

Item: 4

Community Development Fund Sub-committee: 14 September 2021.

Application Number 0/5/8/72.

Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust.

Upgrades to Longhope Lifeboat Museum.

Report by Interim Executive Director of Finance, Regulatory, Marine and Transportation Services.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider an application from Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust for assistance towards upgrades to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum.

2. Recommendations

The Sub-committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust has applied for assistance from the Community Development Fund towards upgrades to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum, in order to ensure the ongoing preservation of the museum building and exhibits, at a total estimated eligible cost of £288,000.

2.2.

That, in July 2020, Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust secured grant assistance from the Community Development Fund of up to £2,500, amounting to 41.7% of eligible project costs, towards a feasibility study into upgrades to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum.

2.3.

That Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust is contributing £48,000 of its own resources towards the project.

2.4.

That Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust has applied for match funding, amounting to £140,000, from various funders towards the project.

2.5.

That messages of support have been received from the undernoted groups and individuals:

- Team Leader (Culture), Orkney Islands Council.
- Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council.
- Island of Hoy Development Trust.
- Liam McArthur, MSP.
- Magnus Thomson, Councillor, Stromness and South Isles.

It is recommended:

2.6.

That a grant amounting to 34.7% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £100,000, to be met from the Community Development Fund, be offered to Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust towards upgrades to Longhope Lifeboat Museum.

2.7.

That powers be delegated to the Interim Executive Director of Finance, Regulatory, Marine and Transportation Services, in consultation with the Solicitor of the Council, to conclude an Agreement, on the Council's standard terms and conditions, with Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust in respect of the funding, detailed at paragraph 2.6 above.

3. Background

3.1.

The Longhope Lifeboat Station and Slipway was originally built in 1906 and accommodated lifeboats for 93 years. The lifeboat was launched from the station for the last time in September 1999 and subsequently closed. The Longhope Lifeboat Museum was established in 2000.

3.2.

The Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC032029) and was formed in 2001. The group owns the Longhope Lifeboat Museum and is responsible for the upkeep and promotion of the facility. The current board membership totals 12 and are predominantly from the local community.

3.3.

The Longhope Lifeboat Museum is a category B listed building, of traditional construction for lifeboat stations of its era. The building is timber framed with the main shell of the building sitting upon wooden stilts. The stilts sit on concrete pads resting on the seabed. The building is clad in corrugated steel and a wooden walkway links the building to the shore.

3.4.

The Longhope Lifeboat Museum provides a significant insight into the past of the local maritime community and embodies the importance of the lifeboat service to the local community. The facility predominately includes the former lifeboat shed which houses the former 1932 lifeboat "Thomas McCunn". The museum also houses a wide range of unique exhibits and archive materials documenting the history of the lifeboat service in Longhope. The museum relies solely on public donations and under normal conditions is open all year round.

3.5.

Since 2014, the preservation and enhancement of the Longhope Lifeboat Museum has been a fundamental priority for the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust. Several condition surveys have highlighted the deterioration of the building due to its age and adverse weather conditions. While routine maintenance of the building is carried out by local volunteers, work on many parts of the building (particularly the supporting substructure of the lifeboat shed and slipway) requires specialist contractors to undertake the work. Given the risk of potential catastrophic failure to the building, modern upgrades are crucial to the future of the Longhope Lifeboat Museum.

3.6.

The proposed upgrades have been outlined in the feasibility study, which the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust secured grant assistance from the Community Development Fund of up to £2,500 and was completed earlier this year and subsequently presented to the board. The study investigated the feasibility, viability and desirability of potential projects concerning the Longhope Lifeboat Museum. Financial sustainability and scoping for future development of the facility was also examined, as well as identification of potential funders.

3.7.

After an appraisal of the options identified through the feasibility study, the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust decided that a suite of upgrades to the museum building, substructure and slipway were deemed the most essential and achievable project to undertake. The Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust subsequently commenced its search for potential funding for the project.

4. Project Proposal

4.1.

Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust wishes to carry out upgrades to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum. This predominantly involves structural works to the museum building, supporting substructure and slipway. It is anticipated that the full project works will enable the Longhope Lifeboat Museum to widen access to the facility and help to reach new audiences. The project works will have a minimum lifespan of 30 years. Examples of some of the upgrades required are outlined in Appendix 1.

4.2.

The upgrades include the following:

- Shot blasting and painting of steelwork on slipway.
- New channel steelwork sections.
- New timber planks on walkway.
- New steel open grid flooring and supports.
- Refurbishment of door rail and rollers.
- Coating of timber trestles with bitumen paint.
- Repairing of concrete bases on slipway.
- New scour mats to the outer end ramp.
- New guttering.
- New bolts and connections.

4.3.

The project costs, which have been determined by industry professionals through the feasibility study, and proposed funding arrangements, are outlined in the table below (inclusive of VAT as Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust is not VAT registered):

Project Details.	Cost.
Building costs.	£268,000.
Professional fees.	£20,000.
Total.	£288,000.
Project Financing.	Amount.
Community Development Fund (34.7%).	£100,000.
Historic Environment Scotland (39.9%).	£115,000.
Island of Hoy Development Trust (5.2%).	£15,000.
National Lottery – Awards for All Scotland (3.5%).	£10,000.
Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust (16.7%).*	£48,000.
Total.	£288,000.

* Confirmed.

4.4.

Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust has agreed to match fund the project at a rate of 16.7%. All other match funding has been applied for and decisions are anticipated on each of the applications shortly.

4.5.

The project works will help the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust to realise its ambition of achieving modern upgrades, ensuring the facility will have a sustainable future and enable the Trust to allow future resources to be focussed more on development of the museum. The Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust will continue to maintain and promote the facility once the project is complete.

5. Project Appraisal

5.1.

The proposals put forward in the development plan and feasibility study, which accompanies the application, outlines the intention to carry out a series of enhancements to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum. These enhancements will enable the facility to continue to provide an important offering for locals and visitors to enjoy.

5.2.

Letters of support in relation to this project have been received from the following groups and individuals:

- Team Leader (Culture), Orkney Islands Council.
- Graemsay, Hoy and Walls Community Council.
- Island of Hoy Development Trust.
- Liam McArthur, MSP.
- Magnus Thomson, Councillor, Stromness and South Isles.

5.3.

The Community Development Fund and its predecessor, the Community Development Fund for the New Millennium, have supported a wide range of development projects involving heritage facilities, including:

- Upgrading of Burray Fossil and Heritage Centre.
- Upgrading of Wyre Community and Heritage Centre.
- Creation of Lurdy Heritage Centre, Flotta.
- Creation of Heritage and Craft Centre, Papa Westray.

5.4.

With regard to Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust's application, the following is an assessment and evaluation against each of the approved assessment and evaluation criteria:

5.4.1. Evidence of need

- The proposed project to carry out upgrades to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum has been outlined in the recently completed feasibility study. The study identified priority and additional areas for upgrade and was considered carefully by the

Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust. Following this exercise, a final decision to progress on the recommended works was decided.

- The proposed project has received letters of support from local groups and individuals, as well as the Orkney Islands MSP.

5.4.2. Achievability

- Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust is run by a volunteer committee of 12 people, who represent a wide demographic within the local community and possess a wide range of skills and experience to carry through the project.
- The members of the committee have been involved in the development and co-ordination of the feasibility study. As the feasibility study was part-funded by the Community Development Fund, Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust has gained valuable knowledge and experience of the requirements of the proposed development, as well as an insight into the project management and claims process required for this, and for other potential funds.

5.4.3. Sustainability

- Investing in the proposed enhancements to the Longhope Lifeboat Museum will ensure the facility's long-term sustainability with works estimated to last for a minimum of 30 years.
- Upgrading the facility will enable the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust to consider future investment in new exhibitions and equipment, thus enhancing future visitors' experiences and ensuring the facility continues to provide an important link to the past for future generations.

5.4.4. Serving the local public and having lasting benefits

- The Longhope Lifeboat Museum is one of the major visitor attractions in South Walls. It maintains the last lifeboat and artefacts related to the lifeboat station and also serves as an important commemoration to the tragic events that occurred on 17 March 1969 when the lifeboat capsized, and all eight crew members lost their lives. It is considered important to ensure this facility continues to honour the crew's memory and bravery.

5.4.5. Opportunities provided or upgraded

- The proposed project works will incorporate innovative conservation techniques for marine buildings, as identified in the recent feasibility study. This will help ensure that the upgrade works proposed will have a long lifespan and make the facility as accessible as possible for future use by visitors.
- This project would enable the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust to consider increasing its scope for the facility, by looking to join museum networks and possibly working towards accredited museum status. If this was to be achieved, it would significantly help in opening up new opportunities for the facility.

5.4.6. Enriching quality of life

- Museums offer an insight into the past and provide an important educational and recreational facility within their communities. The upgrading of the Longhope Lifeboat Museum will ensure the facility continues to provide an important link with the maritime and community history of Brims and allow visitors to learn and enjoy the unique experience that the facility has to offer.
- The Lifeboat is the Longhope Lifeboat Museum's key exhibit and maintaining its condition and seaworthiness provides scope for a multitude of activities. The vintage lifeboat the Thomas McCunn is included in the National Register of Historic Vessels of the UK and more launches may be possible once the slipway is upgraded and community events can be undertaken.

5.4.7. Value for money

- Project costs have been carefully identified and incorporated into the recent feasibility study by experienced architects and civil engineers. From this, the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust has prioritised works in order to ensure maximum benefit for the facility in the future.
- Wherever possible, local contractors will be invited to carry out the prioritised works. This demonstrates a strong desire by the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust to ensure best value to the local economy.

5.4.8. Partnership funding

- There is strong potential that the Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust will secure match funding amounting to £140,000 from various internal and external funders, as outlined in section 4.3.
- Longhope Lifeboat Museum Trust has agreed to provide 16.7% from its own resources to assist with the delivery of the project.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority themes of Thriving Communities and Quality of Life.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to:

Priority 3.11 – We will review and develop Empowering Communities Project to create a sustainable model which will enable and empower communities in the delivery of services and projects in their community.

Priority 5.7 – Work in partnership to deliver the strategy to further protect Orkney's Cultural Heritage.

7. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities of Strong Communities and A Vibrant Economy.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

In July 2016, a further £1,000,000 was allocated to the Community Development Fund, with £100,000 ring-fenced for Community Councils.

8.2.

At present there is sufficient budget within the 2016 Community Development Fund tranche to consider this project.

9. Legal Aspects

9.1.

There are no legal constraints to the recommendations in this report being implemented and the relevant powers are contained in section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

9.2.

If grant assistance is to be provided by the Council, a legally-binding agreement will require to be entered into between the Council and the recipient setting out the terms on which the funding is being provided.

10. Contact Officers

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11. Appendix

Appendix 1 – Images of the Longhope Lifeboat Museum and some of the items requiring upgrade.

Appendix 1.

Images of the Longhope Lifeboat Museum and some of the items requiring upgrade.



Longhope Lifeboat Museum from different angles



Damaged base



Split in concrete base



Rotten timbers



Missing steel floor gantry and rotten western platform



Damaged door hangers



Damaged bottom rails