

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

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	CS/51/14

**Dornoch Common Good Grant of £15,000 for Discover Dornoch**

**Report by Head of Policy and Reform**

**Summary**

This report outlines an application to Dornoch Common Good Fund by Dornoch Area Community Interest Company for £15,000 for the Discover Dornoch project. Members are recommended to approve the grant.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 For the last 18 months, Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC) has been working to achieve the objectives of the Dornoch Economic Masterplan which was commissioned by HIE in 2012. Essentially the Masterplan states that, to achieve greater prosperity, Dornoch needs to raise its profile in the tourism market and attract more visitors.
- 1.2 DACIC established a 4 stage process in working towards this objective: firstly to conduct a series of surveys to understand both Dornoch as a product and visitors' needs and expectations. Stage 2 was to commission a brand identity so that there is a vehicle for promoting the town. Stage 3 was to produce a marketing strategy and stage 4 to actually promote Dornoch via an advertising campaign.
- 1.3 DACIC invited local businesses based in the IV25 postcode to come together to form DACIC's Business Group, with a view to working together to develop new initiatives, improve quality and promote the town. Many businesses are undertaking World Host training to improve customer care in the town. DACIC is working towards Dornoch becoming a World Host destination, a significant mark of quality. There are now 71 businesses (including hotels, inns, bed and breakfasts, self-catering operators, shops, restaurants, takeaways and attractions) which have joined the group. Each has made a financial commitment, the smallest businesses putting £60 per annum and the largest £5,000. This means that DACIC has £20,000 to commit to the Discover Dornoch advertising campaign.
- 1.4 DACIC is also applying to Visit Scotland's Growth Fund for a financial contribution to Discover Dornoch. It can contribute up to £40,000 to match all the other funding DACIC has secured. So if the Dornoch Common Good Fund contributes £15,000 that will bring DACIC's funding to £35,000. Each pound contributed by Common Good will bring as much again to benefit Dornoch's economy, as DACIC will apply to Visit Scotland for £35,000, meaning that Dornoch would benefit from a £70,000 advertising campaign.
- 1.5 Once funding is secured, DACIC will invite tenders from suitably qualified advertising agencies to develop a detailed campaign plan. It is not possible to invite tenders in advance of the confirmation of funding as agencies need to

know the available budget and then develop their plan based on that. Tenders will be compared for quality and best value within the budget.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 DACIC has applied for £15,000 from Dornoch Common Good Fund. It will match this with £20,000 of its own funds (raised from local business) and £35,000 from Visit Scotland, giving a total project fund of £70,000.
- 2.2 Members will recall that grants from Dornoch Common Good Fund greater than £10,000 require approval from Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee.
- 2.3 In line with Common Good Policy, Dornoch Area Community Council were consulted and at their meeting on 19 November 2014 agreed that £15,000 should be granted. This demonstrates the strength of support for the project in Dornoch.
- 2.4 East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Highland Council Members considered the application at a Ward Business Meeting on 17 November 2014 and agreed that the application should be reported to Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee with a recommendation to approve the grant of £15,000.

## **3. Implications**

### **3.1 Resources**

The 2014/15 budget for Dornoch Common Good provides for grant making of £17,000. Of this £11,000 has already been awarded to projects, meaning that funding this project will require drawing on £9,000 of reserves. Dornoch Common Good usable (cash) reserves stood at £218,538 at the end of the last financial year (2013/14) and income has exceeded expenditure in the year to date, meaning that there are sufficient funds to cover the application and any other calls on the Fund. The project is considered to be sufficiently significant to justify drawing on reserves as it both promotes Dornoch (not least on behalf of 71 subscribing businesses) to potential visitors and secures significant match funding.

### Other Implications

There are no Legal; Equalities; Climate Change/Carbon Clever; Risk and Gaelic and Rural implications

### **Recommendation**

Members are recommended to grant £15,000 from Dornoch Common Good Fund to Dornoch Area Community Interest Company as a contribution towards the costs of the Discover Dornoch project.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Author: Phil Tomalin, Ward Manager East Sutherland and Edderton

Date: 25 November 2014