: One Stop Shop Advice Service - £25,000.
2. Inverness Wheeled Sports Club: Inverness City Wheeled Sports Feasibility Study and Strategy - £9,987.
3. LGBT Youth Scotland: LGBTYS Highlands - £9,987.

The following revenue project was recommended for deferral due to limited availability of funds and noted welcome to re-apply to future rounds of funding, including Ward Discretionary Funding:-

1. Inverness Sea Cadets Unit, TS BRITON: Feasibility Study for future of Inverness Sea Cadets Buildings - £25,200

1.4 To aid Members in their decision making, the following appendices are provided to this report:-

- **Appendix 1 - RAG Summary Spreadsheet**

RAG status on key criteria is based on the application form and supplementary information provided during the application process. All applications presented are technically eligible – if any criteria are marked as red this does not indicate an eligibility concern but reflects the quality of information provided or outstanding requirements that will require technical conditions to be applied to any award of funding.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Consider** and **agree** the formal recommendation from the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee contained in 1.4; and
- ii. **Agree** the recommendation to ringfence any remaining balance within the 2023/24 allocation to deliver area priorities identified through work to develop an area-based plan, subject to full applications being brought to a future committee meeting for consideration.

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** - Inverness have available funding of £528,790. Applications under consideration total £538,962.55. Members should note that there is sufficient capital funding should they wish to approve the recommendation for all capital applications, therefore there is no resource implication in respect of capital funding. Applications for revenue funding are in excess of the revenue funds available therefore Members were required to undertake a prioritisation process to agree the recommended funding awards.
- 3.2 **Legal** - When managing external funding it is imperative that the risks to The Highland Council are assessed/mitigated and any back-to-back grant award letters with third parties, and financial claims management protect The Highland Council financial and reputational interests.
- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** - The focus of the funding is economic recovery, regeneration and community resilience. Consideration on issues relating to equalities, poverty and rurality are dealt with on an individual basis for applications and covered in the technical assessments of projects.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - Mitigation of the climate/ecological emergency is a specific aim of the CRF funds. All applicants are required to evidence environmental sustainability as referenced in the technical assessments

- 3.5 **Risk** - A balanced approach to risk is necessary when disbursing grant funds as sometimes it is necessary if a community led project is to proceed, to forward grant payment. Factors such as past knowledge of and project experience of the grant recipient and release of funds related to invoices/works completion certificates etc. are considered in such assessments
- 3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No risks arising directly from this report. Risks within projects are identified and managed on a project-by-project basis by the applicant organisation.
- 3.7 **Gaelic** - Consideration given within individual project applications in line with the Council's policy.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 22 January 2024

Authors: Fiona Cameron, CRF Programme Manager
Fiona Hepburn, Project Officer

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Project Technical Assessments – RAG Summary

Ref	War	Organisation	Project title	Total project cost	Grant Requested	CRF Capital	CRF Revenue	Project start date	Project end date	Match funding confirmed? (Y/N)	Consents/ permissions? (Y/N)	% rate	Project Robustness	Engagement & Support	Meeting a need/demand	Legacy & Exit Strategy	Equalities issues/ impacts	Environmental sustainability	Value for Money	Match funding	Meets Local Priorities	Additionality	Score	
2126	14	Inverness Wheeled Sports Club	Inverness City Wheeled Sports Feasibility Study and Strategy	£ 18,000.00	£ 18,000.00	£ -	£ 18,000.00	01/04/2024	30/10/2024	NA	NA	100%	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	24	
2137	14	Merkinch Partnership	One Stop Shop Advice Service	£ 102,300.00	£ 25,000.00	£ -	£ 25,000.00	01/03/2024	28/02/2025	Y	NA	24%	2	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	3	26	
2173	14	Inverness Sea Cadets Unit - TS BRITON	Feasibility Study for future of Inverness Sea Cadets Buildings	£ 25,200.00	£ 25,200.00	£ -	£ 25,200.00	15/04/2024	31/10/2024	NA	NA	100%	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	22
2196	14	LGBT Youth Scotland	LGBTYS Highlands	£ 59,963.00	£ 39,963.00	£ -	£ 39,963.00	01/03/2024	28/02/2025	Y	NA	67%	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	24	
1038	13	The Highland Council	Whin Park	£ 484,988.00	£ 100,000.00	£ 100,000.00	£ -	01/03/2024	31/01/2025	Y	Y	21%	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	29	
2149	14	Free North Church	Restoration Project	£ 165,000.00	£ 40,000.00	£ 40,000.00	£ -	01/03/2024	30/04/2024	N	Y	24%	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	21	
2161	14	Safe Space Inverness	Safe Space Inverness	£ 105,654.00	£ 33,800.00	£ 33,800.00	£ -	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	N	Y	32%	2	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	26	
2175	12	Glen Urquhart Men's Shed Group	Workshop & Office Refurbishment	£ 20,000.00	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00	£ -	28/06/2024	08/01/2025	N	N	50%	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	26	
2181	16	2nd Inverness Scout Group	Hall Insulation Project	£ 45,643.19	£ 36,514.55	£ 36,514.55	£ -	29/06/2024	09/08/2024	Y	Y	80%	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	23	
2216	15	Culduthel Woods Group	Culduthel Woods Path Restoration Projec	£ 26,000.00	£ 12,000.00	£ 12,000.00	£ -	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	N	N	46%	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	26	
2250	15	Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Development	ICT Community HUB	£ 513,500.00	£ 50,000.00	£ 50,000.00	£ -	01/03/2024	31/08/2024	N	N	10%	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	25	
2281	14	The Ledge SCIO	Clean Air /Warm Air	£ 83,485.00	£ 58,485.00	£ 58,485.00	£ -	20/01/2024	01/03/2024	N	Y	70%	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	23	
2282	16	Cultarlann Inbhir Nis	Insulating the East Church	£ 98,588.00	£ 90,000.00	£ 90,000.00	£ -	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	N	N	91%	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	3	26	
			Total request			£ 430,799.55	£ 108,163.00																	
			Funds available			£ 483,816.00	£ 44,974.00																	
			Difference			£ 53,016.45	-£ 63,189.00																	
RAG																								
<p>All projects are given a rating of red, amber or green against key assessment criteria. As part of the application paperwork applicants are made aware of the criteria for these. These ratings are then converted into scores as follows: Red – 1, amber – 2, green – 3. This allows a total score for each project to be provided. Ratings are based on information provided during the application process and are provided as a guide only. All projects presented are eligible but if Members wish to approve projects that have red or amber ratings it would usually suggest that additional conditions will be attached to the award to address these concerns.</p>																								