

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Environment Committee****1 June 2016****Community Environment Challenge Fund Update****Report by Director (Environment)**

This report provides an update on the award of Community Environment Challenge funding to community groups between April 2015 and March 2016.

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 between 2011/12 and 2016/17.
- 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) and 2014/15 (Report No. 15/240 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 The Fund is aimed at community groups leading and delivering projects to make significant improvements in their local environment which are widely supported by the community. Additionally, as a requirement of the revised Fund, it is the communities' responsibility to develop and adopt a long term maintenance commitment for the environmental projects undertaken through the Fund.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the distribution of funding to community projects from the CECF for the period 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The CECF has supported 14 new projects in 2015/16, awarding grants totalling £100,000. The total cost of these 14 projects amounts to £504,215.96.
- 2.3 2016/17 is the final year of the CECF, with £100,000 being available, and already eight groups have submitted applications.
- 2.4 In addition, the Tay Landscape Partnership had sought to apply to the CECF over the last few years to support the development of paths and trails in order to allow people to get out and enjoy the landscape.
- 2.5 Due to delays in securing permission for some of the Paths and Trails, the phased applications will now be submitted for funding in 2016/17. The funding request will be in the region of £50,000. If approved, these applications along with eight already submitted will mean that the CECF will be fully spent for financial year 2016/17.

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 CECF for 2016/17 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 was available annually between 2011/12 and 2016/17.
- 2.2 For the period 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016, the CECF has committed £100,000.

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 will evaluate the outcomes of the project and confirm 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
- Target Audience

- 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. 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 2015.

