

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND AREA COMMITTEE
DEPRIVED AREA FUND WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of meeting of the Deprived Area Fund Working Group held in Wick Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick on Tuesday 26 May, 2015 at 4.20pm.

PRESENT

Mrs G Coghill
Mr B Fernie
Mr D Mackay

Ms G Ross
Mr J Rosie
Mr W Mackay

Officials in attendance:-

Mr B Mackinnon, Employability Team Leader, Development and Infrastructure Service

Ms H Ross, Senior Ward Manager, Chief Executive's Office

Ms A Macrae, Committee Administrator, Corporate Development Service

Ms G Ross in the Chair

1. Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mrs D Mackay.

2. Deprived Area Fund 2015-16

The Employability Team Leader reported in detail in regard to a number of matters in relation to the Deprived Area Fund during which he confirmed that no significant issues of concern had been identified in relation to the Audit conducted on the Fund by the Council's Internal Audit section. He advised that in response to the Audit an action plan would be developed setting out those issues which required to be addressed.

In the meantime clarity and answers would continue to be sought on range of issues in respect of the Fund details of which he outlined including the potential for service level agreements to be developed. He advised that the intention would be to continue discussions with organisations and Members in this regard and to hold a further meeting/s of the Group prior to a full report being brought to the Area Committee in September 2015.

In discussion, Members expressed the view that:-

- it was important to focus on the outcomes being delivered in terms of employability through the Fund, and reference was made to a presentation some Members had recently received in this regard;
- it was important that business plans and also budgets and contingencies were reviewed to ensure they were sustainable going forward; in addition staffing structures should also form part of the review;
- the opportunities to enter into service level agreements with organisations should also include consideration as to how this would be funded and the lead Service

- to take this forward;
- that the Group take an overview of the operation of the Fund to consider issues such as how applicants accessed the Fund, the assistance they received to complete application forms, and also application deadlines; and
 - that on the basis of the further information received that the original recommendations for the Deprived Area Fund in 2015/16 as detailed in the report submitted to the Area Committee on 15 February 2015 be approved subject to the agreement of the Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Following further discussion, the Group **AGREED**:-

- i. that subject to the agreement of the Director of Development and Infrastructure, the original recommendations for the Deprived Area Fund for 2015-16, be approved as follows,;-
 - Pulteneytown People's Project - £87,000
 - Ormlie Community Association - £13,000; and
- ii. that arrangements be made for a further meeting/s of the Working Group to be held as required and in advance of a report on the Deprived Area Fund being brought to the meeting of the Area Committee on 16 September 2015.

The meeting ended at 4.50pm.