

Agenda Item	6
Report No	RC/013/18

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Ross and Cromarty Committee

Date: 2 May 2018

Report title: **Highland LEADER Programme Update**

Report by: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Highland LEADER 2014 – 2020 Programme

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 as an update on progress to date in the implementation of the Highland LEADER 2014-2020 Programme, including EMFF and with a specific focus on the Ross and Cromarty Area.

2. Recommendations

2.2 Members are asked to note the information contained in the report.

3. Background

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 have 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. An additional sub group for the 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 Local Action Group (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. Progress to date

4.1 The Programme began processing applications in 2016 and to date a total of 38 projects have received grant approval – this represents a total of £1,879,575 LEADER funds approved towards total project costs of £4,172,985. The EMFF programme has to date approved a total of 12 projects. This represents a total of £560,445 EMFF funds against total project costs of £1,299,886. The slow start in the LEADER Programme can be attributed to uncertainties arising from the Brexit vote and 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 have advised that the final date for committing funds from the LEADER programme will be March 2019. Final date for funds to be spent by projects is currently set as December 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. New applications for rural enterprise/farm diversification funds are currently on hold reflecting the volume of applications in progress and to give the rural enterprise group the opportunity to prioritise their remaining funds following their next meeting in April. In order for full programme commitment to be realised, projects will need to be successful in securing match funding and successful in their bids for LEADER. The

programme also has pots of funding available for strategic (£500,000) and co-operation projects (£880,538), 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.

4.3

The seven local area partnerships (LAPs) that operate within the LEADER Programme in Highland are: Caithness, Sutherland, Wester Ross, Skye, Lochaber, Inner Moray Firth North (Black Isle, Dingwall and Seaforth, Tain and Easter Ross, Cromarty Firth) and Inner Moray Firth South (Nairn, Rural Inverness). Appendix A shows the approved projects to date across all seven areas along with the original allocations to each area and the budget remaining. The Wester Ross LAP is currently dealing with applications in the pipeline of more than the local funding they have remaining in their budget. As such a request has been made to the strategic LAG to release an additional £158,274 to the area should all projects be approved. The Inner Moray Firth North area currently has applications in progress totalling around £354,000.

4.4

Current applications in the pipeline in Wester Ross are: Glenelg Ferry Company (received in principle approval - £129,970); Contin Hall (£250,000); Gairloch Hall (£45,000). In Inner Moray Firth North, the projects in the pipeline are: Seaboard Memorial Hall (£51,000); Ross Sutherland Rugby Football Club (£110,000); Avoch Amenities Association (£93,000) and Cromarty and Resolis Film Club (£100,000). There are also a number of earlier stage enquiries in both areas where it has yet to be determined if they will progress to full application.

4.5

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. Implications

Resource – There are no additional resource implications arising from this report

Legal - There are no additional legal implications.

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.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever - There are no climate change or carbon clever implications attached to this report.

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.

Gaelic - There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 18 April 2018

Author: Fiona Cameron (LEADER Programme Manager)

Area	Name of Group	Project Name	Total Eligible Costs	Total Grant Approved	Area Budget	Budget remaining
Inner Moray Firth North	Fyrish Gymnastics Club	Fyrish Academy	£41,200.00	£34,200.00	£550,574.00	£377,719.64
	Ross-shire Voluntary Action	Ross-shire Community Transport Partnership	£81,108.00	£41,263.00		
	Rosemarkie Amenities Association	Rosemarkie Beachfront Sports and Play Area	£75,970.30	£37,985.15		
	North Kessock Ticket Office	North Kessock Ticket Office	£105,693	£59,406.21		
	TOTAL		£303,971.30	£172,854.36		
Inner Moray Firth South	Nairn Sports Club	Nairn Active 2	£274,727.70	£65,000.00	£412,683.00	£113,976.65
	Scottish Canals	Dochgarroch Public Amenities	£83,362.70	£42,362.00		
	The Shieling Project Community Interest Company	A shieling for the future: accessible and sustainable accommodation at the Shieling Project	£132,311.02	£61,975.02		
	Lovat Shinty Club	New Community Health and Sports Pavilion	£ 367,404.54	£129,369.33		
	TOTAL		£857,805.96	£298,706.35		
Lochaber	Caol Regeneration Company Ltd	Thomas Telford Corpach Marina	£50,000.00	£25,000.00	£547,978.00	£318,424.80
	Morvern Community Development Company Ltd	Lochaline Harbour Marina Expansion	£68,346.40	£34,173.20		
	Caol Play	Banavie Road Play Area	£190,812.00	£75,000.00		
	Lochaber Chamber of Commerce	Raising the Profile of Lochaber	£84,250.00	£35,000.00		
	Kilmonivaig Parish Church	Kilmonivaig Parish Church Hall Upgrade	£50,760.00	£25,380.00		
	The Highland Council		£81,000.00	£35,000.00		
	TOTAL		£525,168.40	£229,553.20		
Skye	Portree and Braes Community Trust SCIO	Pier Toilet, Portree	£21,797.16	£11,042.16	£ 313,745.00	£ 92,401.84
	Portree and Braes Community Trust SCIO	Mobile Skate Ramps	£12,788.00	£9,591.00		
	Outdoor Access Trust for Scotland	Fairy Pools - Car Park and Facilities	£342,857.00	£190,000.00		
	Sleat Community Trust	Armadale Stores Redevelopment Feasibility Study	£21,420.00	£10,710.00		
	TOTAL		£398,862.16	£221,343.16		
Sutherland	The Embo Trust (Urras Euraboil)	Embo Village Lifeline	£63,421.28	£30,534.64	£633,673.00	£414,995.20
	Kinlochbervie Planning for Play Association	Kinlochbervie Play Area	£99,995.78	£49,995.78		
	Kyle of Sutherland Hub Ltd	Fitness Suite	£51,620.00	£25,810.00		
	Dornoch Community Council	Dornoch Play Park	£59,708.00	£29,708.00		
	North West Highlands Geopark	Geopark Development	£44,125.26	£22,062.63		
	Sutherland Community Sports and Recreation Hub	Golspie blaize pitch refurbishment - phase 2	£106,884.04	£31,217.75		
	Strathnaver Museum	Refurbishment of the Strathnaver museum as a community hub	£39,132.00	£29,349		
	TOTAL		£464,886.36	£218,677.80		
Wester Ross	Lochcarron Community Development Company	Forest Access and Enterprise Project	£72,053.96	£30,024.96	£506,688.00	£216,695.54
	Glenelg and Arnisdale Development Trust	Glenelg Community Park	£69,995.00	£34,997.50		
	Poolewe and District Swimming Pool Association	Poolewe Powers Ahead	£126,183.60	£57,000.00		
	Gairloch and District Heritage Company	Our Land, Our People, Our Story:Gairloch Heritage Museums re-location and development	£335,940.00	£167,970.00		
	TOTAL		£604,172.56	£289,992.46		
Caithness	Berriedale and Dunbeath Community Council	Dunbeath Broch	£55,014.00	£21,014.00	£497,080.00	£427,026.00
	Lyth Arts Centre	Making More of Caithness	£75,540.00	£49,040.00		
	TOTAL		£130,554.00	£70,054.00		

Farm Diversification AND Rural Enterprise	The Highland Bothies	Highland Bothies	£69,842.62	£34,921.31		
	Kyle of Tongue Hostel and Holiday Park	Kyle of Tongue Hostel and Holiday Park	£288,646.00	£100,000.00		
	Balnapolaig Management	The Steading Guesthouse	£121,850.00	£60,925.00		
	Liquid Footprints	Liquid Footprints	£16,148.00	£8,048.00		
	Lochbroom Glamping	Lochbroom Glamping	£95,899.00	£47,950.00		
	St Franny's Bothan	St Franny's Bothan	£53,100.00	£26,550.00		
	Tongue Garage	Tongue Garage	£242,079.00	£100,000.00		
		TOTAL	£887,564.62	£378,394.31	£1,761,076.00	£1,382,681.69
	38 projects			£4,172,985.36	£1,879,575.64	