

**The Highland Council**

**Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee  
16<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Agenda Item | <b>17.</b>      |
| Report No   | <b>CS/35/15</b> |

**East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Discretionary Fund and Community Services funding for St Andrews Church Board, Golspie.**

**Report by Head of Policy and Reform and Director of Community Services**

**Summary**

This report invites Members to approve the provision of Ward Discretionary and Community Services funding to support construction of a disabled access ramp at St Andrews Church of Scotland, Golspie.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 St Andrews Church of Scotland, Golspie was built between 1737 and 1739 to replace a succession of churches which had stood on the site since the thirteenth century. Apart from the addition of a South transept in 1751, it has undergone little change since. Many consider it to be the finest small Post-Reformation country church in Scotland. It is a well-used local place of worship.
- 1.2 Over recent years it has become apparent that access to the church and churchyard for disabled persons has caused considerable difficulty. Following discussion with, and technical advice from, Highland Council, the St Andrews Church Board set up a sub group to progress work relating to the construction of suitable disabled access to the location.
- 1.3 It is proposed to construct a disabled access ramp from the pavement giving access into the churchyard. The ramp will be constructed adjacent to the existing churchyard wall on the A9 Trunk Road footpath and will utilise the existing stepped access area and tie into existing internal paths. It will be constructed using a dug infill with a tarmacadam surface and faced with locally sourced natural stone to match the existing walls as required by Historic Scotland.

## **2. Funding Requested**

- 2.1 To help support the total project cost of approximately £42,000, the Director of Community Services Highland Council, has agreed £5,000 funding.

At the East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Business Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2015 Members supported a contribution of £9,750 to the project. Thus the total financial contribution is £14,750.

- 2.2 Given the total amount of funding is in excess of £10,000 the approval of Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee is sought.

## **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Equalities Implications – The Council is unable to fund religious activity but the access ramp will give access to the churchyard within which are not only historically interesting graves, but also it is now listed as having Commonwealth War Graves. In this way the Council is helping to meet its equality duty regarding access for people with disabilities.

- 3.2 There are no known legal, climate change/carbon clever, rural or Gaelic implications.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to approve the total funding package from Highland Council of £14,750.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 27th August 2015

Author: Garry Cameron Temp Ward Manager East Sutherland and Edderton

Background Papers: