

## The Highland Council

Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee  
25 September 2014

Agenda Item	16.
Report No	NBS/30/14

### Landfill Communities Fund

### Report by Director of Community Services

#### Summary

This report invites Members to approve applications to the Highland Council Landfill Communities funding.

## 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 with ENTRUST by employing E B Scotland a 'Distributive Environmental Body'. This means that 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 to the Community Services Committee on 15 May 2014.

## 2. Applications for Consideration

- 2.1 Members are invited to consider the following applications to the Highland Council Landfill Communities Fund. The details of the projects are set out in **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 **Kingussie Community Hydro by Kingussie Community Development Company (KCDC)**  
Restoration of 90 years old Hydro Project site with an All Abilities path, suitable Picnic Tables and information boards while also restoring the vegetation and small trees making the site safely available to Locals, Visitors and Educational visits.

### 2.3 **Wetland habitat restoration at Insh Marshes nature reserve by RSPB**

This project will utilise best practise management techniques to ensure that Insh Marshes' wetland is enhanced to provide optimum habitat for wildlife that ensures it will maintain its rich biodiversity value.

## 3. **Project Costs and Recommendations for Allocation of Funding**

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

<b>APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ALLOCATION</b>
Kingussie Community Hydro	£150,000+	5,000	5,000
RSPB	£12,434	10,000	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£15,000</b>

## 4. **Implications**

- 4.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 4.3 There are no equality implications arising from this report.
- 4.4 There are no climate/Carbon Clever implications arising from this report.
- 4.5 There are no risk implications arising from this report.
- 4.6 There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report
- 4.7 There are no Rural implications arising from this report

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to approve the applications.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 18 August 2014

Author: Neil Downie

Background Papers: **Appendix A**

## **Appendix A**

**Name of Project:** KINGUSSIE COMMUNITY HYDRO

**Applicant:** KINGUSSIE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, KCDC

**Background:** Over the past 10 years KCDC have been working to restore a 90 years old Hydro Project on the River Gynack that flows through Kingussie. Construction work began in June 2014 and has progressed well, during construction we had to remove most of the vegetation and small trees such as Hazel and birch

**Project Description:** When the machinery is finished we would like to restore the site with an All Abilities path, suitable Picnic Tables and information boards while also restoring the vegetation and small trees making the site safely available to Locals, Visitors and Educational visits

**Key Costs:** Our Key costs for this would include supply and erection of wooden fencing, building new paths, purchasing all abilities Picnic Tables, Topsoil and the restoration of the native vegetation and trees

**Amount Requested:** £5000

**Timescales:** October/November 2014

**Benefits provided:** The main benefits of the project will be to restore the site with suitable safe access to all allowing them to drive and park close by or walk and cycle to enable all to witness a working Community Hydro Project.

**Other Funding sources:** Community Fundraising events such as a "Snail Race Night" and a sponsored walk will be our main funding sources

**Name of Project:** Wetland habitat restoration at RSPB Insh Marshes nature reserve

**Applicant:** RSPB Scotland

**Background:** RSPB Insh Marshes nature reserve is considered one of the most important wetland habitats in Europe. Encompassing approx 800ha of the River Spey floodplain, it plays host to a rich array of plants and wildlife, including key species such as lapwing, curlew and water vole (all UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species). Such is its ecological importance it has been designated as a RAMSAR site, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR) and is part of Cairngorm National Park. The reserve is held as an exemplar for natural floodplain management, and best practice conservation methods are promoted to interested land owners and other stakeholder audiences.

**Project Description:**

**Ditch Management:**

Vegetation that threatens to choke water courses will be removed from ditches on the reserve, to help provide a more effective through-flow of water on the wetland.

**Scrape Creation:**

A mechanical excavator will create shallow scrapes in the ground to provide additional shallow-edged pools with exposed mud. This will also provide attractive habitat for wading birds.

**Creation of Wildflower Meadow and regeneration of woodland:**

Fencing will be installed to surround a 5ha area of land that will be turned into a wildflower meadow. The work would be undertaken by the reserve warden and volunteers and in particular used as a training exercise to teach fencing skills to our intern and long term volunteers who are looking to pursue a career in conservation.

**Scrub Clearance:**

Overgrown scrub vegetation on the wetland fields will be removed to provide open habitat. This will help encourage waders and other ground-nesting birds into the fields as they select habitat that has clear-lines of site that allow them to watch for predators (such as crows and foxes).

**Additional Cutting:**

Whilst cattle provide the most sustainable method in which to manage the vegetation on wetlands, they are unable to cover all of the ground on this site (certain areas are too wet for cattle to access). To provide optimum vegetation conditions for breeding waders it is necessary to cut certain areas of the reserve using machinery.

**Key Costs:**

Ditching work - £2,000

Scrape creation and ditch blocking - £2,000

Installation of fencing to create a wildflower meadow - £3,000  
Scrub clearance - £2,000  
Extra cutting work with the soft track - £1,000  
In-kind RSPB staff costs to manage project - £2,434

**Total Cost – £12,434**

**Amount Requested:       £10,000**

**Timescales:**

Work to be completed between October 2014 – March 2015

**Benefits provided:**

- Improved biodiversity of the area
- Maintenance of floodplain grazing marsh (UKBAP priority habitat)
- Improved habitat conditions and extended habitat for many important species:
  - Lapwing (UKBAP priority species)
  - Reed bunting (UKBAP priority species)
  - Water vole (UKBAP priority species)
  - Curlew (UKBAP priority species)
  - Grasshopper (UKBAP priority species)
- Provides the backdrop for informal environmental education and curriculum-linked outdoor education for local schools, offering people from diverse backgrounds an opportunity to connect with nature and learn about wetland (and other) ecosystems, within this free and accessible natural resource.

**Other Funding sources:**

RSPB Scotland will meet the in-kind staff costs associated with the delivery of this project.