

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	9
Report No	LA/7/24

Committee: Lochaber Area

Date: 23 January 2024

Report Title: Community Regeneration Fund Assessment of Applications

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Community Regeneration Funding is an umbrella term for a number of funds that are available for communities/organisations to access in Highland. It comprises elements of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund along with the Highland Coastal Communities Fund and the Place Based Investment Programme, both of which are Scottish Government Funding streams to support economic regeneration and sustainable development in Highland. Area Committees are awarded devolved allocations according to approved formulae and decision making on which projects should receive funding sits with elected Members.

Within Lochaber the following allocations are available for distribution in 2023/24:-

- Highland Coastal Communities Fund (capital/revenue);
- Place Based Investment Programme (capital);
- UK Shared Prosperity (separate capital and revenue allocations)

Total funds available - £540,708.21 (this is a mix of capital and revenue from the individual funding programmes above).

1.2 Broad eligibility criteria for the fund 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; and
- able to evidence positive impacts and wide community benefit

1.3 In summary the position in Lochaber at Area Committee on 23 January 2024 is as follows:-

- Available Funding – £540,708.21
- Number of applications for consideration – 22
- Total value of grant requests - £517,706.67

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

- **Appendix 1** – Project application forms; and
- **Appendix 2** - RAG Summary Spreadsheet

RAG status on key criteria is based on the application form and supplementary information provided during the application process. All applications presented are technically eligible – if any criteria are marked as red this does not indicate an eligibility concern but reflects the quality of information provided or outstanding requirements that will require technical conditions to be applied to any award of funding.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- Consider** the applications presented 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 or for the project to be approved subject to further funding becoming available. 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;
- Agree** the approved CRF grant award for each application up to the value of the available area allocation; and
- If there is a balance of funding remaining, **agree** to ringfence remaining grant within the 2023/24 allocation to deliver area priorities identified through work to develop an area-based plan, subject to full applications being brought to a future committee meeting for consideration.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – Lochaber has available funding of £540,708.21. Applications under consideration total £517,706.67. Therefore there are no resource implications should Members wish to approve all applications

3.2 **Legal** - 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's financial and reputational interests.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)** - The focus of the funding is economic recovery, regeneration and community resilience. Consideration on issues relating to equalities, poverty and rurality are dealt with on an individual basis for applications and covered in the technical assessments of projects.
- 3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** - Mitigation of the climate/ecological emergency is a specific aim of the CRF funds. All applicants are required to evidence environmental sustainability as referenced in the technical assessments.
- 3.5 **Risk** - A balanced approach to risk is necessary when disbursing grant funds as sometimes it is necessary if a community led project is to proceed, to forward grant payment. Factors such as past knowledge of and project experience of the grant recipient; release of funds related to invoices/works completion certificates etc are considered in such assessments.
- 3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No risks arising directly from this report. Risks within projects are identified and managed on a project-by-project basis by the applicant organisation.
- 3.7 **Gaelic** - Consideration given within individual project applications in line with the Council's policy.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Infrastructure, Environment & Economy

Date: 3 January 2024

Authors: Fiona Cameron, CRF Programme Manager
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Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Project Application Forms
Appendix 2 – Project Technical Assessments – RAG Summary

Appendix 2: Lochaber Summary RAG Assessment

Ref N	Organisation	Project title	Project description	Total project cost	Grant Requested	Capital	Revenue	Project start date	Project end date	% rate	Project Robustness	Engagement & Support	Meeting a need/demand	Legacy & Exit Strategy	Equalities issues/ impacts	Environmental sustainability	Value for Money	Match funding	Meets Local Priorities	Additionality	Score	
2122	Shopmobility Lochaber SCIO	Shopmobility Lochaber	Contribution to salary costs for 2024 - 25, covering office co-Ordinator and engineer, together with some overheads-insurance and accountancy fees.	£ 29,120.00	£ 12,000.00	£ -	£ 12,000.00	01/03/2024	28/02/2025	41.21%	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	27	
2125	Lochaber Hope	New Connections	Funding is sought to cover two new posts, to expand provision at the New Connections project. New Connections provides a range of support services and opportunities for social interaction, particularly targeting individuals experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Specific costs are for a new project manager and project worker, together with a contribution towards line management and overheads.	£ 101,000.00	£ 56,000.00	£ -	£ 56,000.00	04/03/2024	28/02/2025	55.45%	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	28
2127	Knoydart Farm CIC	Knoydart Farm Work Package 1	This is the first of three work packages for regenerating food production on the remote peninsula of Knoydart, reducing waste and decreasing carbon footprint. This is the initial setup work package and includes key infrastructure, production and equipment to allow the Farm to move on to Work Package 2.	£ 57,900.00	£ 29,025.00	£ 27,529.64	£ 1,495.36	01/03/2024	31/08/2024	50.13%	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	28
2142	Lochaber Rural Education Trust	Shared Mini-Bus	Purchase a new/nearly new mini bus to transport children to Lochaber Rural Education Centre and also to transport teams to shinty matches in rural areas and potential use by other local sports clubs.	£ 40,000.00	£ 32,000.00	£ 32,000.00	£ -	01/01/2024	29/02/2024	80.00%	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	28
2150	Eigg Trading Ltd	An Laimhrig Composting	Funding to purchase an in-vessel composter and maturation bins, developing an area beside the An Laimhrig Community Hub where all business and residential food waste can be turned into compost for the community-owned Tree Nursery.	£ 8,802.00	£ 8,802.00	£ 6,332.00	£ 2,470.00	01/03/2024	31/01/2025	100.00%	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	29
2160	Voluntary Action Lochaber	Third Sector Support Capacity	Funding for staffing costs for 2 new full time Third Sector Support Officers to increase Third Sector support capacity in Lochaber.	£ 85,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ -	£ 65,000.00	01/03/2024	28/02/2025	76.47%	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	29
2177	Linnhe Leisure	Critical Roof Repairs	Support for essential repairs to the roof to make it wind & watertight & to resolve well known associated safety and operating issues.	£ 98,840.00	£ 76,840.00	£ 76,840.00	£ -	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	77.74%	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	29
2192	Road to the Isles Facilities Group	Mallaig Circular Walk Upgrade 2	To undertake improvements to the Mallaig Circular Walk – a core path – between Kings Way and Mallaig Vaig, including drainage and resurfacing.	£ 45,718.40	£ 34,532.00	£ 33,021.36	£ 1,510.64	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	75.53%	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	26
2198	High Life Highland	Ardnamurchan Arts & Nature Project	Funding to develop a Community Public Art programme and an Outdoor Learning Programme for Young People who have Additional Support Needs.	£ 11,428.00	£ 11,428.00	£ -	£ 11,428.00	04/03/2024	21/02/2025	100%	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	27
2206	Green Fingers	New Beginnings	Funding to support, repair and reinstate the infrastructure of a volunteer led gardening project in Claggan. This will enable a revival of the project, and help position it for further growth and development.	£ 17,500.00	£ 15,000.00	£ 15,000.00	£ -	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	85.71%	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	28
2212	Mallaig & Morar Community Association	Community Kitchen Upgrade	Funding to purchase of a range of kitchen equipment to enhance capacity and expand the range of functions and services the centre can offer. This will particularly help a community lunch club.	£ 6,400.56	£ 5,760.56	£ 5,760.56	£ -	04/02/2024	30/03/2024	90.00%	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	26
2215	Morvern Water sports Club	Safety Boat & Water sports Equipment	Purchase of a rescue/safety boat with outboard motor and trailer and paddle sport equipment for local sports club.	£ 15,878.84	£ 13,878.84	£ 13,878.84	£ -	01/01/2024	01/03/2024	87.40%	3	1	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	26
2217	Fort William Marina & Shoreline CIC	installation and management of toilets near FW pontoons	Funding to help to pay towards the permissions to install toilets in the West End Car Park. This includes planning permission, landowner permission, access to power, water and waste away. In response to Members' feedback at EOI stage, the CRF application focusses on these elements of the overall project.	£ 64,942.47	£ 10,000.00	£ 8,145.67	£ 1,854.33	01/04/2024	30/06/2024	15.40%	1	3	3	3	2	2	3	1	3	3	3	24
2219	Fort William Town Team SCIO	Installation of Solar Panels	To install solar panels to the group's hub on the Parade in Fort William. Electricity would be used to power light and be able to charge a water bowser to water the plants in town. The lights would be used in the evening so other organisations can use the hub.	£ 11,362.80	£ 9,862.80	£ 9,862.80	£ -	01/03/2024	30/06/2024	86.80%	2	2	2	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	3	24
2225	Morvern Games and Gala Week Committee	Knock Park	Applicants aim to develop Knock Park and surrounding area to a thriving community hub featuring an improved woodland site, enhanced sports facility, self-storage and a motorhome stopover along with vital infrastructure and amenities improvements. This phase of the project would see initial preparatory works including new fencing, utilities connections, professional fees and planning fees.	£ 38,500.00	£ 30,500.00	£ 30,500.00	£ -	01/03/2024	01/03/2025	79.22%	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	25
2233	Isle of Canna Community Development Trust	Coroghan Barn- Interim Works	Contribution to professional fees associated with the ongoing project to restore Corrigan Barn and turn it into a hub for community events and business space.	£ 80,262.00	£ 13,800.00	£ -	£ 13,800.00	01/03/2024	30/11/2024	17.17%	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	27
2238	Ardgour Glensanda Development Trust	Development Officer	Recruitment of a development officer, and associated overheads, to develop and take forward the objectives of the Ardgour Place Plan.	£ 23,994.20	£ 12,000.00	£ 500.12	£ 11,499.88	01/03/2024	28/02/2025	50.01%	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	25
2251	Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge & Achnacarry SCIO	Former Roy Bridge Primary School	Support for a range of professional fees required for preparatory works to support the development of affordable housing on the site of the former Roy Bridge primary school.	£ 42,690.00	£ 19,690.00	£ -	£ 19,690.00	01/04/2024	31/01/2025	46.12%	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	25
2258	Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust	Eigg Crofting Development Plan	Funding to employ a consultant to produce a crofting development plan for the Isle of Eigg.	£ 15,000.00	£ 14,000.00	£ -	£ 14,000.00	01/03/2024	31/01/2025	93.33%	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	29
2266	Kinlochleven Community Trust	Development Officer Salary	Funding to employ a Development Officer for Kinlochleven Community Trust. By restarting priority projects, it will provide a long-term opportunity for the organisation to regain its full potential to revitalise the village, increase economic opportunities, and improve residents' general well-being.	£ 26,552.00	£ 26,522.00	£ -	£ 26,522.00	01/03/2024	28/02/2025	100.00%	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	29
2283	Arisaig Community Trust	Refurbishment of Car Park	ACT owns and has responsibility for, the car park which is located in the centre of the village, directly outside of the Spar shop. It is the sole parking area and daily usage is high. While small repair jobs have been carried out, it has recently been surveyed by a contractor, with the conclusion reached, that the whole area requires to be fully resurfaced.	£ 25,450.86	£ 13,999.83	£ 13,999.83	£ -	01/01/2024	29/02/2024	55.01%	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	28
2302	Shielbridge Hall Committee	Installation of new L3 Fire Alarm	Applicants are working to put Shielbridge Hall back into public use. The latest fire risk assessment requires applicants to install a new fire alarm to L3 standard specifications before they can open to the public.	£ 7,065.64	£ 7,065.64	£ 7,065.64	£ -	01/01/2024	28/02/2024	100.00%	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	27

RAG Assessment
 All projects are given a rating of red, amber or green against key assessment criteria. As part of the application paperwork applicants are made aware of the criteria for these. These ratings are then converted into scores as follows:
 Red – 1, amber – 2, green – 3. This allows a total score for each project to be provided.
 Ratings are based on information provided during the application process and are provided as a guide only.
 All projects presented are eligible but if Members wish to approve projects that have red or amber ratings it would usually suggest that additional conditions will be attached to the award to address these concerns.