

Report

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

Subject:	Blacklaw Renewable Energy Fund – Grant Application - Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Seek approval for an application to the Blacklaw Renewable Energy Fund from Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that a grant be awarded to Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership of up to £200,000, over a 5 year period, towards the total project costs of £2,151,474, subject to match funding for the project being secured.

3. Background

3.1. At the Executive Committee on 3 March 2004, approval was given to set up a Renewable Energy Fund in respect of Blacklaw 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 Blacklaw Windfarm. To date, Scottish Power has made payments into the Fund totalling £1,020,908.28, including interest.

3.3. The Renewable Energy Fund is administered by Regeneration Services who are responsible for advising potential applicants, assessing applications and monitoring projects to ensure that the community benefits associated with each project are delivered.

4. Proposals

Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership

4.1. The Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership (CAVLP) was established in early 2009 to prepare and implement a programme of works that would conserve and enhance the unique and distinctive landscape of the Clyde and Avon Valleys. A detailed update on the progress made by the Partnership on the stage 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was made to the Committee in September of last year.

- 4.2. The project area boundary is defined by the Special Landscape Area identified within the Local Development Plans of both North and South Lanarkshire Councils. CAVLP comprises 10 public and community sector organisations including NLC, SLC; SNH; RSPB; Central Scotland Forest Trust; Forestry Commission; Rural Development Trust and New Lanark Trust.
- 4.3. The Partnership, led by South Lanarkshire Council, is governed by a Project Board drawn from the partners and a Steering Group of working officers representing all partner organisations. The project will seek to leave a long term legacy by enhancing the natural and built environment and leaving local communities economically and socially stronger in the future.
- 4.4. A Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) entitled “**Our People, Our Land, Our History: Shaping Our Future**” has been developed in support of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnerships Grant Scheme, to implement a £5.3million programme of activity over the next five years. The £1.9m Stage 2 bid was considered and approved by HLF Scotland Committee on 1 December 2011, and match funding of £3.34m will be met from partner agencies over the lifetime of the programme.
- 4.5. The delivery of the Scheme will take place over the next five years, with a range of activities aimed at conserving and enhancing the special qualities of the landscape, mainly through the involvement and actions of local people. A key feature of the plan is that many of the outputs will be delivered by community groups and volunteers. Projects have been designed with this in mind. As the outcomes sought include community capacity building and building personal and employment skills, the engagement of local people will be critical to the success of the Scheme’s vision and objectives. Many projects will be aimed at including and involving young people from communities within and surrounding the project area.
- 4.6. The LCAP details required to be delivered within five Programme Areas are again detailed at the appendix attached.
- 4.7. The total eligible elements of the Action Plan have been costed at £2,151,474 (excluding administration fee of £2,000). The proposed grant from Blacklaw REF is £200,000, equating to an intervention rate of 11%. The remaining funds will come from a range of sources including Heritage Lottery Fund, South Lanarkshire Council, European Social Fund and others.
- 4.8. The project will be managed by an appointed project team who will report to the Partnership Board. It is expected that works would begin in summer 2012 and be undertaken over the course of the 5 year Action Plan.
- 4.9. This application scored 25 from a possible total of 32 during the assessment process. This score permits an intervention level 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 Blacklaw Fund of £1,020,908.28 including interest (i.e. a £992,621.09 contribution and £28,827.19 interest).

- 6.2. The proposed grant of £200,000 (excluding administration fee of £2,000) will be drawn from both the main fund and the Developing Local Communities Fund. This will mean a grant of £28,000 from the main REF fund each year for the next 5 years with £12,000 per annum coming via the Local Fund. This will leave on average £82,000 in the main fund each year to support other projects.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. The risks associated with the projects are focussed on the potential for cost overruns or delays to the programme.
- 7.2. The applicants have indicated that any cost increases will be managed within the present budgets subject to agreement from the REF on any changes to their proposed project. This is highly unlikely to have an impact on the Council.
- 7.3. Delays to the programme will have no impact on the Council.
- 7.4. Without the contributions from the Renewable Energy Fund, it is highly unlikely that the project outlined will proceed.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director (Community & Enterprise Resources)

19 January 2012

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

- Improve the quality of the physical environment
- Raise educational attainment for all
- Improve health and increase physical activity
- Increase participation in arts and culture
- Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for growth, improving skills and employability
- Efficient and effective use of resources
- Sustainable development
- Partnership working, community leadership and engagement

Previous References

- Enterprise Resources Committee 30 March 2011
- Report on the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership – Staffing Requirements Enterprise Resources Committee 14 September 2011

List of Background Papers

- Completed REF Grant Application Form and associated information dated 16 December 2011 received from Clyde and Avon Landscape Partnership.
- Completed REF assessment form dated 19 December 2011 for Clyde and Avon Landscape Partnership.
- Landscape Conservation Action Plan, August 2011

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

Programme and Project Activity

Programme A: Natural Nature Reserves, private woodlands, orchards, built heritage, and creating destinations

Project activity will concentrate on physical works related to woodland management predominantly within designated sites, in particular Chatelherault, and work to support the development of orchards. Outreach work to engage with private landowners with a view to preparing a number of physical projects for implementation on the ground from year 2 onwards will also be developed.

Programme B: development of volunteer and community engagement programmes, including the promotion of Arts and Culture

Project activity will concentrate on a range of community engagement events in the development year. Project activity will also have an emphasis on developing a volunteer programme and creating a bank of volunteers for a range of activities over the Scheme period that will help deliver projects and provide volunteers with a range of learning and development opportunities.

Programme C: Physical Access - improving linkages, accessing destinations and restoring historic routes; Intellectual Access – supporting formal learning, providing information for wider audiences

Project activity will provide woodland paths related to, and complementing, the woodland management works within designated sites. This will also include project activity linking a historic route joining North and South Lanarkshire Council. Community involvement and participation is integral to all of this activity. Intellectual access will be provided through the development of a formal education programme developed by teachers seconded to the partnership.

Programme D: training in conservation skills to address employability and support stewardship of key features of our landscape.

Project activity will deliver key skills in horticulture and fruit tree management for orchard owners and the wider community, including community growing organisations. Training for special needs groups will be delivered by Clydesdale Community Initiative. Accredited training course in relevant skills (related to the physical projects identified) are being developed as a key element of this programme.

Programme E Running Costs, Overheads and Staffing.

Project activity to ensure that the office/team is established and equipped to develop, implement, manage and maintain the programme.