

Agenda Item	4.c
Report No	NC/15/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Nairnshire Area Committee

Date: 15 November 2022

Report Title: Sandown Lands Community Food Growing – Feasibility Brief

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Nairnshire Area Committee on 8 August 2022, it was agreed that a feasibility study would be progressed to explore the potential of developing Community Food Growing on the Sandown Lands in Nairn. This follows public feedback received as part of the consultation on the future use of the Sandown lands. This report provides a draft feasibility study brief for consideration to take forward this work.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Consider and agree the draft feasibility study brief set out in Appendix 1 of this report.
- ii. Agree use of £18k Nairn Common Good Fund cash reserves in 2022/23 for the costs of the feasibility study.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource implications

As the Sandown Lands are on Common Good land any costs associated with the feasibility study will have an implication for the Nairnshire Common Good Fund. It is estimated that the feasibility study will cost £18k which will be met by the Common Good Fund from the 2022/23 operating surplus which is currently estimated to be £71,854 as reported separately to Committee.

3.2 **Legal implications**

Common Good Fund implications in respect of any change of use at the site will be explored within the feasibility study to ensure appropriate governance is followed in due course and would be subject to a formal consultation under the Community Empowerment Act.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) impacts**

A core element of the feasibility study brief is extensive community and stakeholder consultation to inform the future use of the site, in acknowledgement of the importance of this site to the community.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications**

The development of increased local food production will deliver a number of climate benefits, the biggest of these is through the building of local resilience.

Local food growing reduces food miles, reducing the need for secondary refrigeration and transport, and therefore the overall carbon impact of the food chain. Local, seasonal eating can lead to people eating more environmentally aware and nutritionally sound diets. In addition, food that is locally grown is more likely to be valued and as a consequence lead to reduced food waste.

There are benefits to be gained through the shift of land utilisation from its current monoculture model to a more regenerative model, increasing biodiversity and supporting carbon sequestration at Sandown.

3.5 **Risk implications**

To mitigate the future risk to the Common Good Fund arising from any future project delivery proposed by the feasibility study, the brief will explore the potential for income generation from any suggested operating models.

3.6 **Gaelic implications**

None at present, although bilingual signage will be applied to any future use of the site.

4. **Background**

4.1 The Sandown Lands is an area of farming and amenity land on the western approach to the town of Nairn on the A96, shown on the plan contained at Appendix 2. The Sandown Lands is a Nairn Common Good asset.

4.2 Following a statutory public consultation on the future use of the Sandown Lands, the Nairnshire Area Committee agreed on 8 August 2022 that options to establish community growing opportunities on the East Sandown Lands field (hatched pink on the site plan contained in Appendix 1) are explored through a feasibility study, which will include further engagement with the community.

4.3 Committee requested that a draft feasibility study brief be brought back before this Committee for consideration.

4.4 Updates on the development of the feasibility study will be provided to Area Business Meetings and the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership.

5. Feasibility Study Brief

- 5.1 Committee is invited to consider and agree the following Feasibility Study Brief.
- 5.2 The feasibility study will explore the potential of the East Sandown Field to contribute to:
- Food security through community growing and
 - Energy security through green energy projects
- 5.3 It should be carried out in consultation with Community Groups, Community Councils, and the Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership as well as relevant third sector and voluntary groups including but not exclusive to:
- Keeping Nairnshire colourful
 - Nairn Allotment society
 - Greenhive
 - Nairnshire Farming Society
- 5.4 The feasibility study should explore and set out how this potential might be met and present a range of potential delivery models including social enterprise models which allow the community to lead on this project.
- 5.5 It is essential that any delivery models set out have the ability to quickly become self-sustaining, however the feasibility study should also set out the relationship between the project and the Highland Council during initial project stages and beyond in terms of governance, support and project outcomes.
- 5.6 The feasibility outcome should also set out what this project could physically look like at Sandown, setting out how the land would be used delivering food, energy outputs as well as amenity land use. The feasibility outcome should define the benefits around:
- Community benefit
 - Environmental benefit
 - Financial benefit
- 5.7 The potential to unlock funding to support the project, such as green energy grant funding, community development funding and agricultural funding should also be explored.
- 5.8 The feasibility report should also present a design for any preferred development options proposed in the feasibility report and these should include Planning implications and guidance as part of the feasibility report.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Communities and Place

Date: 03 November 2022

Authors: Lewis Hannah, Ward Manager
Kirsty Ellen & Carole Butler, Community Food Growing Coordinators

Appendix 1: Feasibility Study Brief

Appendix 2: Sandown Potential Community Food Growing Area

Background Papers

Nairnshire Area Committee 8th August 2022 (item 10c)

https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4640/nairnshire_committee

Appendix 1

Feasibility Study Brief

The Sandown Lands is an area of farming and amenity land on the western approach to the town of Nairn on the A96, shown on the plan contained at Appendix 2. The Sandown Lands is a Nairn Common Good Fund asset.

Following a statutory public consultation on the future use of the Sandown Lands, it has been agreed that options to establish community growing opportunities on the East Sandown Lands field (hatched pink on the site plan contained in Appendix 1) are explored through a feasibility study, to include further engagement with the community.

What is required

- Explore the potential of the East Sandown Field to contribute to:
 - Food security through community growing and
 - Energy security through green energy projects
- Carry out consultation with Community Groups, Community Councils, and the Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership as well as relevant third sector and voluntary groups including but not exclusive to:
 - Keeping Nairnshire colourful
 - Nairn Allotment society
 - Greenhive
 - Nairnshire Farming Society
- Consider the relationship between the project and the Highland Council during initial project stages and beyond in terms of governance, support and project outcomes.
- Explore the potential to unlock funding to support the project, such as green energy grant funding, community development funding and agricultural funding should also be explored.
- Explore self-sustaining delivery models including social enterprise models which empower the community to lead on this project.
- Explore and detail any Planning implications for the potential options.

Outcomes

- Present potential delivery models for the project and demonstrate what the project could physically look like at Sandown, setting out how the land would be used delivering food, energy outputs as well as amenity land use.
- Define the project benefits within the following categories:
 - Community benefit
 - Environmental benefit
 - Financial benefit

Appendix 2

