

## **Item: 3**

**Community Development Fund Sub-committee: 4 February 2019.**

**Application Number 0/5/8/37.**

**Firth Community Association SCIO.**

**Upgrading of Firth Community Centre and Surrounding Area.**

**Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To consider an application from Firth Community Association SCIO for assistance towards upgrading Firth Community Centre and surrounding area.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Sub-committee is invited to note:

#### **2.1.**

That Firth Community Association SCIO has applied for assistance from the Community Development Fund towards upgrading Firth Community Centre and surrounding area, for use by the local community and visitors to the village of Finstown and surrounding area, at a total estimated eligible cost of £24,876.

#### **2.2.**

That, in March 2013, Firth Community Association secured grant assistance from the Community Development Fund, namely a grant of up to £39,900, amounting to 47.5% of eligible project costs, towards upgrading the kitchen, creating additional storage space and community seating at Firth Community Centre.

#### **2.3.**

That Firth Community Association SCIO is contributing £1,244 of its own resources towards the project.

#### **2.4.**

That Firth Community Association SCIO has applied for match funding amounting to £11,816 from the Orkney LEADER Programme 2014 to 2020 towards the project.

## **2.5.**

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

- Alistair Carmichael, MP.
- Community Energy Scotland, Orkney Project Manager.
- E J Williams, local resident.
- Firth Parents and Toddlers.
- Firth Scottish Women's Institute.
- Firth Youth Club.
- Orkney Weddings.
- Liam McArthur, MSP.

**It is recommended:**

## **2.6.**

That a grant amounting to 47.5% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £11,816, to be met from the Community Development Fund, be offered to Firth Community Association SCIO towards upgrading Firth Community Centre and surrounding area, subject to the full funding package being secured to enable the project to be completed.

## **2.7.**

That powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Solicitor of the Council, to conclude an Agreement, on the Council's standard terms and conditions, with Firth Community Association SCIO in respect of the funding, detailed at paragraph 2.6 above.

# **3. Background**

## **3.1.**

Firth Community Association was established in 1953 and registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2014 (SC034955). Firth Community Association's main objective is to run and maintain the local community centre and organise events and activities for the local community and visitors. The group is run by a board of 17 trustees local to the village of Finstown and the surrounding area.

## **3.2.**

Firth Community Centre is pivotal to the local community, acting as a key venue where both existing and new residents can interact and enjoy activities. The facility continues to be well-used within the village of Finstown and surrounding area. However, the heating has become a major issue requiring engineers to continually fix the boiler with costs increasing each year. This, coupled with concerns regarding the amount of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions from the existing boiler, focussed the Association towards considering alternative options.

### **3.3.**

In recent months, the Association has held public and committee meetings to discuss the future of the hall and ask for suggestions on how it could be improved. The feedback from the consultations identified the desire to reduce running costs, as well as enhancing the hall's offering to local residents and visitors. Suggestions included upgrading the existing heating in the hall, as well as enhancing the surrounding areas around the hall. The installation of a car charger for electric vehicles was also identified from the consultations.

### **3.4.**

Relevant planning permissions for the installation of the new heating system has been approved. Firth Community Association SCIO has successfully identified potential match funding from the Orkney LEADER 2014 to 2020 Programme. The Association has raised sufficient funds to provide the required 5% contribution from its own resources. This has enabled the Association to progress to the stage of applying for the final funds required to deliver the project.

## **4. Project Proposal**

### **4.1.**

Firth Community Association SCIO wishes to carry out upgrades to Firth Community Centre and surrounding area. The project will enhance the facility, enabling it to be run in a more environmentally-friendly and financially efficient manner. The external works will make the facility more appealing for use by the local community and visitors, as well as increasing the sustainability of the facility for years to come. Appendix 1 outlines the proposed areas for enhancement at Firth Community Centre.

### **4.2.**

Works include the following:

- Installation of air source heating in the main hall, kitchen, front room, foyer and hallway.
- Installation of an upgraded hot water cylinder with an immersion heater.
- Creation of a wild flower area and grass pathway adjacent to Firth Community Centre.
- Installation of two electric vehicle charging points.

### 4.3.

The project costs, which have been determined by way of quotations, and proposed funding arrangements, are outlined below (inclusive of VAT as Firth Community Association SCIO is not VAT registered):

<b>Project Details.</b>	<b>Cost.</b>
New heating and immersion equipment.	£16,492.
Electric vehicle charge points.	£7,476.
Plants and seeds for wild flower area.	£252.
Professional fees.	£656.
<b>Total.</b>	<b>£24,876.</b>
<b>Project Financing.</b>	<b>Amount.</b>
Community Development Fund (47.5%).	£11,816.
Orkney LEADER 2014 to 2020 Programme (47.5%).	£11,816.
Own Resources (5.0%)*.	£1,244.
<b>Total.</b>	<b>£24,876.</b>

\* Confirmed.

### 4.4.

Community Development Fund and LEADER grants are the two remaining funders to be confirmed. A decision on LEADER funding is expected by 6 February 2019.

### 4.5.

Firth Community Centre and surrounding area is owned by Firth Community Association SCIO and will continue to be maintained by Association members once the project is complete.

## 5. Project Appraisal

### 5.1.

The proposals put forward in the development plan, which accompanies the application, outlines the intention to upgrade Firth Community Centre and surrounding area, making it welcoming to all members of the local community, as well as visitors.

## **5.2.**

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

- Alistair Carmichael, MP.
- Community Energy Scotland, Orkney Project Manager.
- E J Williams, local resident.
- Firth Parents and Toddlers.
- Firth Scottish Women's Institute.
- Firth Youth Club.
- Orkney Weddings.
- Liam McArthur, MSP.

## **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 at community centres, including:

- Graemsay Community Association towards the upgrading of Graemsay Community Centre.
- Sandwick Community Association towards the upgrading of Sandwick Hall.
- Deerness Community Association towards the upgrading of Deerness Hall.
- Burray Community Association towards the upgrading of Burray Hall.

## **5.4.**

With regard to Firth Community Association SCIO's application, the following is an assessment and evaluation against each of the approved assessment and evaluation criteria:

### **5.4.1. Evidence of need**

- Firth Community Association SCIO held numerous public and private meetings in recent months to discuss the future of Firth Community Centre. The meetings were well attended and the suggestions provided have helped shape the main elements of this project.
- Firth Community Association SCIO has identified that the provision of two electric vehicle charge points at Firth Community Centre as aligning with Orkney Islands Council Local Development Plan 2017, "The provision of low carbon transport infrastructure within developments is particularly encouraged, for example by providing community or commercial electric vehicle charge points". Letters of support from user groups support this element of the project.

#### **5.4.2. Achievability**

- Firth Community Association SCIO is run by a volunteer committee of 17 people, who have a wide range of skills and experience to carry through the project. This includes finance, fund raising, education and public sector.
- Also, 90% of the current volunteer committee were involved in the previous Community Development Fund project. This project also received match funding from the Orkney LEADER 2007 to 2013 Programme. As such, they bring considerable experience of managing a project and working with multiple funders.

#### **5.4.3. Sustainability**

- The enhancements to Firth Community Centre and surrounding area will increase the potential and capacity of the facility, ensuring continued and, hopefully, increased use by the local community and visitors. This will assist in the sustainability of the facility.
- The new heating and immersion equipment will reduce the running costs of Firth Community Centre. Also, the two electric vehicle charge points will have a coin meter and a phone app to allow payment. These enhancements will assist in attracting new users to the facility whilst also helping reduce the strain on Firth Community Association SCIO's financial resources.

#### **5.4.4. Serving the local public and having lasting benefits**

- The enhancements will benefit existing and future user groups of Firth Community Centre. For example, children from the various play and support groups will learn about local biodiversity and wildlife. Also, it will assist local electric car users, who will have two designated charge points they can use within their community.
- It is also intended that the enhancements will help to increase the footfall through the village. This will benefit local facilities, shops and businesses through increased trade.

#### **5.4.5. Opportunities provided or upgraded**

- The proposals seek to enhance the existing community asset, Firth Community Centre, through provision of new and enhanced facilities which have been designed to be as cost effective and beneficial as possible to all potential users. The enhancements will assist in raising the profile of the facility and its future use by locals and visitors.
- The enhanced facility and surrounding area will provide new opportunities for community participation, education, and recreation within the local area.

#### **5.4.6. Enriching quality of life**

- The enhancements to Firth Community Centre will have a positive impact on the quality of life for the local community and visitors to the area and provide a relaxing and stimulating environment.

- The introduction of green space is seen as a positive way of encouraging people to connect with their local environment. It will also help to encourage more people to get outdoors which helps reduce stress and fatigue.

#### **5.4.7. Value for money**

- Project costs have been carefully identified through completion of competitive tendering exercise, ensuring best value for money.
- The successful contractor for the installation of new heating and immersion equipment has demonstrated a good understanding of the project brief and is a reputable company whom the applicant has confidence in.

#### **5.4.8. Partnership funding**

- Additional funding has been applied for from the Orkney LEADER 2014 to 2020 Programme, which will potentially lever in external funding to Orkney.
- This demonstrates a strong effort to secure as much match funding prior to approaching the Community Development Fund.

## **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 3.7 we will review Trust options for sports, leisure and learning and Priority 5.7 continue to support Community Associations and Community Schools of the Council Delivery Plan.

## **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, leaving £900,000 remaining in the new allocation.

### **8.2.**

A total of £327,046 has been allocated from the 2016 tranche of funding to date.

### **8.3.**

Any award to Firth Community Association SCIO in respect of this project would be met from within the Fund, referred to at section 8.1 above, of which a budget of £333,000 per annum has been agreed for the period 2016 to 2019.

## **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**

Gavin Barr, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, extension 2301, Email [gavin.barr@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.barr@orkney.gov.uk).

Roddy Mackay, Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services, extension 2530, Email [roddy.mackay@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:roddy.mackay@orkney.gov.uk).

Jackie Thomson, Development and Regeneration Manager, extension 2507, Email [jackie.thomson@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.thomson@orkney.gov.uk).

Stuart Allison, Economic Development Manager, extension 2514, Email [stuart.allison@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.allison@orkney.gov.uk).

Alister Brown, Economic Development Officer, extension 2512, Email [alister.brown@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:alister.brown@orkney.gov.uk).

## **11. Appendix**

Appendix 1: Images of proposed areas for enhancement at Firth Community Centre.



## Appendix 1

Images of proposed areas for enhancement at Firth Community Centre.



Existing heating system.



Area of hall at the front where the vehicle charge point will be located.



Area of grassland to the side of the hall where the wild flower area and grass pathway will be created.