

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 27 FEBRUARY 2024**

**CLIMATE CHANGE / NET ZERO / BIODIVERSITY ONE OFF INVESTMENT FUND**

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

**1. ABSTRACT**

The report seeks approval of applications recommended for approval by the officer panel, from the one-off Climate Change / Net Zero / Biodiversity fund and asks committee to note that a further report will set out recommendations for use of the remaining funding.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES**

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.
- Deliver efficient waste services and encourage more recycling and cleaner streets.
- Enhance and restore Angus Biodiversity, corporately and with a range of stakeholders.

**3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee: -

- (i) Approves the initial phase of projects totalling £166,850 recommended by the officer assessment panel for funding from the £262,500 biodiversity fund;
- (ii) Approves the initial phase of projects totalling £458,500 recommended by the officer assessment panel for funding from the £487,500 climate change/net zero fund;
- (iii) Agree to amalgamate the remaining balance of £95,650 from the biodiversity fund and £29,000 from the climate change/net zero fund; and
- (iv) Note that a further report will be brought to this Committee to recommend projects for the use of the remaining balance of £124,650.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 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 the 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 left a balance of £0.75m.

4.2 At Communities Committee on 23 May 2023, an approach was agreed on how to take forward the assessment of applications to the Climate Change, Net Zero and Biodiversity one off investment fund ([Report 154/23](#)). After an application and assessment process, this report recommends projects identified by the officer assessment panel for delivery using the scoring criteria included below.

4.3 Climate and nature are both identified as priorities within the Council Plan and underpin policy at a national level. Given the breadth of these themes it was 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%)

4.4 An application form to collate information to allow assessment of proposals was issued to Council Services involved in the relevant climate and biodiversity focussed working groups. Applicants were required to provide details of project, aims and objectives, strategic impact and contribution to relevant strategy and action plan delivery ([Report 154/23](#)). Total costs, timescales for delivery, and additionally, whether the projects would result in long term savings or expedite delivery of an existing statutory measure were also considered. Match funding was not deemed critical; however, a project would gain a higher score if it was demonstrated that alternative funding sources had been explored and/or match funding is available.

4.5 The panel reviewed and evaluated all submissions received in line with the agreed 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. CURRENT POSITION

5.1 In total, fifteen projects were submitted for consideration, six biodiversity and nine climate change/net zero focussed. Many deliver both climate and biodiversity benefits. A summary is provided below including the funding ask and further detail, including a summary description on all the projects is provided in **Appendix 1**.

### **Biodiversity (Allocation: £262,500)**

Angus Coastal Swifts Project	£ 43,000
Land use & Nature-based Solutions Project Officer Angus	£ 67,850
Angus Habitat Mapping – First phase	£ 50,000
Downie Moor Carbon Storage & Habitat Restoration	£ 24,000
Local Nature Conservation Sites Enhancement – Grant Scheme	£ 30,000
Angus Climate Forum – Community Biodiversity Engagement Projects	£ 20,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>£ 234,850</u>

### **Climate Change / Net Zero (Allocation: £487,500)**

LED Lighting Installations Schools	£ 569,500
Angus Rural Mobility Hub Fleet Decarbonisation Support Programme	£ 400,000
Air Source Heat Pump Design – Rosemount Primary School	£ 45,000

Improved recycling at secondary schools	£ 14,000
Sustainable Food/Good Food Nation Staff Resource	£ 181,522
Angus Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	£ 40,000
Road to Net Zero Study for the Council's Non-Housing Building Estate	£ 150,000
Learning for Sustainability Coordinator	£ 65,000
Climate Resilience Grant Fund	£ 50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 1,515,022</b>

- 5.2 Applications were scored using the criteria outlined in section 4.4. The assessment panel represented a broad range of council services with relevant skills and expertise. Scoring was carried out by individual officers and scores were weighted and combined. Final scores and recommendations are included in Appendix 1.

## 6. PROPOSALS

- 6.1 Following the officer panel the following projects are recommended for approval. During assessment officers discussed many of the challenges around available resource to deliver on projects and therefore some submissions were focussed on design/feasibility. Whilst there were suitable projects to allocate the full funding amount officers felt that outputs from some of the feasibility/design work could help direct the remaining funding and the remaining projects reconsidered at that time.

### Biodiversity

Angus Coastal Swifts Project	£ 25,000
Land use & Nature-based Solutions Project Officer Angus	£ 67,850
Angus Habitat Mapping – First phase	£ 50,000
Downie Moor Carbon Storage & Habitat Restoration	£ 24,000
<b>Total Recommended</b>	<b>£ 166,850</b>
Funding available	£ 262,500
Remaining Balance	£ 95,650

### Climate Change / Net Zero

Angus Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment	£ 40,000
Road to Net Zero Study for the Council's Non-Housing Building Estate	£ 150,000
Learning for Sustainability Coordinator	£ 65,000
Air Source Heat Pump Design – Rosemount Primary School	£ 45,000
LED Lighting Installation (3 Schools – Inverbrothock, Inverkeilor, Carnoustie)	£ 108,500
Climate Resilience Grants	£ 50,000
<b>Total Recommended</b>	<b>£ 458,500</b>
Funding available	£ 487,500
Remaining balance	£ 29,000

- 6.2 Officers propose that the remaining balance of £95,650 from the Biodiversity fund and remaining £29,000 from the Climate Change / Net Zero fund be amalgamated and that a further report sets out proposals for the use of this funding.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 The recommended projects contribute towards meeting statutory climate and biodiversity targets and duties. Failure to fund projects would reduce the positive impact that project delivery will have in the face of the climate and biodiversity crises. Many projects support the commitment under The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 requiring all public bodies staff to further the conservation of biodiversity in their roles. Projects, in many cases, focus on delivering in Partnership with external agencies and communities. Failure to fund would mean that Angus Council staff would have to explore additional means to fund and deliver essential projects which poses a challenge due to staff resources.

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 This one-off funding is intended to assist with Angus Council's transition to net zero and addressing the nature crisis. All proposals have set out and being assessed on their fit with the relevant strategies (Sustainable Energy & Climate Action Plan, Transition to Net Zero Action Plan and the Tayside Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 -26). Delivery of the projects will therefore have a positive contribution to environmental implications.

## **10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and included at Appendix 2.

## **11. CONSULTATION**

- 11.1 The Director of Finance and Director of Legal, Governance and Change were consulted in the preparation of this report.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Project Summaries and Assessment  
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment