

Agenda Item	9
Report No	EDI/06/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee

Date: 1 February 2018

Report Title: Update on the Highland LEADER 2014-2020 Programme, including European Marine Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Report By: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper reports the progress of the Highland LEADER 2014-2020 Programme. The LEADER Programme supports bottom-up community development and therefore is central to the Council's commitment to empower communities and to support associated community, business and infrastructural developments. The Programme has received an indicative allocation of funding from the Scottish Government of £8,805,388. Additionally the programme oversees the implementation of the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) element of the EMFF funds, which are delivered jointly between Highland and Moray. This is through an allocation of £1,006,000 (Highland - £704,200; Moray - £301,800). This report is provided to members to update on progress to date in the implementation of the Highland LEADER 2014-2020 Programme, including EMFF.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The Highland LEADER Programme 2014-2020 is part of the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP), aimed at promoting economic and community development within rural areas. The Council is responsible for the administration of the Programme in Highland as defined in an SLA between Highland Council and the Scottish Government. A recent Highland Council Internal Audit report determined that the programme had a substantial level of assurance and the Scottish Government monitoring visit awarded the programme a green RAG status.
- 3.2 In line with the arrangements set out in the Programme Business Plan, the Highland LEADER team has established 7 Local Area Partnerships across Highland with accompanying Local Area Action Plans that set out the priorities for each area. Member representation at a local level on the Local Area Partnerships has been agreed through Ward Business Meetings, as agreed by ward managers. An additional sub group for the Local Action Group (LAG) has been established for this Programme – the Rural Enterprise Group oversees delivery of the required farm diversification and rural enterprise elements of the programme. The delivery of EMFF funding is overseen by a joint Highland and Moray Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG).
- 3.3 The Leader Strategic LAG is responsible for the day to day operations of the Programme, including animation and promotion, capacity building and co-operation between stakeholders both within Highland and across the EU. The LAG considers project applications for pan Highland projects, co-operation projects and projects involving co-operation between areas in Highland. The LAG also oversees the implementation of the Programme at a local level to ensure that collectively the local plans deliver the aims of the programme. The Highland Council is represented on the LAG at member level through nomination from the EDI committee.

4. Update

- 4.1 The Programme began processing applications in 2016 and, to date, a total of 26 projects have received grant approval – this represents a total of £1,151,039 LEADER funds approved (**Appendix 1**) towards total project costs of £2,105,638. The EMFF programme has, to date, approved a total of 7 projects. This represents a total of £338,701 EMFF funds against total project costs of £686,558. The slow start in the LEADER Programme can be attributed to uncertainties arising from the Brexit vote, complexities in the application process arising from the new Scottish Government IT system, and the late issue of Programme guidance.
- 4.2 The next few months will be key in determining the likelihood of the programme achieving full commitment. The Scottish Government has advised that the final date for committing funds from the LEADER programme will be March 2019. As it stands there are a number of projects in development, and commitment is expected to rise significantly over the next quarter, with most local areas showing sufficient projects in the pipeline to fully allocate their funds. The funding available across the programme in the allocations to Local Area Partnerships and the Rural Enterprise Group amounts to £5.2m and, taking into account the projects already approved and the applications currently being worked on, there is a potential commitment value of just under £5.1m. This can only be realised if projects are successful in securing match funding and are successful in their bids for LEADER. The programme also has pots of funding available for strategic and co-operation projects, which to date there has been little call on. The LAG has the ability to divert some of these funds to local areas if there is a demand for more funding for local projects. In order to ensure all the different pots are

fully committed, and in light of the long lead in time for a LEADER application, there is a need to further promote the programme now to ensure that enough projects do come forward in the remaining time frame.

- 4.3 As the programme reaches full commitment of funds, the focus of work in the team will move from developing applications to ensuring that project claims are processed and paid expediently.
- 4.4 The Programme team is organising a meeting for all members of decision making groups in late February/early March, part of which will be dedicated to ensuring that the programme is fully promoted in all areas and commitment is maximised across all the pots of funding that are available.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Resource - There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 Legal - There are no additional legal implications.
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The LEADER Programme is aimed at promoting economic and community development within rural areas. It is a bottom up method of delivering support for rural development aimed primarily at small and medium sized community driven projects that are pilot, and innovative in nature. All parts of the Highland area are included in the Programme with the exception of the City of Inverness, and the Badenoch and Strathspey area which is included within the Cairngorm National Park LEADER Programme.
- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever - There are no climate change or carbon clever implications attached to this report.
- 5.5 Risk – The Development and Infrastructure Service, together with the Highland LEADER team will continue to work closely with Internal Audit and The Scottish Government to ensure the Programme is delivered in accordance with the governing European and Scottish Regulations and that there is no disallowance of grant. The coming year is fundamental to ensuring that the full indicative allocation can be committed to projects within Highland so that no funds are lost to the area. To aid with this the programme will continue to be extensively promoted and the strategic LAG will monitor the uptake of grants across the various pots of funding that are available.
- 5.6 Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 15 January 2018

Author: Fiona Cameron, LEADER Programme Manager

Area	Name of Group	Project Name
Inner Moray Firth North	Fyrish Gymnastics Club	Fyrish Academy
	Ross-shire Voluntary Action	Ross-shire Community Transport Partnership
	Rosemarkie Amenities Association	Rosemarkie Beachfront Sports and Play Area
	North Kessock Ticket Office	North Kessock Ticket Office
Inner Moray Firth South	Nairn Sports Club	Nairn Active 2
	Scottish Canals	Dochgarroch Public Amenities
	The Shieling Project Community Interest Company Lovat Shinty Club	A shieling for the future: accessible and sustainable accommodation at the Shieling Project New Community Health and Sports Pavilion
Lochaber	Caol Regeneration Company Ltd	Thomas Telford Corpach Marina
	Morvern Community Development Company Ltd	Lochaline Harbour Marina Expansion
	Lochaber Chamber of Commerce	Raising the Profile of Lochaber
	Kilmonivaig Parish Church	Kilmonivaig Parish Church Hall Upgrade
	The Highland Council	The Bronze Ford
Skye	Portree & Braes Community Trust SCIO	Pier Toilet, Portree
	Sleat Community Trust	Armadale Stores Redevelopment Feasibility Study
Sutherland	The Embo Trust (Urras Euraboil)	Embo Village Lifeline
	Kinlochbervie Planning for Play Association	Kinlochbervie Play Area
	Kyle of Sutherland Hub Ltd	Fitness Suite
	North West Highlands Geopark	Geopark Development
	Sutherland Community Sports and Recreation Hub	Golspie blaize pitch refurbishment - phase 2
	Strathnaver Museum	Refurbishment of the Strathnaver museum as a community hub
Wester Ross	Lochcarron Community Development Company	Forest Access and Enterprise Project
	Glenelg and Arnisdale Development Trust	Glenelg Community Park
	Poolewe & District Swimming Pool Association	Poolewe Powers Ahead
	Gairloch & District Heritage Company	Our Land, Our People, Our Story:Gairloch Heritage Museums re-location and development
Farm Diversification	The Highland Bothies	Highland Bothies