

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment, Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee

14 June 2017

Community Environment Challenge Fund Update

Report by Director (Environment)

<p>This report provides an update on the award of Community Environment Challenge Funding to community groups between April 2016 and March 2017.</p>

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Community Environment Challenge Fund allows communities to bid for environmental improvement funding, which can link to conservation area appraisals and other regeneration initiatives.
- 1.2 The Fund is aimed at community groups leading and delivering projects which would make a significant difference to their local environment, and be widely supported within the community. Up to £100,000 of funding has been made available annually since 2011/12.
- 1.3 The Environment Committee approved changes to the Community Environment Challenge Fund (CECF) in June 2013 to make the Fund more accessible to community groups and local organisations. This was to streamline the assessment and approval process, and to assist community groups to improve their areas, in partnership with the Council (Report No.13/271 refers).
- 1.4 The Committee has subsequently been updated on the funding awarded to community groups in 2013/14 (Report No. 14/250 refers), 2014/15 (Report No. 15/240 refers) and 2015/16 (Report No. 16/239 refers).
- 1.5 To apply for funding, groups must be constituted with the project supported by all local elected members in the ward where the project is taking place. It must also have the support of a range of local community groups including the Community Council. The project must be completed within two years, using at least 50% match funding from other sources which may include fundraising activities and 'in kind' contributions.
- 1.6 In order to maximise the number of groups and areas benefiting from the funding, each community group can currently only apply for funding for one project per financial year. To ensure the projects make a significant difference to the local environment, funding levels are set between £5,000 and £10,000 per project, although larger funding applications will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

- 1.7 Additionally, as a requirement of the revised Fund, it is the responsibility of the communities to develop and adopt a long term maintenance commitment for the environmental projects undertaken through the Fund.
- 1.8 The Tay Landscape Partnership is a 4 year £2.6 million initiative is principally funded by Heritage Lottery Fund. As part of the Council's support for the initiative up to £50,000 of the CECF was ring fenced for Tay Landscape Partnership applications to support the development of paths and trails in order to allow people to get out and enjoy the landscape. Due to delays in securing permission for some of the Paths and Trails, the applications were all submitted for funding in 2016/17.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the distribution of funding to community projects from the CECF for the period 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The CECF has supported 12 new projects in 2016/17 from a revenue budget of £100,000, awarding grants totalling £99,976.53. The total cost of these 12 projects amounts to £717,424.90.
- 2.3 The 2017/18 Final Revenue Budget, approved by the Council on 22 February 2017 (Report No. 17/45 refers), included £100,000 per annum to continue funding the Community Environmental Challenge Fund permanently.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The revised CECF is continuing to fund the development of sustainable community-led environmental improvement projects through an accessible, stream-lined, effective assessment and approval process.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee:
- i) Notes the contents of this Report.
 - ii) Instructs the Director (Environment) to report the outcomes of the Community Environment Challenge Fund for 2017/18 to the Committee in 12 months' time.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The proposals in this report relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement in terms of following the priorities:

- i) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- ii) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- iii) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

1.2 The proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- i) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- ii) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- iii) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Up to £100,000 of funding has been available annually since 2011/12.
- 2.2 For the period 01 April 2016 – 31 March 2017, the CECF has committed £99,976.

Workforce

- 2.3 The proposals in this report have no workforce implications.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.4 The proposals aim to enhance public open space assets and/or potentially reduce the maintenance burden on the Council by working in partnership with community groups.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allow the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in the Community Environment Challenge Fund report were considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) and were assessed as relevant and the following positive outcomes are expected following implementation.
- 3.3 The criteria for the grant require the applicant to have consulted widely in the community and have community support for the project they are seeking funding for. An improved environment or facilities funded by the Grant should benefit most groups and the effect would therefore be positive. An annual review of the success of the grant aid programme will be undertaken including an assessment of equalities in relation to the funding awarded and any negative impacts will be addressed.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.4 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.5 The proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act.

Sustainability

- 3.6 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Challenge Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.7 Prior to June 2013, there was no method of monitoring the impacts of the Community Environment Challenge Fund. It was therefore agreed in June 2013 that an End of Project Feedback Form is sent to each group that has received funding so that the impacts on the community and their local area can be recorded.
- 3.8 By working in partnership with the community to enhance and maintain the environmental quality in locally important areas, we are ensuring a sustainable approach is taken to the environment, community and economy.

Legal and Governance

- 3.9 The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Governance have been consulted on the content of the report.
- 3.10 Funding is only released when proof has been supplied that match funding has been secured. This proof could be in the form of a Letter of Support for Guaranteed Funding from Other Funder(s). Groups are asked to submit proof of requests of payments (i.e. copy of invoices) as soon as possible and payment of the grant is made on that basis before the invoice has been paid. The applicant is requested to also provide evidence of 'in kind contribution' and the grant is paid against proof of "in kind" expenditure up to the level of grant agreed.
- 3.11 An End of Project Monitoring Report is sent to each group that has received funding so that the positive impacts on the community and their local area can be recorded, shared and celebrated. Overall, the form evaluates the outcomes of the project and confirms what work was carried out.

Risk

- 3.12 Risks associated with individual projects are identified and managed through the assessment process.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Governance have been consulted on the content of the report.

External

- 4.2 Before submitting the June 2013 Committee Report, the amended essential and desired criteria were consulted on with representatives from Take A Pride in Perthshire.

5. Communication

- 5.1 Below is a list of the communications which continue to be undertaken as part of implementing the proposals, including the key target audiences and the communication methods.

- PKC website
- Leaflet
- YouTube film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wsYa-TtvfM#t=85>

- 5.2 Communities across Perth and Kinross including:

- Local groups
- Individuals
- Take A Pride in Perthshire
- In Bloom Committees

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to material extent in preparing the above Report:-

- Environment Committee Report (Ref No. 16/239) – dated 01.06.16
- Environment Committee Report (Ref No. 15/240) – dated 03.06.15
- Environment Committee Report (Ref No. 14/250) – dated 04.06.14
- Environment Committee Report (Ref No. 13/271) – dated 05.06.13
- Environment Committee Report (Ref No. 11/446) – dated 07.09.11

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Projects approved by the CECF since April 2016

Appendix 1

Projects supported by the CECF from 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

Applicant	Project Brief	Sum Requested	Grant Awarded	Financial Year	Other Notes
Stanley Development Trust Ward 5 - Strathtay	Stanley Path Network Maintenance & Development.	£8,350	£6,181.47 paid from 2015/16 budget £2,168.53 paid from 16/17 budget	2015/16	A 2015/16 application Total project cost of £17,250 Project in progress
Aberfeldy Move2Improve Ward 4 - Highland	Lower Birks Community Conservation & Enhancement Project	£15,000	£15,000	2016/17	Total project cost of £74,341 Project in progress
Crieff in Leaf Association Ward 6 - Strathearn	New planters in Crieff at the golf club entrance and at the Toll	£2,808	£2,808	2016/17	Total project cost of £5,808 Project completed
Pitlochry in Bloom Ward 4 - Highland	Improvements to Edradour Path	£10,000	£10,000	2016/17	Total project cost of £22,030 Project completed

Applicant	Project Brief	Sum Requested	Grant Awarded	Financial Year	Other Notes
Tay Landscape Partnership Ward 1 – Carse of Gowrie	The Group intends to create a new woodland of approximately 5,000 trees and rejuvenate existing woodland, increase awareness of the local landscape and deliver events that pass on the traditional rural skills of coppicing, hedge laying and green wood-working.	£10,000	£10,000	2016/17	£32,650 Project in progress
	TayLP will deliver 20 training workshops for best practice orchards skills, plant a new community/linear orchard with a local community and organise a Fruit Festival in 2016.	£6,700	£6,700	2016/17	£13,400 Project in progress
	The Group intends to plant new hedges, woodlands, improve riparian watercourses and install new bat and bird boxes in	£10,000	£10,000	2016/17	£32,500 Project in progress

Applicant	Project Brief	Sum Requested	Grant Awarded	Financial Year	Other Notes
	order to create new habitat for wildlife throughout the TayLP scheme area. This will protect, enhance and extend wildlife habitat networks.				
Pitlochry Pavillion User Group Ward 4 - Highland	Pitlochry Historic Terracing Refurbishment	£15,000	£13,000	2016/17	Total project cost of £228,000 Project completed
Kinnesswood in Bloom Ward 8 – Kinross-shire	Benarty View Community Project	£10,000	£10,000	2016/17	Total project cost of £30,276 Project in progress
PKCT on behalf of Auchterarder Community Sport Association Ward 6 – Strathearn	Auchterarder Core Paths Project	£6,750	£3,300	2016/17	Total project cost of £13,449.62 Project completed
St Fillans Community Trust Ltd Ward 6 – Strathearn	St Fillans Play Area	£10,000	£7,500	2016/17	Total project cost of £128,042.28 Project in progress

Applicant	Project Brief	Sum Requested	Grant Awarded	Financial Year	Other Notes
Forward Coupar Angus Ward 2 – Strathmore	Butterybank Community Woodland	£4,000	£2,000	2016/17	Total project cost of £14,945 Project in progress
BIG (Blackford Improvement Group) Ward 7 – Strathallan	Blackford Play Park re-development and expansion	£10,000	£7,500	2016/17	Total project cost of £121,983 Project in progress
			2016/17 TOTAL = £99,976.53		Total Project cost of all the 2016/17 projects = £717,424.90 <i>(excluding the 2015/16 project)</i>