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The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 3rd December 2015

Agenda Item	16
Report No	CIA/70/15

Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund 2015-16

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

This report sets out the applications received for the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund in Inverness for 2015-16. It details the background to the fund, together with a summary of applications, the assessments and funding recommendations.

1. Background

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Highland Council in June 2014, Members approved the development of the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund (CCCGF). In February 2015, Members agreed at Resources Committee that the £200,000 fund would benefit from localisation, with each Area Committee having a fund allocation based on the number of Members. For City of Inverness, the funding allocation is £65,000. It was also decided that funding decisions would be taken at Area Committees, with an annual update of the decisions made presented to Resources Committee. The criteria and scoring for the fund are available on the Council's website and attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 At City of Inverness Area Committee on 10th September, 2015, Members agreed to support projects totalling £17,390, which leaves £47,610 available for allocation.
- 1.3 The CCCGF contributes to the Council's programme commitment in Highland First, "Helping communities reduce their energy use and costs."
- 1.4 This report sets out the most recent applications received for the CCCGF in City of Inverness for 2015-16, summarises the applications and provides funding recommendations for Members to consider.

2. 2015 – 16 Applications

- 2.1 Applications were invited for the 2015-16 grant fund through notices on the Council's website, via social media and through articles in local press. Two applications were received for City of Inverness in the latest funding round:

CITY OF INVERNESS AREA		
Ref. No.	Applicant Organisation	Funding request (£)
11793	Aulnaskiach Dell SCIO	3,550
11803	Inverness Tennis & Squash Club	20,350
		23,900
	Remaining Budget 2015 - 16	£47,610

- 2.2 The applications have been given a robust appraisal, including:
 - An examination of the applicant's proposals by Council officers to assess the need and appropriateness of the proposals as well as the applicant's capacity to deliver the project using the assessment criteria;
 - A technical assessment of each applicant organisation has been carried out including its governance, experience, activities undertaken, how business is managed, including an examination of its annual reports and accounts; and

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- Where necessary, further information or clarification has been sought.

3. Assessment

- 3.1 A summary of the applications, assessments and comments for each application is shown at Appendix 2. Based on these assessments, the awards recommended are:

Ref.	Applicant Organisation	Total Project Cost (£)	Match Funding in Place (£)	Amount Applied For (£)	Recommended Award (£)
11793	Aultnaskiach Dell	19,895	1,500	3,550	3,550
11803	Inverness Tennis & Squash Club	40,700	20,350	20,350	20,350
	Totals	60,595	21,850	23,900	23,900

- 3.2 The projects detailed in the applications will help communities tackle climate change in different ways. They will both help to reduce carbon emissions and demonstrate value for money in achieving this aim. Additional match funding of £21,850 is detailed within the applications and Members' support for these projects will allow this sum to be invested in the area. Without support, these projects may not be able to proceed.
- 3.3 Aultnaskiach Dell have received £3,500 in funding from the Inverness Common Good fund this year (Ref No. 11182)., as a contribution towards essential tree surgery at the Dell.
- 3.4 The total recommended funding is £23,900, which leaves £23,710 available for future allocation. It is recommended that Members consider and agree whether to hold another round of applications this financial year (2015-16) or to carry the underspend forward into 2016-17.

4. Implications

- 4.1 Resource Implications: The recommendations, if approved, will commit £23,900 from the City of Inverness CCCGF allocation, leaving a further £23,710 available for future allocation.
- 4.2 Climate Change/ Carbon CLEVER Implications: Through the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and as a signatory to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, The Highland Council has a duty to encourage and work with others in the local community to take action to adapt to the impact of climate change, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to make public its commitment to action. Through the CCCGF, the Council supports local communities in taking practical steps to mitigate against climate change.
- 4.3 Rural Implications: The CCCGF is open to community groups and organisations throughout the Highlands. As applications will be approved by Members at Area Committees, the fund will benefit the whole Highland region.
- 4.4 Gaelic Implications: The CCCGF follows the Council's policy on signage and branding. The application form seeks to assess project contributions to the promotion of the Gaelic language.
- 4.5 Risk Implications: The recommendations are based on a thorough assessment of the organisations' capacity to deliver efficiently and effectively. The organisations are established and meet current monitoring requirements. The grant funding is managed and monitored using the Council's standard terms and conditions of grant.

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- 4.6 Legal Implications: Accounting rules relating to spending of capital grants to third parties will be implemented and specific conditions will be detailed in award notices.
- 4.7 Equalities Implications: To ensure that the grant is accessible to all groups of people, support was made available throughout the process. Applications were screened on a case-by-case basis for equalities implications. Projects which are granted funding will be required to have necessary equality policies in place, and this will be outlined in award notices.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Agree the funding recommendations from the Carbon CLEVER community grant fund as shown below:

Ref. No.	Applicant Organisation	Recommended Award
11793	Aulnaskiach Dell	3,550
11803	Inverness Tennis & Squash Club	20,350
	Total	£23,900

2. Agree whether to promote a final round of funding this financial year (2015/16) or to carry the underspend of £23,710 forward to 2016/17.

Designation: Head of Policy and Reform

Date: 17/11/2015

Author: Keith Masson, Policy Coordinator – Climate Change.

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Appendix 1

CARBON CLEVER COMMUNITY GRANT FUND – ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund – Assessment Criteria Scoring Matrix
2015/16**

The Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund will be assessed on the six criterion below. A technical assessment comprising organisational governance, experience, track record and capacity to deliver the project, and other sources of funding will also be undertaken.

1. Assessment of Application

CRITERION	WEIGHTING	MAX SCORE
Criterion 1: Carbon Reduction – applications must lead to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in the community.	X 2	10 (2 x 5)
Assessment: The application must identify how the project will reduce CO ₂ in the community and measure this data. Level of specific targeting identified including how the project is going to target CO ₂ reduction in the community. A practical approach should be taken to ensure project proposals maximize carbon emission reduction.		
Criterion 2: Leadership – applications must demonstrate leadership in maximising carbon emission reduction & encourage behaviour change in the community	X 1	5 (1 x 5)
Assessment: The application must demonstrate that the project will take a lead role in the community in respect of demonstrating excellent practice in carbon reduction.		
Criterion 3: Engagement – applications must demonstrate community consultation in respect of the project, as well as efforts to engage with stakeholders	X 2	10 (2 x 5)
Assessment: Application should highlight how project will engage with local communities and assist in building community capacity – i.e. use of volunteers, developing project management skills etc.		
Criterion 4: Value for Money – applications must demonstrate that the project offers good value for money	X 1	5 (1 x 5)
Assessment: Application should highlight how project will offer value for money whilst complementing (not reinventing) other local services and programmes which tackle climate change.		
Criterion 5: Economic Benefit – applications must describe how the project will benefit the community, from an economic perspective	X 1	5 (1 x 5)
Assessment: Application should specify ways in which the project will result in economic benefits for the local		

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economy including how this will be delivered. This might include income generation, increasing employment, drawing in private investment etc.		
Criterion 6: Raise Awareness & Promote Behaviour Change – applications must provide details about the project’s expected sustainable legacy and how it will promote behaviour change in the community.	X 1	5 (1 x 5)
Assessment: Application should demonstrate how the project will raise awareness of climate change and what measures will be put in place to promote low carbon behaviours in the community.		

Scoring of Application

0 – Unacceptable	No information provided or justification provided indicates that applicant does not meet key criteria
1 – Poor justification	Limited attempt to provide key information
2 – Lack of full justification	Modest attempt at providing key information with little justification on how key criteria will be met
3 – Satisfactory justification	Reasonable effort at providing key information on all points and meeting criteria
4 – Strong justification	Good response which covers all points requested and comprehensively provides information on how key criteria will be met
5 – Very strong justification	Excellent response which provides all key information requested and gives substantial additional information which clearly meets criteria

Maximum score is 40 points.

2. Technical Assessment (pass or fail)

The purpose is to make a judgement on the applicant organisation’s governance, experience, track record and capacity to deliver the project. This will be assessed by Council Officers and will include the following:

- History of Organisation;
- Record of previous funding being spent appropriately;
- Track record of delivering similar projects within or outwith the Highland Council area;
- Capacity of Organisation to deliver the project;
- Application costs offer good value for money – i.e. are judged as reasonable costs;
- Alternative sources of funding, for example through Climate Challenge Fund or other grants; and
- Appropriate governance arrangements are in place, including sound financial management.

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Appendix 2

**CITY OF INVERNESS AREA COMMITTEE
CARBON CLEVER COMMUNITY GRANT FUND 2015-16**

Summary Applications, Assessments and Recommendations

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Carbon CLEVER Community Grant Fund (CCCGF) 2015-16

Name of Applicant & App. Ref: Aultnaskiach Dell, 11793	
Application Finance 2015 – 16 Year Project Cost: £19,895 Amount Applied for: £3,550	Application Finance 2015 – 18 (if applicable) 3 Year Project Cost: £NA
Recommended Year 1: £3,550	
<u>Project Summary: Aultnaskiach Dell</u>	
<p>This application is for 1) the purchase of a powered wheelbarrow, specially designed for use by arborists (£3k) , 2) purchase of hand tools which will enhance our ability to involve the community in managing and improving the woodland, including producing firewood for sale (£300) 3) purchasing trees and bushes to replant following felling and control of invasive vegetation (£150) and 4) net bags for wood fuel sales (£100)</p> <p>Our group intends to acquire and preserve for future generations to enjoy, the area of Inverness known as Aultnaskiach Dell, situated in the south of the City and extending to some 1.97 hectares. The current owners purchased the woodland to prevent a threat of clear felling forty years ago. The advancing years of the current owners Mr and Mrs Barron, has prompted them to offer the woodland to a suitably constituted community organisation for a nominal sum, so that the long term future of the woodland is preserved for environmental and community benefit. The woodland is a highly attractive strip of 'second generation' mature broadleaf trees, many over 100 years old, occupying the banks of a fertile valley through which flows the Aultnaskiach Burn. There is considerable wildlife present in the woodland including a variety of birds, red squirrels, roe deer, bats and a pine martin within the wider escarpment area. The woodland evokes a unique, almost rural sense of place within an otherwise strongly urban environment. The wood is aging and overstocked but in reasonable health despite some Dutch Elm Disease. It now requires active and on-going maintenance if it is to be preserved for future generations.</p> <p>The aims of our group are: "To advance the environmental protection and improvement of Aultnaskiach Dell by the conservation, management, protection and sustainable enhancement of the natural habitat and the plant and animal species therein. To advance citizenship and community development by encouraging voluntary activity in, and promoting civic responsibility for, the conservation, management and enhancement of Aultnaskiach Dell"</p> <p>Our long term objective is to take the woodland into community ownership. During the course of our first year of operation as a SCIO, it became clear that this would potentially involve far greater long term liabilities than the initial feasibility study for this project suggested, due to the presence of Dutch Elm Disease in the Dell. With the agreement of our funders and the owners, the SCIO decided to lease the woodland for an initial period of three years, to test community support for the above aims and to give more time to raise a contingency fund. Whilst progress has been substantial, (a copy of a recent report submitted in relation to other funding the group has received is attached as an Appendix, along with our most recent Annual Report) the group faces three significant challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The steep sided valley within which the woodland sits and the single point of public access on a busy public road makes timber extraction difficult and expensive. Although we have raised nearly £1000 from wood fuel sales in past years, there is still a substantial amount of felled timber in the Dell with more to come following tree surgery due this winter. Whilst we need to leave some dead wood lying for biodiversity reasons we need to increase our capacity to deal with felled timber quickly. Hence our wish to pilot the use of a mechanical wheelbarrow. • There is Dutch Elm Disease present in the Dell and elm make up a significant proportion of the trees in the Dell. It is very difficult to predict how quickly the disease will spread and 	

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more importantly how soon trees affected will require to be felled. Hence the need for a contingency fund of 20-25k before community ownership can be considered. We have already raised £5k through private donations, wood sales and fund raising events.

- Although our membership has grown by two thirds since our first year of operation, we are still a small, community organisation which requires a considerable amount of volunteer effort to achieve its aims. We have been fairly successful in encouraging volunteers to undertake practical activity in the wood with 12-15 people regularly turning out. Most of the volunteers to date are local residents used to maintaining their own gardens. We are aware that we need to keep reaching out to the community, including people who may not already have access to the kind of hand tools we use in events targeted at control of invasive vegetation. Hence our desire to purchase some hand tools.

During 2015/16 we plan to undertake the final phase of the programme of essential tree surgery identified as necessary to make the wood a safer place for people to access and to secure the long term health of the wood and the environmental benefits it brings to Inverness. This work will take place between November 2015 and March 2016, depending on weather and availability of our contractors. This work is funded primarily by a grant from the Common Good Fund.

Our long term plans for management of the woodland over the next 5-10 years are set out in our Draft Management Plan. This sets out some of the ways in which we plan to try and meet the challenges outlined above:

- better co-ordination of tree felling and log cutting to ensure wood is cut into manageable lengths as close as possible to when we are ready to distribute for sale.
- better planning and promotion of timber sales to encourage increased uptake of a local source of firewood
- continuing to increase our capacity to undertake work required by ourselves, e.g. training a group member in use of chemicals used for treatment of invasive vegetation. and updating existing members chainsaw certifications.
- use of low impact methods of timber extraction including motorised wheelbarrows and possibly an 'iron horse' to extract more of the harder to reach timber
- forming partnerships with local youth organisations, schools etc. to try and encourage responsible use of the woodland by young people
- forming partnerships with community and other organisations who may be able to use the Dell to achieve their own aims, e.g. Inverness Green Gym
- a fund raising drive with the aim of raising our community ownership fund target of £20-25k from a combination of membership donations, larger scale donations from high wealth individuals, grants from charitable trusts and any surplus from sale of firewood after felling costs.

Measurable Outcomes:

Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Member target reached (65)	Member target reached (70)	Member target reached (75)
Wood fuel sales increase by 10%	Wood fuel sales increase by 10%	Wood fuel sales increase by 10%
No of species present in woodland increases. No target set as yet. This is first year we have information on biodiversity from a schools project. 36 species found.	No of species present in woodland increases	No of species present in woodland increases
At least as many trees are planted as are felled. Age structure and variety of tree species improves.	At least as many trees are planted as are felled. Age structure and variety of tree species improves.	At least as many trees are planted as are felled. Age structure and variety of tree species improves.

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Criteria 1 Score 6 – (3 x 2)

Satisfactory justification. Satisfactory effort at providing justification for project and how it will reduce CO₂ in the community. Evidence of current emissions levels and how these will be reduced provided, although application would have benefited from a clearer, more detailed rationale.

Criteria 2 Score 3 – (3 x 1)

Satisfactory justification. Satisfactory demonstration by applicant that proposed project will address leadership aims. Satisfactory evidence that the project will potentially begin to move towards the outcome of leading on low carbon behaviour in the community. However, would have benefited from more comprehensive evidence.

Criteria 3 Score 6 – (3 x 2)

Satisfactory justification. Satisfactory demonstration by applicant that that the project will actually address the needs identified. Satisfactory evidence provided that the provision will compliment and provide an additional service rather than duplicate existing activity. The application would have benefited from demonstrating stronger links to existing provision by community or public sector providers i.e that they are not working in isolation.

Criteria 4 Score 3 – (3 x 1)

Satisfactory justification. Satisfactory demonstration by applicant how the project will offer value for money while complementing local climate change initiatives, such as through the planned use of volunteers and/or existing facilities. Application would have benefited by providing some additional information on how this would actually work in practice.

Criteria 5 Score 2 – (2 X 1)

Lack of full justification. Attempt to demonstrate how the project will deliver economic benefits for the local community, however little evidence of how this would be achieved in practice.

Criteria 6 Score 3 – (3 X 1)

Satisfactory justification. Satisfactory demonstration by application of how the project will raise awareness and promote behaviour change in the local community. However, would have benefited from further detail in respect of how this will be achieved in practice.

Overall Score Against Criteria : 23/40

Technical Assessment:
PASS

Summary: Good application which addresses the fund's key criteria well. This project has the potential to deliver lasting benefits to the local community over a number of years.

Recommendation:

Approved

Amount Recommended:

£3,550

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Name of Applicant & App. Ref: Inverness Tennis & Squash Club, 11803		
Application Finance 2015 – 16 Year Project Cost: £40,700 Amount Applied for: £20,350	Application Finance 2015 – 18 (if applicable) 3 Year Project Cost: £NA Amount Applied for: £NA	
Recommended Year 1: £20,350		
<p>Project Summary: Energy Efficiency Project</p> <p>The aims of the project are to reduce the energy consumption of the Club premises, to achieve lower running costs and improved environmental impact. This will be achieved by installing a new space and water heating system, cavity wall and loft insulation, and double-glazing. We request grant assistance with the capital cost of these installations.</p> <p>The project will be of significant financial benefit to the Club, making estimated annual energy cost savings of about £7,000. These savings will enable the Club to apply for and service a loan from Resource Efficient Scotland for the balance of the required capital funding. This will very materially assist the Club to stabilise its finances, and progress its programmes of activity to develop racquet sports in the Inverness area. There will also be substantial reductions in CO₂ emissions to the environment, estimated at over 20 tonnes p.a.</p>		
Measurable Outcomes:		
Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Reduced energy consumption, measurable by electricity and gas consumption and payments	Reduced energy consumption, measurable by electricity and gas consumption and payments	Reduced energy consumption, measurable by electricity and gas consumption and payments

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Criteria 1 Score 10 – (5 x 2)

Very strong justification. Excellent response which clearly provided justification on why and how CO₂ emission reduction will be targeted. Excellent level of information on how current levels of emissions were calculated and detailed projections of future emissions provided. To achieve this level, substantial additional information is provided which demonstrated that the project strongly addresses this criterion.

Criteria 2 Score 2 – (2 x 1)

Lack of full justification. Attempt to demonstrate leadership aims, however lacking level of information or justification which demonstrates the effectiveness of intervention in addressing leadership aims. Weak level of justification on how participants will move towards the outcome of leading on low carbon behaviour in the community.

Criteria 3 Score 6 – (3 x 2)

Satisfactory justification. Satisfactory demonstration by applicant that that the project will actually address the needs identified. Satisfactory evidence provided that the provision will compliment and provide an additional service rather than duplicate existing activity. The application would have benefited from demonstrating stronger links to existing provision by community or public sector providers i.e that they are not working in isolation.

Criteria 4 Score 4 – (4 x 1)

Strong justification. Good response which clearly demonstrates how the project will offer value for money while complementing local climate change initiatives such as through the planned use of volunteers and/or existing facilities as an important part of the project delivery. Application also details that some match or additional funding is in place which furthers the scope of the project.

Criteria 5 Score 2 – (2 X 1)

Lack of full justification. Attempt to demonstrate how the project will deliver economic benefits for the local community, however little evidence of how this would be achieved in practice.

Criteria 6 Score 2 – (2 X 1)

Lack of full justification. Attempt to demonstrate how the project will raise awareness and promote behaviour change in the local community, however little evidence of how this will be achieved in practice has been provided.

Overall Score Against Criteria : 26/40	Technical Assessment: PASS
Summary: A very good application which meets the fund's key criteria well on the whole. This is a project which will deliver important benefits to the facility and local community over a number of years, whilst significantly reducing the carbon footprint of the club.	
Recommendation: Approved (with conditions)	Amount Recommended: £20,350
Condition: Funding recommended on condition that Resource Efficient Scotland loan is approved.	