

Agenda Item	4
Report No	ERA-02-22

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Easter Ross

Date: 17 February 2022

Report Title: Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Assessment of Applications

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The Highland Coastal Communities Fund is a new fund designed to support economic regeneration and sustainable development around coastal areas in Highland. The fund is derived from revenue generated by Scottish Government Crown Estate marine assets. Each year local authorities are allocated a proportion of the profits.

Within an overall allocation to Highland of £3,034,703, the Easter Ross Area Committee has been awarded £108,107.84 of Crown Estates revenues for distribution within the Easter Ross Area. Funding will be distributed as the Highland Coastal Communities Fund – Easter Ross (HCCF).

1.2 Broad eligibility criteria for the scheme is as follows:-

All projects are expected to be able to meet at least one of the following priorities:-

- Economic recovery;
- Community resilience;
- Mitigating the impact of the climate/ecological emergency; or
- Addressing the challenges of rural depopulation.

Projects should be able to demonstrate that they are:-

- Sustainable/viable;
- Providing value for money;
- Providing additionality;
- Able to evidence local support/local benefit; and
- Able to evidence positive impacts for coastal communities and/or the coastal economy

1.3 At Committee in April 2021, Members identified that they wished to see an application brought forward from the Saltburn area and this is now presented for discussion and a decision on the approval of funds.

1.4 In summary the position in Easter Ross at Area Committee on 17 February is as follows:-

HCCF original allocation – £108,107.84

Total value of grant approved to date - £92,111.24

Balance remaining - £15,996.60

Value of grant requested - £13,630.31

1.5 To aid Members in their decision making, the following appendices are provided to this report:-

- Appendix 1 - Project application form
- Appendix 2 – Project Technical assessment and RAG status

Technical assessments and the RAG status are based on the application form and supplementary information provided during the application process.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **consider** the application presented for funding and agree whether to approve, defer or reject the application. An approval of funding should detail the amount approved and outline any conditions of funding that Members wish to attach to the approval over and above the required technical conditions. A deferral would allow an applicant to resubmit the current application at a future date with updated information. A rejection would mean that the application will not proceed and any future application to the fund should be brought forward initially as a new expression of interest.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** – Easter Ross has available funding of £15,996.60. Applications under consideration total £13,630.31 therefore there are no resource implications

3.2 **Legal/Risk** – When managing external funding it is imperative that the risks to The Highland Council are assessed/mitigated and any back to back grant award letters with third parties, and financial claims management protect The Highland Council financial and reputational interests.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – Coastal communities funding is available to all Area Committees within Highland with a coastline. The focus of the funding is economic recovery and community resilience. Consideration on issues relating to equalities, poverty and rural issues are dealt with on an individual basis for applications and covered in the technical assessments of project.

3.4 **Climate Change/Carbon Clever** – Mitigation of the climate/ecological emergency is a specific aim of the HCCF funding. All applicants are required to evidence environmental sustainability as referenced in the technical assessments.

- 3.5 **Risk** – When managing external funding it is imperative that the risks to The Highland Council are assessed/mitigated and any back-to-back grant award letters with third parties, and financial claims management protect The Highland Council financial and reputational interests.
- 3.5 **Gaelic** – Consideration given within individual project applications in line with HC policy.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 1 February 2022

Author: Fiona Cameron, Programme Manager

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Application form
Appendix 2 – Technical assessment and RAG status

Highland Coastal Communities Fund Application Form

Please refer to the **Guidance Notes** to complete the application form.
Supporting documentation must be submitted with the application (see section 8.2).
Projects must not start or commit expenditure before receiving and accepting the offer of grant letter if awarded funding.

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY

1.1 Project reference number		
1.2 Organisation	Saltburn & Westwood Community Council	
1.3 Project title	Saltburn Beach Access Improvements	
1.4 Project costs	Total cost of project	£13,630.31
	Match funding	£0
	Grant requested	£13,630.31
1.5 Start date	As soon as funding is available and contractor able to conduct the work	
1.6 End date	One week after start date	

1.7 Which of the following programme themes will the project meet? Please choose ONE theme.	
Economic Recovery	
Community Resilience	Yes
Mitigation of climate/ecological emergency	
Rural de population	

1.8 Privacy Notice
Please confirm you have read and understood the Highland Coastal Communities Fund privacy notice: www.bit.ly/HCCF-Privacy-Notice
YES

SECTION 2: CONTACT DETAILS

2.1 Main contact name	
Contact number	
Alternative contact number	
2.2 Position	
2.3 Address	
Postcode	
2.4 Email address	
2.5 Website address	www.saltburnwestwoodcc.org.uk

SECTION 3: ORGANISATION DETAILS

3.1 Organisation type	Please indicate (x)	Organisation number
Company limited by guarantee		
Constituted group	X	
Public body		
Private (i.e. business)		
Charity		
SCIO		
Other (please specify)		

3.2 Are you applying on behalf of a partnership and is your organisation the lead applicant? <i>Please provide partnership agreement with the application.</i>	NO
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3.3 Is the organisation VAT registered? By ticking this, you are declaring the organisation VAT status as per HMRC. If this changes at any time during the project, you <u>must</u> notify the HCCF Team as this may affect the offer of grant.	NO
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3.4 If the organisation is VAT registered, please quote number.							
3.5 Is the VAT related to the project being reclaimed from HMRC? <i>Provide relevant details i.e. details of exemptions.</i>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Whole</th> <th>Partial</th> <th>None</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Whole	Partial	None			
Whole	Partial	None					

Details:

3.6 Project delivery team	
Name	Job title/area of work

SECTION 4: PROJECT DETAILS

Please refer to the **Guidance Notes** to complete this section. It provides important information, definitions, and examples to ensure you answer each section correctly.

4.1 Project location - must be within 5km of the coastline? Please include postcode.
Beachfront at IV18 0JZ
4.2 Do you own the land/building or have a lease agreement in place? Please provide evidence of ownership/lease with the application. If not in place, what are the arrangements to obtain this and by when?
Ownership searches over the last few years have been inconclusive as to who owns the slipway but it has been available for community use and maintained by the community for decades.

4.3 The Project
<p>(a) Please summarise the project, explaining how it will achieve the fund’s themes as noted in 1.7, and list which outcomes it hopes to achieve.</p> <p>The project has three elements, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The repair of the existing slipway by replacing crumbling damaged sections with an even, safe surface to allow for safe access to the beach by boat users. 2. Installation of new steps at the slipway for improved access. Several people have been injured by slipping when trying to access the beach using the slipway itself which can become very slippery. Installing steps will allow for safe access and reduce the risk of injury. 3. Install handrails at all access steps to the beach to improve accessibility for those who are perhaps less physically able and to generally make access points safer for all. <p>All three of these elements are linked to improving/maintaining Community Resilience.</p>
<p>(b) How will the project benefit coastal communities or the coastal/marine economy?</p> <p>The beach at Saltburn is accessed and used by many residents and visitors to the area and as a Community Council, we are keen to continue to encourage people to engage with the natural resources on our doorstep as an aid to physical and mental wellbeing. Improving the access points by making them more accessible may encourage more people to use these natural resources and provide improved safety for those that do.</p>

The slipway is a valuable asset to the community in that it allows both residents and visitors to launch a range of small sea craft from Saltburn to enjoy the Cromarty Firth, observe the wildlife in and around it and enjoy nature, all of which promote wellbeing. The slipway is deteriorating significantly and if not repaired soon, will become dangerous to both beach users and potentially wildlife and completely unusable meaning that residents have to travel to access a similar resource elsewhere.

(c) What need or opportunity will the project address? How do you know there is local support for the project? *Please provide evidence of community support with the application i.e. letters of support/consultation reports.*

Many community members have raised concerns about the state of the slipway, both those who use it and those who don't. We formed a working group comprising of two Community Council members and two residents who worked together to survey the beach front and identify improvements that could be made. Photos of the slipway damage taken during this survey are included as an attachment to this application.

We then conducted a consultation with residents in November 2021, inviting each household by way of a newsletter, which was delivered to each house, to respond regarding our proposals and indicate if they were in agreement that these projects should be carried out and asking them to indicate what priority order they should be given (see Newsletter in attachments to this application). The consultation included sea wall repairs but it is our understanding that these are still due to be carried out directly by the Highland Council.

Only a small number of households responded (16), however all were fully in support of the proposals and we are confident that the lack of other responses is due to everyone broadly being in agreement. A similar consultation exercise last year regarding a different matter (the planting of trees) generated a significant number of objections and many more consultation returns as a result.

The sea wall repairs were ranked first in order of priority with the slip way next and the installation of handrails third.

(d) List the main activities to deliver the project including timescales – this will be the project delivery plan.

Activity name	Achieve by (date)
Slipway repairs	Asap
Provide and install handrails at existing access points	Asap
Create new steps and install handrail at slipway	Asap

(e) In developing the project, please detail how you have considered the following:

Environmental impact – *describe how you intend to mitigate negative environmental impacts that may arise in delivering the project. It may also be that the project specifically seeks to address climate change*

issues or implement net zero ambitions/solutions.

The contractor delivering the work will ensure that appropriate method statements and risk assessments are conducted and adhered to in order to ensure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation.

Equalities impact – explain how you have taken groups with protected characteristics into account in the development/delivery of the project. How will you ensure that no one is excluded or disadvantaged from benefitting from the project? Will the project target specific groups for example?

The installation of handrails to improve access to the beach front is specifically being done with equalities in mind, hopefully providing safer access to more people who wish to use the beach.

(f) How will the project be supported after HCCF funding and what will be the lasting benefits/legacy?

It is expected that good quality repairs to the slipway and the new steps and handrail installations will last a significant number of years and therefore not require any significant funding support for some time. Regular inspections will be conducted and small scale repairs conducted as necessary to maintain the assets for as long as possible.

(g) Please outline how the project fits with other relevant local plans and strategies.

The Highland Wide Local Development Plan sets out ambitions to retain and enhance opportunities for people to take part in physical activity both on land and on water with any development projects required to retain existing paths or water access points while maintaining or enhancing their amenity value.

We very much feel that this project is in keeping with this principle with improved accessibility through the inclusion of new steps and handrails enhancing access to the beach to a broader range of people and the repairs to the slipway vital to ensure its useful existence continues.

4.4 Does the project require planning permission or statutory regulatory consents?

NO

If YES, please detail below - provide evidence with the application if granted.

Type	Applied – Yes/No (include date)	Granted – Yes/No (include date)

SECTION 5: BUDGET

This can be provided in a separate excel spreadsheet if preferred. Delete the example below before completing this section.

5.1 Main project expenditure		
Budget Heading	Detailed cost	Amount
Slipway Repairs	Prepare and Repair any areas where concrete is defective or has broken away with Flexcrete Fastfill concrete repair material. Grip areas on ramp will be coated with Belzona 5831 antiskid polymeric coating.	£7,426.52
News steps and handrail	Create new concrete steps at one side of the slipway and install marine grade stainless steel handrail alongside	£4,840.07
Install handrails at existing access points	Install marine grade stainless steel handrails alongside existing steps	£1,363.72
TOTAL PROJECT COST		£13,630.31

5.2 Reasonableness of cost – please explain how you have obtained these costs whilst developing the project?

We asked two local firms to quote for the work, however, only one of them took up the option despite several reminders to the second. We conducted a walk along the beach with them to discuss each of the elements and what the most cost effective and resilient way was to carry out each one and they have provided their quote on that basis so we are confident that the prices quoted are reasonable.

They included a quote for the sea wall repairs as we were unclear at that point if these were still to

be done under a contract awarded directly to a supplier last year and they have quoted a comparable figure to the original contract even though the repairs now required are more significant than when the job was considered last year. This has given us further confidence that their costings are reasonable.

SECTION 6 – MATCH FUNDING

6.1 Please give details of confirmed or pending match funding:

If match funding is confirmed, please provide letters of awards with the application.

Name of funder	Applied YES / NO (include date)	Granted YES / NO (include date)	Amount £
Total match funding			£
HCCF requested			£
Total project cost			£

6.2 Will the project involve “in kind” support?

This should not form part of the overall budget or counted as confirmed match funding for the project.

YES

Please detail:

6.3 Please explain why public funding is required to deliver the project. Will the project happen without funding support?

Without public funding, this project would be unlikely to proceed. It may be possible for the Community Council to secure funds for the handrail installations to existing access points from other sources, but very unlikely that we would secure the amounts required for the slip way repairs and the installation of the new steps.

SECTION 7 – BUSINESS AND REVENUE GENERATION PROJECTS

To be completed by business and revenue generation projects ONLY. If the project does not generate revenue, please go to SECTION 8.

Please submit a business plan with the application.

7.1 Will the project generate revenue? Please provide a copy of the budget forecast with the application.

NO

If yes, how will the revenue benefit the organisation? Will it be re-invested to help with the long-term sustainability – if so, how?

7.2 How will you ensure that local organisations/businesses are not disadvantaged as a result of the project?

7.3 Have you considered taking out a loan for the project?

YES / NO

Please state your reasons:

7.4 Have you had support from other organisations in developing the project?

For example:	Details
Business Gateway	
HIE	
Other	

7.5 Have you previously received public funds for the business/organisation?

YES / NO

If yes, please provide details of awards for the last 3 fiscal years:

Funding	Year of award	Amount £

SECTION 8 – SIGNATURE

I declare that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I have read the guidance notes and understand and accept the terms and conditions noted within them.

The data you have provided in the application (and claim) forms are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004.

8.2 Supporting documents checklist.		YES / NO or Not applicable
<i>You must enclose the following documents (where applicable) with the application. If they are not available, please state why.</i>		
1	Constitution or articles and memorandum	YES
2	Committee Members or Directors List	YES
3	Permissions – i.e. planning, building warrants, marine licences	N/A
4	Policies – i.e. child protection, health and safety, equal opportunities	N/A
5	Confirmation of match funding letters	N/A
6	Bank statement – latest statement * please provide a statement below declaring what the remaining bank balances are for.	YES
7	Annual financial accounts – latest available	YES
8	Evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, community consultation reports, photos	YES
9	Business plan (revenue generation projects only)	N/A
10	Relevant insurance policies	N/A
11	Job descriptions (HCCF funded posts only)	N/A
12	Evidence of control/ownership of asset – i.e. lease, title deeds	N/A
13	Partnership agreement	N/A
Reason for missing documentation:		
Declaration what the remaining bank balances are for:		

For assistance completing this form please contact: coastal.communities@highland.gov.uk

Highland Coastal Communities Fund - Application technical assessment

Project Ref:		Applicant Organisation	Saltburn & Westwood Community Council	Area Committee	Easter Ross
Organisation Type:	Constituted Group	Project Title:	Saltburn Beach Access Improvements	Committee meeting date	17/02/2022

Project Summary				Programme theme (delete as appropriate)
Total project costs	£13,630.31	Estimated start date	ASAP	Community Resilience
Total HCCF funding sought	£13,630.31	Estimated completion date	One week later	
HCCF intervention rate	100%			

Assessment Criteria Application has demonstrated:	RAG Status	Comments
Project Robustness		Issue around control/ownership of the asset to be resolved. Aside from this the project is straightforward with works being quoted for already and due to be carried out over one week by one contractor. Maintenance plan to be submitted as a condition of funding
Engagement & Support		Newsletter distributed to all households detailing plan for the project and views sought from local residents as part of a community survey. Although a low response rate the responses were all supportive of the project and the applicant has provided evidence of other surveys that generated a higher response rate being generally around issues that did not receive unanimous agreement and therefore has suggested that in itself a low response rate is indicative of support
Meeting a Need of Demand/Market Demand		Clear need for the project. Photographic evidence of current state of disrepair has been provided
Legacy & Exit Strategy		Unlikely to require a great deal of input beyond HCCF funding; however, a maintenance plan should be submitted and agreed as a condition of funding
Consideration of equalities issues/impacts		Nature of project means limited consideration can be given to this. Applicant has stated that the provision of handrails is aimed at improving access
Environmental sustainability		Contractor compliance with environmental legislation including method statements and risk assessments being undertaken and adhered to
Value for Money		Relatively low level of investment for potentially significant impact given the number of local residents and visitors who could potentially benefit from the works.
Match funding		Could not score more than amber due to 100% HCCF being applied for; however, the application has come forward at the request of Members

Meets Local Priorities		Application states the project will fit with the Highland wide development plan. No specific HCCF priorities set; however, project meets wider objectives around improvements to coastal areas and improving access
Additionality HCCF funding is required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the project to proceed • Increase the scope of quality of the project • Accelerate the implementation of the project 		Without HCCF unlikely the project would proceed at all and at the very most only the handrail element may be taken forward through sourcing alternative sources of funding for access

Application Technical Check		Yes / No N/A	Comments
1	Project summary		
A	Is HCCF grant requested within the area thresholds?	Yes	
B	Has the Privacy Notice been acknowledged?	Yes	
C	Are project timescales within HCCF programme timescales?	Yes	
2	Contact details		
A	Is the organisation's details on OSCR or Company's House as per registered number?	N/A	Community Council
B	Does the organisation address match the bank statement?	No	Bank statement has address of Treasurer who is not the main contact on application form
3	Organisation details		
A	Is project activity being proposed by a public sector statutory duty?	No	
B	Is the project being proposed by a private business?	No	
C	Is it a partnership project and is there a partnership agreement in place? Is the HCCF applicant the lead organisation?	No	
D	Is applicant organisation VAT registered?	No	
4	Project details		
A	Is the proposed activity/project within 5km of coastline? If not, has the applicant provided a justification of project benefit to coastal communities?	Yes	
B	Does the applicant own or lease the land or building?	No	Condition of funding will be required in order to resolve who has control of this asset and can give authority for works to take place

	If not, has the ownership transfer/lease agreement been applied for/pending? When will this be in place?	No	Application states that over a period of years it has not been possible to establish who owns the land but that the community have used and maintained it for decades. Further information has been sought from the applicant and other Highland Council officers on this matter and an update will be provided at committee. A condition of funding around the resolution of this issue will be required should funding be approved
C	Is the project activity plan achievable within the timeframe? Are there any notable potential delays?	Yes No	Delays could occur due to bad weather ;however the duration of the project is so short that this is not felt to be a concern
D	Does the project have to comply with any Statutory Regulatory Requirements? i.e. planning, building warrants, SEPA consents, marine licences? Are these in place, pending decision, or not applied for? If pending or not applied for, when are they likely to be in place?	No	Application states that no permissions are required. This will be confirmed in advance of the committee meeting
5	Budget		
A	Have project costs been sufficiently broken down and itemised?	Yes	
B	Are project costs eligible/essential?	Yes	
C	Have the recommended HCCF procurement requirements been met, where required? If not, are steps taken to obtain project costs reasonable?	Yes	Two companies were approached to quote for works but only one quote was received. Value of work in question means that this is sufficient
D	Has VAT been removed or included in the project costs? As per section 2 above?	Yes	
6	Match funding		
A	Is match funding confirmed? If not confirmed, has it been applied for or pending decision?	N/A	100% grant requested
B	Will there be in-kind support? How does this add value to the project?	Yes	Application notes small amount of in kind contribution through project administration and ensuring wider communication with the community
C	Has any work already started/costs been incurred prior to the application?	No	
7	Business and revenue generation projects ONLY		
A	Will the project generate revenue?	No	

B	Has a business plan and budget forecast been provided?	N/A	
C	Has loan finance been considered? Yes or no answer, has explanation been provided?	No	Non revenue generating and not appropriate for loan finance
D	Has the applicant received previous funding from public sources in the last three fiscal years?	Yes	Community Council deemed to be a public body. No state aid implications arising from this project therefore no further detail sought
8	Signature		
A	Is the application form signed and dated by chairperson or equivalent (authorised signatory)?	Yes	
Document checklist:		Yes/No N/A	Comments
	Expression of Interest	No	Member led project
	Constitution or articles and memorandum	Yes	
	Committee members or directors' list	No	Requested from applicant
	Permissions – such as planning, building warrant, SEPA	N/A	Confirmation sought
	Policies – such as equal opportunity, environmental, child protection (if working with young or vulnerable people)	No	Requested from applicant
	Confirmation/evidence of match funding	N/A	100% HCCF
	Most recent bank statement provided	Yes	Balances available would not be sufficient to deliver the project
	Statement demonstrating why public funding is required	Yes	
	Statement declaring what the remaining bank balances are for	N/A	
	Latest annual accounts	Yes	
	Research/evidence of need and demand i.e. letters of support, consultation reports, photos	Yes	
	Business plan (revenue generation projects only)	N/A	
	Relevant insurance policy	No	Requested from applicant
	Job descriptions for any post which funding is sought towards	N/A	
	Evidence of control/ownership of asset – i.e. lease, title deeds	No	Further information sought
	Partnership agreement	N/A	

Recommended grant conditions	
Pre- approval conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Pre - start conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land ownership or control of the asset to be resolved to satisfaction of HCCF team/internal audit • Evidence of insurance • Maintenance plan to be provided
Specific conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

<p><i>I confirm that I have completed the technical assessment for this project as set out above.</i></p>	Name:	
	Date:	

<p>Committee Meeting Outcome</p>	Decision	Approved / Deferred / Rejected
	Grant amount awarded	£
	Date:	