

# PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL

## Environment and Infrastructure Committee

19 August 2020

### Community Environment Challenge Fund Update

#### Report by Head of Environmental & Consumer Services (Report No. 20/132)

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to amend the “match funding” criteria with regard to making applications to the fund. In addition, the report provides an update on the award of Community Environment Challenge Funding to community groups between April 2019 and March 2020 (including the CEC Funding which was ring-fenced to use for the Solheim Cup Communities Fund in 2019/20).

#### 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 & Infrastructure Committee approved changes to the Community Environment Challenge Fund in May 2018 (Report No.18/176 refers). These were :
  - (a) to enable an allocation of the funding to be available to assist community groups to leverage additional funding from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF). The SLCF 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. Appendix 2 details 4 projects in Perth and Kinross who have leveraged a total of £100,439 of funding from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund in 2019/20 and a further 6 projects which are pending, and – if awarded – would bring the total leveraged to £261,672.94.
  - (b) expand the Fund to include applications in relation to the improvement of sports pitches and sports ground pavilions. To support the Policy on Provision of Facilities for Outdoor Pitch Sports (Report No. 17/368 refers), clubs can apply to the Community Environment Challenge Fund for facility improvements to ensure that they are adequate for present and future needs. These facilities must be available for wider community use and events.

- 1.4 To apply for funding, groups must be constituted with the project supported by all local elected members in the relevant ward. It must also have the support of a range of local community groups, including for example the Community Council. The project must be completed within 2 years, using at least 50% match-funding from other sources. This may include fundraising activities and 'in-kind' contributions.
- 1.5 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 £2,500 and £10,000 per project, although larger funding applications will be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.6 Additionally, it is the responsibility of the applicants to develop and adopt a long-term maintenance commitment for the environmental projects undertaken through the Fund.
- 1.7 £30,950 of Community Environment Challenge Funding was ring-fenced across 2018/19 and 2019/20 for the Solheim Cup Communities Fund. This was to enable community groups to implement sustainable physical environmental improvements within communities in celebration of the Solheim Cup being hosted in Perth and Kinross in September 2019. Appendix 3 details the 21 applicants who successfully applied to this Fund.
- 1.8 The CECF has supported 14 new projects in 2019/20 (detailed in Appendix 1), awarding match-funding totalling £94,049.13. The total cost of these 14 projects amounts to £675,818.56. There are already two applications awarded or pending award from the 2020/21 CECF budget.
- 1.9 Whilst the CECF has been successful in meeting its objectives, a number of recent applications have relied heavily on support in kind in terms of the applicants' time in planning and preparing for the project and maintaining the new asset thereafter. In a competitive funding environment, it is difficult to justify the funding of such projects unless more tangible match funding can also be demonstrated. This also prevents the Council being the sole cash contributor to the project.

## **2. PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 CECF grants require 50% match funding. This can be in terms of the applicant's own funds, grants or donations from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties and/or support in kind. Going forward, preference will be given to projects where the match funding in terms of grants, donations, or the applicant's own funds is the larger proportion compared to the in-kind contribution.
- 2.2 To address this and to clarify the requirement for public access the following additional criteria are proposed:

- in relation to the 50% match funding, preference will be given to projects which include a mix of funds raised from third parties, cash contributions and in-kind support. The in-kind support must relate to the project itself, rather than any other activities of the group, and make up less than 50% of the overall match funding
- to be considered for funding the project must be accessible to the public.

2.3 Guidance for applicants is provided on the website and will be updated in due course in line with the proposed revised criteria above.

### 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The 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:

- notes the contents of this report and the appendices.
- approves the additional criteria proposed for 2020/21 as set out at section 2.2 of the report.

#### Authors

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#### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan

1.1 The proposals in this report relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan in terms of the following 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 2019 – 31 March 2020, the CECF has awarded £94,049.13, including £30,950.87 allocated to the Solheim Cup Communities Fund across 2018/19 and 2019/20.

### 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 and is therefore exempt.

### 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

- 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 & social media
- Leaflet
- YouTube film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wsYa-TtvfM#t=85>
- Regularly included in the ECS Community Planning Partnership's Monthly Funding Alert

- 5.2 Communities across Perth and Kinross including:

- Local groups
- Individuals
- Take A Pride in Perthshire & Kinross-shire
- In Bloom Committees
- Sports Clubs

## **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 & Infrastructure Committee (Ref No. 18/176) – dated 23.05.18
- 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
- Environment Committee Report (Ref No. 19/136) – dated 15.05.19

### **3. APPENDICES**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Projects approved by the CECF since April 2019
- 3.2. Appendix 2 – SLCF Projects in Perth & Kinross since April 2019
- 3.3. Appendix 3 – Projects funded through the Solheim Cup Communities Fund