

The Highland Council

Skye, Ross and Cromarty Area Committee
22 April 2015

Agenda Item	5
Report No	SRC/016/15

Landfill Communities Fund

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

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

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. Application for Consideration

- 2.1 Members are invited to approve the following applications to the Highland Council Landfill Communities Fund. The details of the projects are set out in the **Appendices**.
- 2.2 **Easter Ross Green Gym[®] and Wester Ross Green Gym[®]**
TCV Green Gym transforms people's quality of life and wellbeing whilst also improving the local environment for the community. Participants take part in a three to four hour weekly programme of practical outdoor activity, such as planting trees, building footpaths and creating community gardens.

2.3 River Broom Invasive Species

Following a survey performed by Coille Alba in November 2014, this is now an ongoing project to control Invasive Non-native Plants in the River Broom catchment. The Project will continue to bring these species under control with the help of volunteers and local communities.

3. Project Costs and Recommendations for Allocation of Funding

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

Applications	Total Project Cost	Amount Requested	Recommended Allocation
Easter Ross Green Gym	£11,600	10,000	10,000
Wester Ross Green Gym	£11,200	10,000	10,000
River Broom Invasive Species	£28,800	10,000	10,000
Total			£30,000

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 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 for the Council's interest.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 16 March 2015

Author: Neil Downie

Appendix A

Name of Project: Easter Ross Green Gym®

Applicant: TCV Scotland

Background: TCV's purpose is to "Work together with people and communities to transform their health, prospects and outdoors places for the long term." This is our leading goal in the Strategic Business Plan 2013-16, with Green Gym identified as the core activity that will help us achieve our purpose.

TCV Green Gym transforms people's quality of life and wellbeing whilst also improving the local environment for the community. Participants take part in a three to four hour weekly programme of practical outdoor activity, such as planting trees, building footpaths and creating community gardens. A social prescription model is used, where medical and mental health organisations refer people to the programme, which can be tailored to meet specific health and social objectives for participants. People can also self-refer and all participants are regarded as volunteers making an important contribution to their community and green spaces.

Evaluation work undertaken by TCV and partner agencies shows that:

- 100% of participants, surveyed across the UK agree that taking part in the Green Gym has benefited their mental health, boosting self-esteem and confidence through learning new skills and completing new tasks
- Volunteering has a greater effect on the most deprived who show the most change as a result of their experience, including a significant positive change in the way they engage with their community
- Projects which involve residents in improving local green spaces have been shown to result in greater social and community cohesion, and an increased feeling of safety in the community
- Working out in green spaces is a great way to relieve stress and can help to combat depression

By joining the Green Gym participants will become more active physically and develop new social skills and connections. This will help them to make positive decisions about their own health and wellbeing. People will connect with nature and other people, and through these connections, become better equipped to cope with mental health and other issues. People will be part of intergenerational groups helping to overcome social isolation and exclusion, boosting confidence for all generations, as well as improving self-esteem by providing a regular sense of achievement. People will learn new skills while undertaking practical conservation

activities within their local green spaces increasing their potential to find work. All of this contributes to enhance personal resilience of the local community.

Project Description: A monthly programme of activity will be produced and widely distributed, as a promotional tool, to ensure any new volunteers are able to join in. Easter Ross Green Gym activities will include the following key activities:

- **Himalayan Balsam removal, Cromarty Firth Catchments** – continuation of Dingwall Green Gym activities to prevent re-infestation.
- **Loch Bran SSSI Dragonfly habitat management, Loch Bran, Easter Ross** – Supporting various site management tasks including: 1/ Maintain dragonfly feeding habitats in the surrounding woodland and water margins by retaining sheltered clearings and rides; 2/ Selective thinning, especially where regeneration has the potential to result in the drying out of wetland area; 3/ Phased felling in order to avoid or minimise the problems of sedimentation and run-off; 4/ Support the “Life of Loch Bran” project.
- **Spartina (Cord grass) treatment and removal, Dingwall Bay, Easter Ross** - There are two populations of Spartina that need treating, both relatively small and localised. Treatment has a good chance of success given that the populations are currently small and localised. They are also relatively accessible. Doing nothing is also likely to lead to the saltmarsh feature of the Cromarty Firth SPA and SSSI becoming unfavourable in the future, at which point action would need to be taken and this would be both more costly and more difficult to achieve.
- **Control of Gorse scrub at Talich Wildlife Reserve, Near Hill of Fearn, Easter Ross** - Manually cutting, stacking and burning regenerating gorse scrub throughout the wildlife reserve.
- **Wildflower meadow restoration at Talich Wildlife Reserve, Near Hill of Fearn, Easter Ross** - Cutting, raking, and encouraging the restoration of the existing wildflower meadows.
- **Bird and Bat Box restoration scheme, Near Hill of Fearn, Easter Ross** - Mapping existing wildlife boxes, upgrading where necessary, creating new boxes and encouraging any nesting birds.

Key Costs:

£900: Easter Ross Green Gym® Development – 2 days @ £300 (office based – Munlochry - research and promotion) and 1 days @ £300 (In situ partner referral Green Gym taster /Information day – Tain area)

£10,500: 35 weekly sessions @ £300/session. This cost includes provision of Green Gym trained TCV staff member, instruction, crewbus/transport, tools and comprehensive insurance. Some additional TCV led preparatory and development activity will also take place, at no additional charge, to facilitate a quick and effective commencement of this project.

£200: Publicity allowance to cover the design and production of project publicity leaflets.

Total Project Cost: £11,600
Amount Requested: £10,000

Timescales: project will take place between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.

Benefits provided:

The proposed outcomes of the Easter Ross Green Gym programme will include:

- Provision of a range of environmental learning activities across the project area
- Providing opportunities to engage more people in a healthier lifestyle, increasing fitness and confidence as well as reported improvements in mental wellbeing and reduced feelings of isolation
- Increased levels of physical activity amongst participants who are not meeting the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) recommendations for physical activity, who are obese and/or have physical or mental health problems. Enable participants to meet the CMO's guidelines for physical activity, and to sustain their activity at this level.
- Ensure the participating communities feel sufficiently informed and empowered to continue working in a sustainable structure and format
- Strengthen partnerships through making local connections with other local community, environmental, health and educational establishments (statutory and 3rd Sector)
- An improved environment will provide a safer, more attractive and pleasant place to live as well as enhancing accessibility and biodiversity in across key sites in Easter Ross.
- The participating community members will have benefited from the health improvements environmental volunteering can bring and will be inspired to continue growing and improving their community
- Delivery of a range of practical conservation outcomes in line with local Greenspace/Neighbourhood/Biodiversity strategy targets.

Other Funding sources:

TCV Scotland will source the additional 10% third party funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

Appendix B

Name of Project: Wester Ross Green Gym®

Applicant: TCV Scotland

Background: TCV's purpose is to "Work together with people and communities to transform their health, prospects and outdoors places for the long term." This is our leading goal in the Strategic Business Plan 2013-16, with Green Gym identified as the core activity that will help us achieve our purpose.

TCV Green Gym transforms people's quality of life and wellbeing whilst also improving the local environment for the community. Participants take part in a three to four hour weekly programme of practical outdoor activity, such as planting trees, building footpaths and creating community gardens. A social prescription model is used, where medical and mental health organisations refer people to the programme, which can be tailored to meet specific health and social objectives for participants. People can also self-refer and all participants are regarded as volunteers making an important contribution to their community and green spaces.

Evaluation work undertaken by TCV and partner agencies shows that:

- 100% of participants, surveyed across the UK agree that taking part in the Green Gym has benefited their mental health, boosting self-esteem and confidence through learning new skills and completing new tasks
- Volunteering has a greater effect on the most deprived who show the most change as a result of their experience, including a significant positive change in the way they engage with their community
- Projects which involve residents in improving local green spaces have been shown to result in greater social and community cohesion, and an increased feeling of safety in the community
- Working out in green spaces is a great way to relieve stress and can help to combat depression

By joining the Green Gym participants will become more active physically and develop new social skills and connections. This will help them to make positive decisions about their own health and wellbeing. People will connect with nature and other people, and through these connections, become better equipped to cope with mental health and other issues. People will be part of intergenerational groups helping to overcome social isolation and exclusion, boosting confidence for all generations, as well as improving self esteem by providing a regular sense of achievement. People will learn new skills while undertaking practical conservation activities within their local green spaces increasing their potential to find work. All of this contributes to enhance personal resilience of the local community.

Project Description: Given the distances involved between the biodiversity work sites identified to date it is proposed that there be 2 shorter 16 week Wester Ross Green Gym programmes covering the Gairloch and Ullapool areas in order to maximise referral partnership arrangements and, correspondingly, the number of local beneficiaries. The opportunity exists to provide a few additional sites within these areas in order to provide a wider programme of activities as a monthly programme of activity will be produced and widely distributed, as a promotional tool, to ensure any new volunteers are able to join in.

Gairloch Green Gym project sites:

- ***Rhododendron Ponticum* clearance around Loch Maree** – including on Grudie Estate and Gairloch estate
- ***Rhododendron Ponticum* clearance around Gairloch, including An Ard** - Clearing isolated bushes by pulling them out and using lever and mulch techniques.
- **Footpath repairs Opinan and around Gairloch** - Repairs to paths including boardwalk access to Opinan beach, South Erradale and An Ard boardwalk.
- **Carn Dearg Youth Hostel Wildlife Garden** - Clear invasive species and develop wildlife habitats for insects and other animals.

Ullapool Green Gym project sites:

- **Ullapool Hill Invasive Species and Access** (Ullapool Hill, Ullapool. NH 135945) – various activities including rhododendron clearance with some additional clearance of encroaching vegetation (primarily gorse) from Ullapool Hill's important path network.
- **River Broom Japanese Knotweed** (By Ullapool. NH 193794) – Provide a supporting role only in the removal and safe disposal of this invasive species.

Key Costs:

£1200: Wester Ross Green Gym® Development – 2 days @ £300 (office based – Munloch - research and promotion) and 2 days @ £300 (In situ partner referral Green Gym taster /Information days – Gairloch and Ullapool areas)

£9600: 32 weekly sessions @ £300/session (16 weekly sessions based around Ullapool and 16 weekly sessions based around Gairloch). This cost includes provision of Green Gym trained TCV staff member, instruction, crewbus/transport, tools and comprehensive insurance. Some additional TCV led preparatory and development activity will also take place, at no additional charge, to facilitate a quick and effective commencement of this project.

£400: Publicity allowance to cover the design and production of project publicity leaflets.

Total Project Cost: £11,200
Amount Requested: £10,000

Timescales: project will take place between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016.

Benefits provided:

The proposed outcomes of the Wester Ross Green Gym programme will include:

- Provision of a range of environmental learning activities across the project area
- Providing opportunities to engage more people in a healthier lifestyle, increasing fitness and confidence as well as reported improvements in mental wellbeing and reduced feelings of isolation
- Increased levels of physical activity amongst participants who are not meeting the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) recommendations for physical activity, who are obese and/or have physical or mental health problems. Enable participants to meet the CMO's guidelines for physical activity, and to sustain their activity at this level.
- Ensure the participating communities feel sufficiently informed and empowered to continue working in a sustainable structure and format
- Strengthen partnerships through making local connections with other local community, environmental, health and educational establishments (statutory and 3rd Sector)
- An improved environment will provide a safer, more attractive and pleasant place to live as well as enhancing accessibility and biodiversity in across key sites in Wester Ross.
- The participating community members will have benefited from the health improvements environmental volunteering can bring and will be inspired to continue growing and improving their community
- Delivery of a range of practical conservation outcomes in line with local Greenspace/Neighbourhood/Biodiversity strategy targets.

Other Funding sources:

TCV Scotland will source the additional 10% third party funding from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

Appendix C

Name of Project: River Broom Invasive Plants

Applicant: Wester Ross Fisheries Trust

Background:

Several species of Invasive Non-Native Plant Species (INNPS) are present along many watercourses in the River Broom catchment. These include Japanese knotweed and, to a lesser degree, Giant Knotweed and Himalayan Knotweed. These plants spread rapidly and damage the environment.

Project Description:

Following a survey performed by Coille Alba in November 2014 and management recommendations in their report, this is now an ongoing project to control Invasive Non-native Plants in the River Broom catchment. The Project will continue to bring these species under control with the help of volunteers and local communities. It will raise awareness of invasive plants among land-holders, infrastructure managers and the general public through active participation in the project, as well as through the media. Local communities will play a vital role in ensuring that any future introductions are spotted, reported and controlled.

Key Costs:

Planning, securing funds, recruitment	1150
presentations, press releases, articles, leaflets, posters	250
update website with local news, events	250
train volunteers to control INNPS	945
organise and run community / volunteer work-parties	1690
prepare and hold workshop for practitioners	
removal of Japanese Knotweed by cutting, hand-pulling + grazing	15400
spraying and stem injection	2350
training and supervision of contractors	3795
liaison with agencies, and land-owners	1250
data collection, mapping, monitoring and reporting	1800

Total Project Cost: £28880

Amount Requested: £10,000

Timescales: April - October 2015

Benefits provided: biodiversity, access, engagement with public, volunteer involvement

Other Potential Funding sources:

SEPA Water Restoration Fund
Highland Council Discretionary Fund
Woodland Trust Scotland
Wester Ross Fisheries Trust