

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 23 MAY 2023

APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE / NET ZERO / BIODIVERSITY ONE OFF INVESTMENT FUND

REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ABSTRACT

At its budget setting meeting on 2 March 2023, Angus Council agreed to using uncommitted General Fund reserves to support work and investment on a one-off basis in a small number of areas, such as climate change. This report recommends the approach and criteria for the allocation of the revised figure of £0.75M for investment in climate change, net zero and biodiversity projects and initiatives.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) approves the approach to the distribution of the one off investment of £0.75 million in climate change, net zero and biodiversity projects and initiatives;
- (ii) approves the process and scoring criteria for allocation of the one-off investment fund in climate change, net zero and biodiversity projects and initiatives; and
- (iii) notes that a further paper will be reported to Committee after the summer recess period, setting out details of all projects received, those recommended for approval and a reserve list.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 Delivery of projects and initiatives from this fund will contribute to the following priorities in the Angus Council Plan 2023-2028.

Caring for our Place

- Take action to mitigate against climate change by delivering our Transition to Net Zero Action Plan 2022 to 2030 and leading on the delivery of a Sustainable Energy Climate Action Plan (SECAP) for Angus to reduce area wide emissions.
- Reduce our energy use through a reduction in our property estate coupled with good management to reduce wasting energy.
- Delivery efficient waste services and encourage more recycling and cleaner streets
- Enhance and restore Angus Biodiversity, corporately and with a range of stakeholders

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Special Meeting of 2 March 2023, Angus Council agreed the use of £1M of uncommitted reserves for the 2023/24 financial year to be allocated towards a fund to support climate change/net zero/biodiversity projects and initiatives (Report 57/23 refers). Subsequent to this Policy and Resources Committee agreed at their meeting of 2 May 2023 to use £0.25m towards the Monifieth Learning Campus given the reduced energy consumption and environmental benefits through Passivhaus (Report 116/23 refers). This leaves a balance of £0.75m.

- 3.2 Existing activity with these 3 key strands sits within the following plans and structures which coordinate the projects/activity within these:

Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan (SECAP)

Approved in September 2021, SECAP focuses on Angus wide actions across 6 key sectors. Following the appointment of a dedicated resource in January this year, work is underway to streamline actions and develop relationships with business and community stakeholders. The SECAP Steering Group is currently in the process of being formed with its first meeting due to be held immediately following, the appointment of elected member representatives at the meeting of Angus Council on 22nd June 2023.

Angus Council Transition to Net Zero Action Plan 2022 to 2030

Approved by Full Council in September 2022, the Plan focuses on solely Angus Council activity, containing actions plans within the 5 key themes. This is overseen by the net zero working group of officer representatives from the relevant services named in the plan.

Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 to 2026 (LBAP)

Work on the 5-year review of the Plan is currently ongoing. The plan includes over 140 projects and brings together organisations, communities and individuals to deliver on these. Overall activity is coordinated through thematic subgroups. This context provides a strong framework for the identification of projects that bring forward actions and/or address existing gaps. There are also some key strategic areas of statutory work within these themes that could be brought forward.

- 3.3 This context provides a strong framework for the identification of projects that deliver on existing actions and/or address existing gaps. There are also some key strategic areas of statutory work within these themes that could be brought forward to help address the nature and climate crisis.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 An internal engagement exercise, through the existing working group members within the groups noted above, was undertaken to ascertain the type of projects that could be progressed under this funding. A significant number of proposals were put forward for consideration as a result. These included a number of spend to save initiatives, such as energy efficiency improvements to Council properties, as well as, more strategic options, for example, a carbon storage study. It is clear from this initial exercise that further time is required to develop projects and identify costs.
- 4.2 Significant partnership and joint working with external parties and community groups in these areas is already well established or underway Taking that into account and given the resource commitment to coordinate an external competitive grant process, it is recommended that the request for applications be targeted within the context of these existing working arrangements

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Climate and nature are both identified as priorities within the Council Plan. Given the breadth of these themes it is recommended that the fund be split as follows to demonstrate delivery across both priorities:

Climate Change / Net Zero	£487,500 (65%)
Biodiversity	£262,500 (35%)

It may be appropriate to make minor adjustments to these funding levels if, for example, the overall evaluation results in a significant proportion of high scores under one theme.

- 5.2 An application form to collate information to allow assessment of proposal will be issued to Council Services involved in the relevant working groups. Applicants will be required to provide details of the project, aims and objectives, strategic impact of the investment and how this will contribute to the relevant strategy and delivery of associated action plan, total costs, timescales for delivery and whether the project will result in long term savings or expedite delivery of an existing statutory measure. Match funding is not critical, however, a project will gain a higher score if demonstrated that alternative funding sources have been explored and/or match funding is available.
- 5.3 A panel will review and evaluate all submissions received in line with the proposed scoring criteria as set out below:-

Criteria	Maximum Score (%)
Strategic Impact	30
Contribution/Fit with Relevant Strategy and Action Plan	20
Deliverability	15
Addresses a Statutory Requirement	10
Funding Leverage	10
Spend to Save	10
Risk	5
Total	100

- 5.4 A further report to Committee will provide details on all projects and their score. It will also recommend projects for approval as well as a reserve list should projects not progress.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The projects as they come forward will be funded from the £0.75m one-off investment fund and any other alternative or match funding that has been confirmed from other sources, so there will be no additional call on Angus Council financial resources to deliver the projects other than officer time to deliver the identified projects and administer the fund.
- 6.2 All projects that are successful in obtaining funding will require to consider any impact on the Council's revenue costs on a permanent basis. Where an increase in recurring costs is evident, projects will have to identify how these costs would be met within existing Council revenue resources.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed when projects are identified and brought back to committee for approval.

8. CONSULTATION

The Director of Finance and Director of Legal and Democratic Services were consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

REPORT AUTHOR: Jill Paterson, Service Leader Planning and Sustainable Growth
EMAIL DETAILS: patersonjf@angus.gov.uk



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

Step 1

Name of Proposal (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions):

Approach to commitment of one-off funding for climate change / net zero / biodiversity projects and initiatives.

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment Yes/~~No~~

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people Yes/~~No~~

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics Yes/~~No~~

(iii) It is for information only Yes/~~No~~

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year Yes/~~No~~

(v) It is technical Yes/~~No~~

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment Yes/No

Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Yes/No

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.
If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

Step 3

(i) Lead Directorate/Service:

(ii) Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

(iii) What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

(iv) Is it a new proposal? Yes/No Please indicate OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? Yes/No Please indicate

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees Yes/No

Job Applicants Yes/No

Service users Yes/No

Members of the public Yes/No

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

Other (general information as appropriate).

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? Yes/No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Age

Impact

Disability

Impact

Gender reassignment

Impact

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

Impact

Religion or Belief

Impact

Sex

Impact

Sexual orientation

Impact

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.

Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?

Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.

Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings? Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.

Low and/or No Wealth (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future).

Impact

Material Deprivation (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

Impact

Area Deprivation (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport)).

Impact

Socio-economic Background i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

Impact

Other – please indicate

Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Jill Paterson, Service Leader – Planning and Sustainable Growth

Reviewed by: Kelly Ann Dempsey – Team Leader Environment and Climate Change

Approved by: Antony McGuinness – Manager Development Plan, Environment and Climate Change

NB. There are several worked examples of separate EIA and FSD Assessments in the Guidance which may be of use to you.
