

The Highland Council
Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee
6 August 2014

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| Agenda Item | 9 |
| Report No | SRC 26/14 |

Landfill Communities Fund

Report by Director of Community Services

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| <p>This report invites Members to agree that an application to the Highland Council Landfill Communities Fund be submitted to ENTRUST for their consideration.</p> |
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1. Background

- 1.1 Landfill Operators, including The Highland Council, pay a tax to the Government on every ton of waste that they dispose of in a landfill site. The Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) allows the landfill operator to offset 5.1% of their landfill tax liability and gives a 90% tax credit against their donations to organisations who deliver Environmental Objectives, and are registered with ENTRUST, the Government regulator for the LCF.
- 1.2 The Highland Council removes the need to register bids with ENTRUST by employing E B Scotland, a 'Distributive Environmental Body'. E B Scotland register the projects in the Council's name and undertake all regulatory and administrative responsibilities.
- 1.3 The Highland Council, as a Landfill Operator, distributes its Landfill Communities Fund to local biodiversity conservation projects with a maximum contribution of £10,000 to any one project annually, subject to approval by the appropriate Area Committee, as agreed by Members when they considered report COM/03/14 at the Community Services Committee on 15 May 2014.

2. Applications for Consideration

- 2.1 Members are invited to consider the following application to the Highland Council Landfill Communities Fund. The details of the project are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 **Angling Advisory Service for the Gairloch Area by the Wester Ross Fisheries Trust**
The project will build an innovative interactive website that permits anglers to directly input material in the form of, for example, photographs of environmental degradation, invasive species, catch composition, location and quality.

3. Project Costs and Recommendations for Allocation of Funding

3.1 The table below details the total project cost, the amount requested, and the proposed allocation

| APPLICATIONS | TOTAL PROJECT COST | AMOUNT REQUESTED | RECOMMENDED ALLOCATION |
|--|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Angling Advisory Service for the Gairloch Area | 11,200 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| TOTAL | 11,200 | 10,000 | 10,000 |

4. Implications

4.1 This report has no impact on equality, Gaelic, Climate Change/Carbon Clever or rural considerations; nor are there any resource, legal or risk implications.

Recommendation

Members are invited to agree that the application detailed in **Appendix A** from Wester Ross Fisheries Trust be submitted to ENTRUST for their consideration.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 17 July 2014

Author: Neil Downie

Background Papers: Report COM /03/14
(www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/65206/item_6_landfill_community_fund)

Appendix

Name of Project: Creation of an Angling Advisory Service for the Gairloch area

Applicant: Wester Ross Fisheries Trust

Background: This project is part of the WRFT's overarching core area of Outreach to People – awareness, education and participation (Section 3.3 WRFT FMP Summary 2009+, www.wrft.org.uk). The Skye Fisheries Trust part of this project commenced in June 2013 and finished in November 2013. There is now a web site (<http://www.wrsaas.org.uk/>) that is populated with the Skye information. This next part of the project is for the gathering, verification and collating of information for the Gairloch area followed by the populating of the web site with the resultant Gairloch information. In this part of the project we will also produce the “app” for smart-phones, tablets etc.

Project Description: The Gairloch area provides a vast range of opportunities for both freshwater and marine anglers, but at present there is no centralised point where information can be sourced on the opportunities and constraints. It is very difficult for visitors and residents alike to know where (and how) they may fish for what, and where to seek the necessary permits and permissions. Equally important, there is no mechanism for anglers to routinely submit their field observations, and no entity to collate and evaluate such observations in terms of priority actions to protect biodiversity and ecosystem health. The potential for anglers to contribute to generating public awareness of issues impacting on the health of local ecosystems is being lost. The project will build a website with an innovative interactive platform that permits anglers to directly input material in the form of, for example, photographs of environmental degradation, invasive species, catch composition, location and quality. This information will permit the WRFT to constantly monitor a large local area, identify existing or potential risks to aquatic and riparian ecosystems, and then generate public awareness of the need for appropriate remedial action.

Possible Resultant Outcomes / work description and objectives: This project is liable to identify future INNS work that needs to be undertaken. But, because we don't know the full extent to which INNS will be highlighted, we decided, after liaising with Dr Chris Horrill, INNS officer at RAFTS, the appropriate level of resourcing seems to be 2 teams, each of 4 people, for the Gairloch Area (i.e. 8 trained volunteers in total). The Trust will have a role in liaison with landowners, tenants, crofters as INNS work progresses. Finally the Trust will have to market their local projects and give publicity to the intended benefits. Some of this might be achieved through the website itself, but the local press and radio stations will undoubtedly have a role to fulfil. Depending on the nature of the INNS being tackled the effective methods will vary.

Key Costs:

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| 3rd year Student Costs (20 weeks in Gairloch area) | £6120.00 |
| Field Work Assistants (2 weeks in Gairloch area) | £1280.00 |
| Supervisor's Costs (1 week Gairloch) | £3000.00 |
| Monitoring and maintaining of data information source | £800.00 |
| Total Costs | £11200.00 |

Amount Requested: £10000.00

Timescales: September 2014 to May 2015

Benefits provided: There is ample anecdotal evidence that the integrity of both freshwater and marine ecosystems is under threat in the western highlands and islands of Scotland. Declining sea-angling catches, the collapse of Sea Trout fisheries and the poor performance of salmon fisheries are indicators that all is not well in our aquatic environments. The risks to biodiversity and environmental health are implicit, but little hard information is available to help us understand the underlying issues. Anglers are a large untapped source of such information. They alone spend hours in remote areas fishing lochs and rivers and at sea in small boats without the financial imperatives and vested interests of commercial fishery enterprise. This project will, through the application of innovative cutting edge information technology, draw anglers into participation in biodiversity management and protection in return for access to an interactive angling database. The provision of an interactive platform as an angling support tool will have two major additional benefits: it will generate public awareness of the threats to aquatic and riparian biodiversity and it will encourage anglers to the project area boosting the economy for local communities.

Other Funding sources: In kind contribution of £1200.00