

Item: 8

Development and Infrastructure Committee: 12 September 2017.

North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme.

Report by Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

1. Purpose of Report

To submit detailed financial implications for the Council in respect of the proposed North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, in March 2015, the Council agreed:

2.1.1.

That a sum of £25,000 be allocated towards the second round development phase costs in respect to the Scheme, to be met from the Strategies, Studies and Project Initiation allocation within the Economic Development Grants budget for 2016 to 2017, to ensure the minimum grant application requirements were met.

2.1.2.

That, in principle, funding of 10%, estimated at £282,260, be made available towards the delivery phase costs associated with a second round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2.1.3.

That, subject to a successful Round One bid, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a report, regarding detailed financial implications for the Council in respect of the proposed North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme.

2.2.

That, in November 2015, the Council was awarded a first-round pass by the Heritage Lottery Fund in respect of the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme, with an ear-marked grant of £2,998,600 allocated.

2.3.

That, in April 2016, the second round development phase application commenced, with a submission deadline of 31 October 2017.

2.4.

That the Scheme Projects, listed in Appendix 1 to this report, have been informed by the studies and consultations conducted as part of the second round development phase.

2.5.

That, in accordance with Heritage Lottery Fund requirements, a minimum of 10% of funding for Landscape Partnership Schemes has to be met from the partnership steering group, made up of the partner bodies.

2.6.

That the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme comprises the following partners:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Orkney Islands Council.
- Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

2.7.

That, based on the estimated delivery costs, amounting to £4,221,207, for the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme, the estimated funding, amounting to £282,260, previously approved, in principle, by the Council, would satisfy Heritage Lottery Fund's requirement referred to at paragraph 2.5 above.

2.8.

That, although it would be possible to consider an annual commitment from the Economic Development Grants Budget, this budget has experienced a 50% reduction over the last 7 years, and carries the risk of further reductions in future years.

2.9.

That, whilst the Economic Development Grants budget remains one option for the Council's funding element of the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme, due to the wide-ranging nature of the intended outcomes, another option would be for the Council to identify an alternative source of funding.

It is recommended:

2.10.

That the Committee determines the source of the Council's contribution to the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme, based on the options outlined in paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9 above.

2.11.

That, should the Committee recommend the option outlined in paragraph 2.9 above, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a report, to the Policy and Resources Committee, regarding the source of Council funding, amounting to £282,260, to be allocated towards the delivery phase of the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme.

3. Policy Aspects

This report relates directly to action b) of Target 2.6, Orkney's Cultural Heritage, of the Council Delivery Plan 2015 to 2018, which states "We will work with the North Isles communities to develop through the Landscape Partnership Scheme a programme of projects aimed at regenerating the islands through heritage projects".

4. Introduction

4.1.

At its meeting held on 26 March 2015, the Development and Infrastructure Committee noted:

4.1.1.

That in December 2013, the Council endorsed the proposal, in principle, to develop a Round One bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund in respect of a North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (the Scheme).

4.1.2.

That public consultation on development of the Scheme had been undertaken with an overview of the consultation responses attached as Appendix 1 to the report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

4.1.3.

The Scheme Vision and Projects, attached as Appendix 3 to the report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, which had been informed by comments raised through consultation on development of the Scheme, referred to at paragraph 4.1.2 above.

4.1.4.

The breakdown of associated costs for staff, surveys and potential projects to be included in the Scheme, attached as Appendix 3 to the report by the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure.

4.2.

The Development and Infrastructure Committee recommended:

4.2.1.

That the Scheme Vision and Projects, attached as Appendix 1 to the Minute, be endorsed.

4.2.2.

That powers be delegated to the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure, in conjunction with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, together with elected members representing the North Isles electoral ward, to submit a first round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, by the deadline of 31 May 2015, in respect of the proposed North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme, incorporating any further amendments received from stakeholders.

4.3.

The Committee recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee:

4.3.1.

That a sum of £25,000 be allocated towards the second round development phase costs in respect to the Scheme, to be met from the Strategies, Studies and Project Initiation allocation within the Economic Development Grants budget for 2016 to 2017, to ensure the minimum grant application requirements were met.

4.3.2.

That, in principle, funding of 10%, estimated at £282,260, be made available towards the delivery phase costs associated with a second round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

4.4.

The Committee further recommended that, subject to a successful outcome of the Round One bid, the Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure should submit a report, to an appropriate meeting of the Committee, regarding detailed financial implications for the Council in respect of the proposed North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme.

4.5.

At its meeting held on 15 April 2015, the Policy and Resources Committee considered and approved the recommendations referred to at section 4.3 above.

5. Second Round Development Phase Overview

5.1.

The second round development phase is being progressed by a Development Officer and has required the completion of several studies to inform development of the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme:

- Historic Environment.
- Heritage Trails and Active Travel.
- Biodiversity.
- Tourism and Marketing.
- Landscape and Seascape Character.

5.2.

The studies have involved high levels of community consultation as well as specific research. They have, in conjunction with the community consultations completed during the first round application, helped to identify and shape the projects to be included for delivery in the second round development phase, as outlined in Appendix 1.

5.3.

The second round development phase has also required the completion of a Branding, Graphics and Website Strategy, as well as a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy. These strategies will identify and produce a logo and associated branding and graphics to help establish the Scheme identity as well as the production of an agreed framework for how to monitor and evaluate the achievements of the Scheme.

5.4.

The second round development phase application involves the completion and submission of a detailed Landscape Conservation Action Plan showing all the individual projects for delivery in the Scheme and how they relate to the studies.

5.5.

One of the requirements of Heritage Lottery Funded Landscape Partnership Schemes is that a minimum of 10% of the overall funding package must be provided by the steering group. This requirement is requested in order to show buy-in and support for Landscape Partnership Schemes by the partners that make up the steering group.

5.6.

Once the application is submitted the Heritage Lottery Fund regional board will conduct a thorough review and assessment. Once this is complete a decision will be made on the application and the Council, as lead body for the Scheme, will be informed of the outcome. It is anticipated the decision will be known by the end of February 2018, with the Scheme commencing soon afterwards.

5.7.

Subject to a positive outcome, and once the grant funding agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund has been considered and signed by all parties, the delivery phase of the Scheme will be given permission to start. It is anticipated that the Scheme will commence in April 2018 and be delivered over 5 years, which would imply a projected Scheme completion date of March 2023.

6. Human Resources Implications

6.1.

A successful second round bid would require a team to be employed, with responsibility for implementation and delivery of the Scheme. This team will ensure the Scheme achieves its objectives during the 5 year delivery phase from 2018 to 2023. The Scheme delivery team will consist of the following staff:

- Programme Manager, to oversee and manage delivery of the Scheme.
- Project Officers (x 2), to oversee and coordinate project delivery within the Scheme.
- Finance and Administration Officer, to provide financial and administrative support during delivery of the Scheme.

6.2.

The post of Programme Manager will be recruited first, once the Scheme has been given permission to start by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is anticipated around May/June 2018. The other posts will be recruited soon after the Programme Manager commences in their post.

7. Financial Implications

7.1.

The total cost associated with delivery of the Scheme has been estimated at £4,221,207.

7.2.

As referred to in section 5.5 above, a minimum of 10% of the total Scheme costs must be provided by the partnership steering group. This is a requirement of Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme grant programme. The partnership steering group is made up of the following organisations:

- Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Orkney Islands Council.
- Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

7.3.

The proposed funding for delivery of the Scheme is anticipated to be provided by the partnership steering group, and other groups, as highlighted in Appendix 2.

7.4.

The Heritage Lottery Fund specify that year one of all Landscape Partnership Schemes must be fully funded. Subsequent years can identify and secure additional funds during the Scheme. Based on the small anticipated shortfall in the overall funding for the Scheme, a fundraising strategy will commence early in its delivery. This will ensure that the Scheme will achieve full funding, and be in a position to deliver all elements highlighted in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan.

7.5.

Based on the estimated delivery costs of the Scheme being £4,221,207, the proposed contribution from the Council would ensure that the 10% minimum requirement of the delivery phase is achieved, as well as ensuring limited shortfall to be acquired during the Scheme. This report is seeking a formal commitment from the Council to provide £282,260 in order that the required minimum 10% from the partnership steering group can be achieved.

7.6.

The £282,260 of Council funding that will be required over a five year period could be alternatively expressed as an annual commitment of £56,452 for five years. The annual Economic Development Grants Budget would be a source of funding for the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme that is available to the Committee. This budget has experienced a 50% reduction over the last 7 years, so, such an allocation will impact on the function's future activities.

8. Legal Aspects

8.1.

The governance of the Scheme will be achieved through the signing, by all partnership steering group members, of a collaboration agreement. This agreement outlines the key roles, responsibilities and commitments of all partnership steering group members during the delivery of the Scheme. The document has been disseminated to all partnership steering group members' legal teams (including the Council). A final signed version will be submitted as part of the second round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

8.2.

Many of the parties' obligations in terms of the collaboration agreement are defined by reference to the North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme Landscape Conservation Action Plan. This Action Plan will set out the principal objectives of the Scheme, and covers a number of other areas in more detail, including the running of the Scheme, project plans, and the funding to be committed by each of the funders (including steering group members.) The Action Plan is currently being finalised.

8.3.

Should the second round development phase application be approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Council, as lead partner within the partnership steering group, would be required to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant offer for the delivery phase.

9. Contact Officers

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1: List of NILPS projects.

Appendix 2: Funding breakdown for NILPS delivery.