

**The Highland Council**  
**Caithness & Sutherland Area Committee**  
**9 December 2014**

Agenda Item	5.
Report No	CS/45/14

**Landfill Communities Fund**

**Report by Director of Community Services**

**Summary**

This report invites Members to approve an application 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 application to the Highland Council Landfill Communities Fund as noted below. The full details of the project are set out in the Appendix.
- 2.2 **Enhancing Biodiversity at Ledmore and Migdale by The Woodland Trust**  
Enhancing Biodiversity at Ledmore and Migdale aims to bring priority woodland habitats at the site into a more favourable condition through a series of important measures.

### 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.

<b>APPLICATIONS</b>	<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ALLOCATION</b>
Enhancing Biodiversity at Ledmore and Migdale	£25,893	10,000	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	£25,893	10,000	10,000

### 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 Tree planting and restoration of native woodland will have a positive impact and result in carbon reduction.
- 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 application.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 21 November 2014

Author: Neil Downie

Background Papers: Appendix

## Appendix

**Name of Project:** Enhancing Biodiversity at Ledmore and Migdale

**Applicant:** The Woodland Trust

**Background:** Ledmore and Migdale is situated within the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area and is of national interest for nature conservation and biodiversity. The woods contain three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and are rich in biodiversity, with an array of locally rare, important and UKBAP-listed (UK Biodiversity Action Plan) species recorded in the area. With careful management and restoration, they have the potential to contribute to a more connected and resilient woodland habitat network, buffering surrounding habitats and ultimately supporting the restoration of biodiversity in the Dornoch Firth National Scenic Area.

**Project Description:** Over time, ancient woodland habitats in the area have come under increasing pressure from human activity and encroachment of non-native species and there is a time-limited opportunity in which they can be restored. *Enhancing Biodiversity at Ledmore and Migdale* aims to bring priority woodland habitats into a more favourable condition through the removal of invasive species; establishment of new deer fencing to protect regenerating habitats; planting new native trees to buffer remaining pockets of woodland; and ecological assessment to help plan future management of designated sites. The project will deliver the following two long-term outcomes:

1. The enhancement of three UKBAP habitats to benefit locally rare and UKBAP-listed species
2. The preservation of three designated areas: Ledmore Oakwood SSSI, Migdale Pinewood SSSI and Spinningdale Bog SSSI.

**Key Costs:** The total project cost is £25,893, consisting of tree planting (£4,850); fencing (£14,500); ancient woodland restoration (£1,400); ecological survey and assessment (£200); invasive species management (£2,726); and SSSI bog restoration (£2,217).

**Amount Requested:** The Trust is seeking £10,000 from the Highland Council LCF in year one.

**Timescales:** The project will run over two years: April 2015 - December 2016.

**Benefits provided:** The project will benefit three UKBAP-listed habitats and a number of locally rare and UKBAP-listed species. The project will also support the delivery of the UKBAP Target, Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, and Scottish Native Woodland HAP, and build on the long term outcomes of the Sutherland Biodiversity Action Plan. The proposed work is supported by SNH - particularly with regards to the aforementioned designated SSSI sites.

The project will make a positive impact on local and surrounding communities by improving parts of the woodland which have been degraded due to insensitive commercial afforestation in the 1960s. It will further improve the aesthetic quality of the site, by protecting and enhancing native woodland habitats, making the site and wider area a more attractive space for additional public enjoyment, long-term health and wellbeing, and educational benefit. It will also provide higher-quality connecting green space, potentially encouraging more visitors and more regular visits not only to the site but to the wider area too. This will contribute to enhanced wellbeing by encouraging further exploration, bringing additional health benefits to surrounding neighbourhoods, and positive impacts that would, in time, be received throughout the wider area.

**Other Funding sources:** The Trust will be making a contribution towards the overall project from its Operations budget in Scotland, and will be seeking additional support in year two. This may include a second application to the Highland Council LCF, as a primary supporter of the project, but also charitable trusts whose criteria match the project themes and objectives.