

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment and Infrastructure Committee

23 May 2018

Community Environment Challenge Fund Update

Report by Executive Director (Housing & Environment) (Report No. 18/176)

This report provides an update on the award of Community Environment Challenge Funding, to community groups between April 2017 and March 2018. It recommends that an allocation from the fund be available to assist community groups to leverage additional funding from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund. It also recommends that the Fund is expanded to include applications in relation to the improvement of sports pitches and sports ground pavilions.

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). Projects which can demonstrate any of the following are a priority for support:
 - 'Spend to save' e.g. changing bedding plant areas to herbaceous plants, therefore saving on maintenance and materials
 - Physical environmental improvement projects which reduce waste, increase reuse and recycling or use environmentally-friendly materials
 - Enhance/contribute to the local economy such as tourism or craft, or use of local materials
 - Benefits to the wider community encompassing a range of age groups and abilities
 - Link to other existing or planned regeneration initiatives (e.g. conservation area appraisals)
 - An ability to complete the project within 12 months.
 - Demonstrate environmental sustainability e.g. carbon reduction

- 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), 2015/16 (Report No. 16/239 refers) and 2016/17 (Report No. 17/206 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. This 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 As part of a Community Benefit award for Perth and Kinross from Suez (recycling contractors) arising from the recent dry mixed recycling contract, the CECF will be augmented by a further £4,600 per annum for the period of the contract. Therefore, there will be £104,600 available to contribute towards eligible projects in 2018/19.

PROPOSALS

- 2.1 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. This was supplemented by the Suez Community Funding to give a total of £104,600 for 2017/18.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note the distribution of funding to community projects from the CECF for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The CECF has supported 14 new projects in 2017/18 from the revenue budget of £104,600, awarding grants totalling **£103,853.19**. The total cost of these 14 projects amounts to **£361,317.63**.
- 2.4 Through the new Residual Waste Contract with Avondale Environmental, which commenced on 1 October 2017, there is the opportunity for community groups to leverage money from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF). The SCLF is a tax credit scheme, linked to Scottish Landfill Tax, that

encourages landfill site operators to contribute tax credits to benefit community and environmental projects.

- 2.5 The Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF) encourages Landfill Operators (LOs) to donate money to approved bodies (ABs) for environmental projects. However, these donations are strictly limited to no more than 5.6% (from 1st April 2015) of the LOs' total Landfill Tax liability. For information, the Council's share of the Landfill Tax liability that is available for funding is in the region of £200,000 per annum. However, the fund is not ring-fenced to geographic areas. As such, the amount could be more or less than this.
- 2.6 Having made a donation, the Landfill Operator can then claim a tax credit of 90% of the money that they have donated. In practice, this means that the LO has to fund 10% of the donation that it makes to the AB.
- 2.7 Subject to certain conditions, it is permissible for the Landfill Operator to be reimbursed for this 10% by a Contributing Third Party (CTP). The Council can, and has acted, as the CTP.
- 2.8 In 2017/18, £47,110 of funding was unlocked through SLCF (through the approved body SUEZ Communities Trust). Muthill Community Council received £10,186 for outdoor gym equipment, The Friends of MacRosty Park received £27,000 for all ability play equipment and Stanley Development Trust received £9,924 to bring football back to Stanley. This required an 11.5% Contributing Third Party Payment through the CECF.
- 2.9 It is, therefore, proposed that the Council continue to act as the Contributing Third Party (CTP) and allocate £20,000 from the Community Environment Challenge Fund budget. This has the potential to leverage a further £180,000 from the SCLF, which could provide a total funding opportunity of £304,600.
- 2.10 At the Environment, Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 8 November 2017 (Report No 17/368), the Policy on Provision of Facilities for Outdoor Pitch Sports was approved. The policy will ensure the effective and efficient management of Council facilities for outdoor pitch sports for community use. To support this policy, it is proposed to widen the scope of the Community Environment Challenge Fund to be open to clubs for facility improvements to ensure that they are adequate for present and future needs.
- 2.11 This would be on the basis that Council park pitches are integral to the overall public and community amenity. As such, they must also be available for wider community use and events. Applicants would also be encouraged to work in partnership with the Council to manage use, improve the quality of the pitches they use most and take a lead role in providing, managing and improving changing facilities.
- 2.12 Ultimately, the Community Environment Challenge Fund can support clubs to undertake minor pitch maintenance, such as surface patching and work in partnership with the Council on major pitch improvements such as drainage,

to maximise the use of available resources. Also, by working in partnership, clubs and associations can achieve improvements to changing facilities.

- 2.13 Such applications would be required to meet the criteria of the Community Environment Challenge Fund, as detailed in section 1.3.

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) Requests the Executive Director (Housing & Environment) to report the outcomes of the Community Environment Challenge Fund for 2018/19 to the Committee in 12 months' time.
- ii) Approves that the Council continue to act as a Contributing Third Party and that an allocation of £20,000 from the Community Environment Challenge Fund is available as a contribution, to assist community groups to leverage further funding from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund.
- iii) Approves the expansion of the CECF to include applications in relation to the improvement of sports pitches and sports ground pavilions.

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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 In 2017/18 only, due to Suez's Community Benefit Contribution, up to £104,600 of funding has been available.
- 2.3 For the period 01 April 2017 – 31 March 2018, the CECF has awarded **£103,853.19**.
- 2.4 Subject to approval, a further £180,000 could be leveraged through the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund through providing a third party contribution of £20,000.

Workforce

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

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.6 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, the Head of Democratic Services 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, the Head of Democratic Services 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 & Social Media
- Leaflet
- YouTube film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wsYa-TtvfM#t=85>
- Regularly included in the ESC Community Planning Partnership's Monthly Funding Alert

- 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, Enterprise & Infrastructure Committee (Ref No. 17/206) – dated 14.06.17
- 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 2017