

The Highland Council
ADULT & CHILDREN SERVICES COMMITTEE
19 FEBRUARY 2014

Agenda Item	17.
Report No	ACS/31/14

Highland Culture Fund
Support for National and International Events taking place in Highland
Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Summary

This report invites Members to approve funding from the Highland Culture Fund for key national or international events which are scheduled to take place in the Highland area during 2014 and 2015, including the Mountain Bike World Cup, the World Sheepdog Trials, Etape Loch Ness, the Queen's Baton Relay and the Scottish Traditional Music Awards. It is envisaged that other requests for support will be received during the months ahead and a further report will be submitted later in the financial year.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Highland Culture Fund (HCF), which was originally established as part of the legacy resulting from the Highland Year of Culture in 2007, has decreased over the years and in 2013/14 stood at £200,000. As a result of already agreed budget savings, the Fund is set to reduce further to £100,000 from 1st April 2014.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 20th March 2013 ACS Committee agreed:-
- To commit funding for a number of national and international events
 - To reserve up to £40,000 for advance payments for 2014 and 2015 events
 - To offer a one-off small grants scheme during 2013/14
- 1.3 The past few years have seen a number of significant national and international events take place very successfully in the Highland area. The Council has actively encouraged and supported these with the aim of developing the reputation of the Highlands as a suitable place to host events with the benefit of enhancing tourism and the economic spin off generated by the extra visitors to the area. From 2014/15 the remaining HCF budget will provide support for national and international events.
- 1.4 A number of significant events are already confirmed to take place in the Highlands in 2014 or 2015 but, due to the demand on the funds available, potential Council support often needs to be phased over more than one financial year or may require contributions from more than one Council source. This approach has already been used on occasions where events or activities that the Council might wish to support could not be accommodated from a single budget. The approach also ensures that budget availability can be managed, maximised and matched as far as possible with demand. From the organiser's perspective, it can provide a degree of comfort during the planning process or in meeting often hefty up-front costs associated with the event.

- 1.5 The report asks Members to note the prior commitments that have been made from HCF and to approve a number of new commitments. The tables in **Appendix 1** show the implications that existing and proposed new commitments would have on the available HCF budget (assuming this remains at currently agreed levels) up to and including 2015/16 financial year.

2. CONFIRMED EVENTS

2.1 World Orienteering Championships

The World Orienteering Championships are to take place centred in Inverness in August 2015. The Council previously supported the British Orienteering Association's (BOA) bid to stage the Championships in the Highlands and at the ECS Committee meeting in January 2011 agreed to commit £30k towards the cost with the proviso that the grant be paid over two financial years - 2013/14 and 2014/15. In return for the Council's support, a formal contract with BOA is being drawn up which will ensure some lasting benefits to the area and some support to further the interest in Orienteering across the Highlands.

Since the World Championship event was confirmed, the Scottish Orienteering Association [SOA] has also advised that it will run its main annual event – the Scottish Six Days - alongside the World Championship in 2015. It is estimated that the two events will attract approximately 5000 competitors to the Highlands along with their families and support teams. It is anticipated that the SOA will make an application for funding during the course of 2014. The joint event is being marketed as 'Highland 2015.'

2.2 Etape Loch Ness

The Council's Climate Challenge Team is considering sponsoring Etape Loch Ness – a new 67 mile closed road cycling sportive round Loch Ness scheduled to take place in May 2014 - to the extent of £15k. It is proposed that one third of the Council's contribution be provided from the HCF.

2.3 World Sheepdog Trials Championship

The World Sheepdog Trials Championship will take place in Scotland for the first time, at Fearn, Easter Ross in September 2014. Discussions have been ongoing with various Council officials since the bid to host the championships was submitted two years ago. A contribution of £15k has been requested from the Council and it is suggested that this may be made up by a grant of £10k from HCF with the balance coming from Ward Discretionary budgets in East Ross and the Black Isle. It is proposed that a contribution of £10k be provided from HCF phased over two financial years.

2.4 Mountain Bike World Cup

The UCI Mountain Bike World Cup series has taken place in Lochaber since 2007 and has been a major success in terms of competitor numbers, spectators and the development of interest in Mountain Biking in the Lochaber and wider Highland area. Mountain biking is included in this year's Commonwealth Games for the first time. It has been confirmed that the event will return to Lochaber in 2014 and 2015 and that there is a possibility that the actual world individual championships may take place there in 2016. The Council has traditionally supported this key event with a grant of £25k per annum.

It is proposed that a similar level of funding is awarded for the 2014 event subject to the successful negotiation of a suitable benefits package. In addition, and to assist with longer term planning for the event, it is further proposed that “in principle” award of £25k for the 2015 event be made subject to similar conditions.

2.5 The Queen’s Baton Relay

The Queen’s Baton Relay associated with the Commonwealth Games will visit a number of communities in the Highland area in July 2014. Although the final route has yet to be confirmed several of the costs of programming the Relay and hosting events will fall to the Council. Based on the experience of the Olympic Torch Relay it is proposed that a sum of up to £20k be earmarked within HCF budgets to meet some of these costs.

2.6 Scots Trad Music Awards

The MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards (STMAs) will be held in Inverness in December 2014. The awards, which are held annually at different venues throughout Scotland, aim to highlight Gaelic and traditional music and create a high profile opportunity to bring the industry into the spotlight of media and public attention. The 18 awards are made as a result of public voting and the STMAs receive approximately 100,000 votes. A section of the event is televised live on BBC ALBA and is available on BBC iPlayer and Freeview. The STMAs are one of the most viewed broadcasts on BBC ALBA with viewing figures in excess of 500,000.

An application has been made for a contribution of £27k from the Council towards the cost of staging the event in Inverness (approx. 37% of estimated costs). The organisation is also seeking support from Creative Scotland and from a range of sponsors.

Initial discussions with other Council services have explored the potential to provide equal contributions from Inverness Common Good Fund, Gaelic budgets and the Highland Culture Fund. It is proposed that an “in principle” commitment of £9k be agreed from HCF to help secure a total Council funding package. If agreed, any award would be subject to the successful negotiation of a suitable benefits package.

2.7 Other Events

In addition to the Scottish Six Day Orienteering Event referred to above, an initial approach has been received from the organisers of the Celtic Film and Television Festival who are looking to hold their annual festival at a location in the Highland in April 2015 and the Scottish Golf Open is to return to Castle Stuart, in 2016.

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional legal, equality or climate change implications arising from this report.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Members are asked to:-

- a) Note the existing HCF commitments up to and including the 2015/16 financial year as detailed in the Tables in Appendix 1
- b) Agree the following new HCF commitments
 - Etape Loch Ness - £5,000
 - World Sheepdog Trials Championships - £10,000
 - UCI Mountain Bike World Cup - £25,000 in 2014 and 2015
 - Queen's Baton Relay - £20,000
 - Scots Trad Music Awards - £9,000
- c) And, if the new awards are agreed, note the budget implications as set out in the Tables in Appendix 1.

Designation: Director of Education, Culture and Sport

Date: 4th February 2014

Authors: John Macdonald, ECS Learning & Leisure Client Manager
Jeannie Graham, External Funding Manager

Background Papers:

ECS Committee 13 January 2011 Report ECS-21-11

ACS Committee 12 March 2013 Report ACS-39-13

HIGHLAND CULTURE FUND

Table 1	2013/14
Budget	200,000
Committed Funds [including 1st instalment to World Orienteering]	160,000
Funds remaining	40,000
Recommendations (Funded from Remainder of £40k)	
Etape Loch Ness	5,000
World Sheepdog Trials 1st instalment	6,000
Queen's Baton Relay events	20,000
Scottish Trad Music Awards	9,000
Balance Remaining	nil

Table 2	2014/15
Budget	100,000
Committed 2nd instalment World Orienteering	15,000
Recommendations	
World Sheepdog Trials 2nd instalment	4,000
Mountain Bike World Cup (1st of 2 years)	25,000
Balance remaining	56,000

Table 3	2015/16
Budget	100,000
Recommendations	
Mountain Bike World Cup (2nd of 2 years)	25,000
Balance remaining	75,000