

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	5
Report No	SCC/13/25

Committee: Sutherland County

Date: 2 June 2025

Report Title: Dornoch Common Good Fund – Grant Application Dornoch Firth Independent Lifeboat (East Sutherland Rescue Association)

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines an application for £25,000 made by Dornoch Firth Independent Lifeboat (East Sutherland Rescue Association) to Dornoch Common Good Fund. The grant will be used to construct a concrete apron at Dornoch Lifeboat Station and install a water tank for firefighting.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:-
- i. **Approve** a revised budget for Dornoch Common Good Fund; and
 - ii. **Approve** a grant of £25,000 from Dornoch Common Good Fund to Dornoch Firth Independent Lifeboat (East Sutherland Rescue Association).

3 Implications

- 3.1 **Resource** – Each year Sutherland County Committee sets the Dornoch Common Good budget, including an allocation for Grants and Contributions for community projects. The 2025/26 budget for Grants and Contributions is set at £35,000.

The long-term understanding between the Council and Dornoch Area Community Council is that larger sums for significant projects should be considered separately from and in addition to the Grants and Contributions budget, if there is a sufficient balance available. The overall Common Good budget for 2025/26, agreed at Sutherland County Committee on 17 February 2025, forecast a surplus of £30,535 at year end, meaning that the revised budget as detailed in Appendix 2 and proposed grant are affordable without drawing on reserves.

- 3.2 **Legal** – On 17 February 2025, Sutherland County Committee delegated authority to the Community Development Manager to approve Dornoch Common Good grants up to £10,000, within the annually set budget and following consultation with Ward 4 Members. Grants greater than £10,000 and up to 10% of the value of the Common Good fund, such as this application, are decided by Sutherland County Committee.

3.3 **Risk** – No implications.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** - No implications.

3.5 **Gaelic** - No implications.

4 **Impacts**

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary**

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 1 May 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that there are positive impacts for disabled and older people as the project will deliver safe and improved access to the beach. There are no other impacts identified. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3	Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
	Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People affected by disability – Positive• Older adults – Positive
	Socio-economic	No impact
	Human Rights	No impact
	Children's Rights and Well-being	No impact
	Island and Mainland Rural	No impact
	Climate Change	No impact
	Data Rights	No impact

5 **Background**

5.1 Dornoch Firth Independent Lifeboat is a Coastguard 'dedicated facility' ready to respond to emergency callouts from HM Coastguard. The Dornoch Lifeboat area of operation covers approximately 50 miles of coastline from Helmsdale harbour to Balintore, plus inland waters in Sutherland and Ross-shire. Dornoch Independent Lifeboat recently acquired a new 8.5m twin engine lifeboat and Talus launch tractor at a cost of £160,000 with funding donated by Wildland Trust, located in Highland. A second launch tractor for the smaller Dornoch Lifeboat was donated by Alladale Nature Reserve, Ardgay.

5.2 Dornoch Independent Lifeboat has been managing the self-financed build of Cadogan Lifeboat Station, located at Dornoch Beach. The cost of the Lifeboat

Station has so far been approx. £600,000, the majority of which was donated by the Cadogan Trust. The site for the lifeboat station and surrounding area is leased from Dornoch Common Good Fund for 99 years from 3 August 2020.

- 5.3 There are a small number of jobs to complete on the new Lifeboat Station including a concrete apron, and installation of a water tank for fire fighting in the Dornoch Beach carpark vicinity. At present there is no apron, other than sand and stones, which are constantly churned up by the Lifeboat and launch tractor (tractor weighing 15 tonnes). The area is unsightly, uneven and dangerous for current Lifeboat turn around operations, including boat and machine washdown to remove salt residue. It also makes the beach more difficult for pedestrian access if accessing via the concrete ramp past the lifeboat station.

6 Proposal

- 6.1 Dornoch Independent Lifeboat is applying for £25,000 from Dornoch Common Good Fund to construct a concrete apron outside the front and side of the Cadogan Lifeboat Station and to Install a firefighting water tank adjacent to the Dornoch Beach carpark. All permissions (planning etc.) are in place. The grant will pay for concrete and strengthening materials to a depth of 150mm and area of 214 sq. m. and for the installation of the tank - (the tank has already been purchased). The grant will enable ESRA to complete the £600,000 lifeboat station project.
- 6.2 Dornoch Area Community Council discussed the application on 15 January 2025 and is supportive of the application.
- 6.3 It is proposed to increase the Grants and Contributions budget by £25,000 to facilitate approval of the grant to Dornoch Independent Lifeboat. This will increase the Grants and Contributions budget from £35,000, as agreed on 17 February 2025, to £60,000. The revised budget is detailed within **Appendix 2**.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 29 April 2025

Author: Phil Tomalin, Community Development Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Draft Revised Budget 2025/26

Impact Assessment

Equality

- **People affected by disability – Positive**
- **Older adults – Positive**

The funding (if granted) will be used to improve access to the beach by extending the concrete ramp to a concrete area by the lifeboat station. The area is currently sand and gets churned up by the lifeboat operations, which impedes access for older and disabled people. The project, while principally aimed at making lifeboat operations safe, will also facilitate safe and improved access for disabled and older people to the beach.

Otherwise, there are no impacts arising from the project.

**Dornoch Common Good Fund
Budget 2025/26**

**Draft Revised
Budget
2025/26
£**

INCOME

Rents	101,235
Invitation to pay income	3,500
Interest and investment income	4,800
TOTAL INCOME	109,535

EXPENDITURE

Staff Costs/Central Support	3,000
Grants & contributions	60,000
Miscellaneous Property costs	15,000
Invitation to pay costs (Miscellaneous)	1,000
Dornoch Beach Car Parks	25,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	104,000

Income less Expenditure	5,535
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Estimated Revenue Reserves 2024/25	305,441
Budget surplus/(deficit) for 25/26	5,535
Forecast year end reserves 2025/26	310,976