

Report

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| Report to: | Enterprise Resources Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 15 February 2012 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) |

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| Subject: | Whitelees Windfarm - Grant Application - East Renfrewshire Council |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ seek approval to the application by East Renfrewshire Council for financial assistance towards the management and maintenance of the access work at Whitelees Windfarm

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that a grant of £33,972 (excluding administration fee of £1,500) be awarded to East Renfrewshire Council towards the management and maintenance of the access works at Whitelees Windfarm subject to match funding for the project being secured.

3. Background

- 3.1. At the Enterprise Resources Committee of 27 June 2007, approval was given to set up a Renewable Energy Fund in respect of Whitelees Windfarm, and to the administrative arrangements associated with the allocation of funds.
- 3.2. The Fund is financed from payments from Scottish Power who operate the Whitelees Windfarm. To date, Scottish Power has made payments into the Whitelees Fund of £662,142.05 including interest.
- 3.3. The Renewable Energy Fund is administered by Regeneration Services who have responsibility for advising potential applicants, assessing applications and monitoring projects to ensure that the community benefits associated with each project are delivered.

4. Proposal

East Renfrewshire Council

- 4.1. At the Enterprise Resources Committee Meeting on 27 June, 2007 a Section 75 Agreement placed an obligation on the Council to jointly prepare and implement an access strategy for Whitelees Windfarm. A maximum of 31 months of community benefit income was ring fenced for these works.

- 4.2. The maintenance of these access works can utilise up to 40% of the community benefit each year.
- 4.3. A ranger service is presently employed which significantly reduces the ongoing costs of maintenance, allowing more funds to be diverted towards assisting with community projects. The ranger service comprises two full time rangers employed by East Renfrewshire Council on three year contracts who offer a proactive management service and are also able to promote responsible access to a wide range of users.
- 4.4. An expanded programme of activities took place during 2011, including children's activities during the summer holidays and a mother and child walking group was also established. It is anticipated that ranger led services will be further expanded during 2012.
- 4.5. The project will be managed by the Whitelees Access Officer who is jointly employed by South Lanarkshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council and East Ayrshire Council and who reports on a regular basis to the three authorities.
- 4.6. The total eligible cost of the project is £94,650. The proposed grant from Whitelees REF is £33,972 (excluding the administration fee of £1,500) equating to an intervention rate of 36%. The remaining funding will be contributed by East Renfrewshire Council. The proposed grant is the South Lanarkshire Council pro rata share of the maintenance costs across the respective local authority areas.
- 4.7. This application scored 25 from a possible total of 32 during the assessment process which allows an intervention rate of up to 45%.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. There are no employee implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. To date, Scottish Power has made payments into the Whitelees Fund of £662,412.05 including interest (i.e. a £646,809.01 contribution and £15,603.04 interest).
- 6.2. At the Enterprise Resources Committee of 27 June, 2007, approval was given to utilise 31 months of income (£265,248.43) from Whitelees REF towards the access works required and associated costs. This equates to an available budget total for the REF of £381,560.58.
- 6.3. Whitelees REF has committed funds, from the main Fund, of £233,091.48 towards projects from an available budget of £302,695.45 (70% of the available budget of £381,560.58 plus interest of £15,603.04 plus an additional £20,000 transferred from an underspend on the Local Grant Scheme to meet demand). The remaining monies comprise the Local Grant Scheme which is administered by Leader.
- 6.4. Therefore, there will be sufficient funds available from the remaining balance of £69,603.97, to meet the sum of £33,972 requested (excluding administration fee of £1,500).

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. The risks associated with the project are focussed on the potential for cost overruns or delays to the programme.
- 7.2. Delays to the programme will have no impact on the Council.
- 7.3. Without the contributions from the Renewable Energy Fund, it is highly unlikely that the project will proceed.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 8.2. All necessary consultation has taken place with the appropriate Council Resources.

Colin McDowall

Executive Director (Community & Enterprise Resources)

16 January 2012

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

- Improve health and increase physical activity
- Increase participation in arts and culture
- Improve the quality of the physical environment
- Sustainable development
- Effective and efficient use of resources
- Partnership working, community leadership and engagement

Previous References

- Executive Committee Report on Renewable Energy Developments and Community Benefit – 1 December 2010

List of Background Papers

- Completed REF Grant Application Form dated 12th December 2011 received from East Renfrewshire Council.
- Completed REF assessment form dated 19th December 2011 for East Renfrewshire Council.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Stuart Hodge, Project Development Officer, Regeneration Services

Ext: 4759 (Tel: 01698 454759)

E-mail: stuart.hodge@southlanarkshire.gov.uk