

Agenda Item	21
Report No	PLA 36/17

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Places Committee

**Date:** 16 August 2017

**Report Title:** Strategic Timber Transport Fund - Status Of Projects And Bids

**Report By:** Director of Community Services

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund (STTF) projects, and recommends the allocation of match funding for a bid in 2018/19.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. approve the proposals for future bids to the Strategic Timber Transport Fund;
  - ii. agree that up to £0.5m be allocated under the road structural (capital) funding as match funding; and
  - iii. agree that, should STTF match funding bids be unsuccessful, any residual match funding will be reallocated across the Areas using the Road Condition Survey parameters, with scheme selection being decided by Members at local Area level.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 9 March 2017, Council approved report HC/14/17 to allocate £0.5m to Scottish Timber Transport Fund schemes as match funding.
- 3.2 In total, 7 STTF scheme bids were submitted to Forestry Commission Scotland by the 24 April deadline.

### **4. Status of current STTS projects**

- 4.1 In all, 6 schemes were approved by the FCS assessment panel which granted £1.417m of STTF funding. Including match funding from Highland Council and forestry owners, the total funding for the schemes is £2.089m.
- 4.2 The first schemes have been programmed, with completion of the final scheme scheduled for October 2017.
- 4.3 Due to the requirement for third party, land and statutory undertaker approvals, the three schemes: Raasay, B851/South Loch Ness and B9090 at Clephanton, were not ready for submission by 24 April. These are currently being developed in preparation for submission of bids under the next STTF funding round.
- 4.4 As requests for timber extraction come forward, the Project Officer for the Highland Timber Transport Group is working with forestry operators, Highland Council and the Forestry Commission on identification of viable STTF schemes. It is anticipated there will be at least 6 schemes ready to for submission in the next funding round.

### **5. Future STTS funding.**

- 5.1 The Forestry Commission Scotland has requested local authorities and forestry operators to indicate the level of match funding to support STTS bids that they may have available in 2018/19. At this stage it is unclear if the Scottish Government and Forestry Commission are going to allocate a sum similar to the £7m made available in 2017/18.
- 5.2 For 2017/18, Highland Council was able to provide up to £0.5m under the road structural (capital) funding as match funding.
- 5.3 Currently there is no specific funding allocated to act as match funding for STTF schemes to enable the submission of future bids.
- 5.4 As in 2017/18, should STTF bids be unsuccessful any residual match funding will be reallocated across the Areas using the Road Condition Survey parameters, with scheme selection being decided by Members at local Area level.

### **6. Implications**

- 6.1 Resource - the proposals are deliverable within the agreed and anticipated level of future budgets.
- 6.2 Legal - there are no legal implications.
- 6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – there are no community implications arising from this consultation.

- 6.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - there are no climate change/Carbon Clever implications arising from this consultation.
- 6.5 Risk - no risks have been identified as arising from the consultation.
- 6.6 Gaelic - there are no Gaelic implications arising from this consultation.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 7 August 2017

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