

The Highland Council
Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee
30 April 2014

Agenda Item	12
Report No	SRC 20/14

Dingwall Common Good Fund
Townhouse Tower, Dingwall

Report by Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement

Summary

This report seeks Members' approval to provide £15,000 from the Dingwall Common Good Fund to complete a £197,560 funding package to carry out external renovations at Dingwall Townhouse Tower, including the restoration of the town clock.

When complete, the renovation work will enhance this landmark building's contribution to the wider Dingwall townscape. It will also help to deliver the Council's Programme commitments to:

- make Highland an attractive environment for business, and
- support the development of Highland urban centres.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council is undertaking a programme of external repair and conservation work to Dingwall Townhouse tower, a Common Good property on Dingwall High Street that has been an important town centre landmark since the eighteenth century. This work is due to cost £197,560, including professional fees.
- 1.2 The Townhouse project has already attracted contributions totalling £182,560 from external partners and The Highland Council, as follows:
- | | |
|---|----------|
| The Highland Council | £95,860 |
| The Highland LEADER 2007-2013 Programme | £56,650 |
| Historic Scotland | £30,050. |
- 1.3 The tower renovation work started on site in March 2014 and is due to conclude on 18 July 2014. The improvement work includes the reinstatement of traditional lime harling that originally protected the tower's rubble stonework, and the restoration of the town clock and its octagonal wooden enclosure.
- 1.4 The project is a key strand of Dingwall Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), a £550,000 heritage-led regeneration initiative developed in partnership with local stakeholders and launched in 2011. The scheme's primary focus is on investment in the town centre's historic environment, including grant support for property owners. It secured grant offers of £570,000 comprised of £420,000 from Historic Scotland and £150,000 from the Highland LEADER Programme.

1.5 External funding for the CARS programme is conditional on The Highland Council ensuring funds will be put towards:

- a) urgent repairs to the external fabric of the Townhouse tower, and
- b) 50% of CARS Project Officer and Admin costs over 4 years (£80,000 in total, jointly funded by THC and Historic Scotland).

2 Project Funding from The Highland Council

2.1 Project funding of £95,860 has already been committed from a variety of Council sources, as follows:

	£
D&S Ward Discretionary Budget	9,000 paid in 2012/13
	6,000 paid in 2013/14
	6,860 to be paid 2014/15
Planning & Development Service	9,000
Capital Discretionary Budget	30,000
Chief Executive's Corporate Development Fund	20,000
Property Capital Budget	15,000
TOTAL	95,860

3 Contribution from Dingwall Common Good Fund

3.1 The Dingwall Townhouse project budget has a current shortfall of £15,000.

3.2 At a Ward meeting on 10 February 2014, Dingwall and Seaforth Ward Members agreed to seek approval from The Highland Council to bridge this shortfall with a contribution of £15,000 from Dingwall Common Good Fund.

Recommendation

Members are requested to:

- a) Approve a contribution of £15,000 from the Dingwall Common Good Fund to complete a £197,560 funding package to carry out external renovations at Dingwall Townhouse Tower, including the restoration of the town clock.
- b) Note the Highland Council project funding totalling £95,860.

Designation: Acting Head of Community and Democratic Engagement

Date: 7 April 2014

Authors: Diane Agnew, Ward Manager, Dingwall & Seaforth and Black Isle and Una Lee, Project Officers, Dingwall CARS Scheme