

Rural Resettlement Fund**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on the one-off Rural Resettlement Fund (RRF) of £500,000, announced in the Argyll and Bute Council budget 2016/2017.
- 1.2 The May 2016 Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the main focus of the RRF should be to incentivise new residents and/or businesses to relocate to Argyll and Bute.
- 1.3 The August 2016 Policy and Resource Committee agreed the outline conditions of the fund, including allocation £10,000 for marketing, giving officers the remit to proceed with the development and delivery of the fund.
- 1.4 RRF was formally launched on 31st October 2016 in line with Argyll Enterprise Week. This report will provide members with an update on the performance of the fund so far.
- 1.5 Table 1 below provides an update on performance of the fund so far.

Table 1: Summary of Rural Resettlement Fund applications						
RRF applications	Received	Approved	Withdrawn	Rejected	Pending	Grant Awarded
Personal Relocation Grant	33	17	2	5	9	£81,078.03
Business/Self-employed	3	3	0	0	0	£15,000.00
Total	36	20	2	5	9	£96, 078.03

Rural Resettlement Fund

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with an update on the one-off Rural Resettlement Fund (RRF) of £500,000, announced in the Argyll and Bute Council budget 2016/2017.
- 2.2 In May 2016 the Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the main focus of the RRF should be to incentivise new residents and/or businesses to relocate to Argyll and Bute.
- 2.3 The August 2016 Policy and Resource Committee agreed:
- RRF will support micro and SMEs (including social enterprises) relocating their business to Argyll and Bute; economically active people and economically active families relocating to take up employment in Argyll and Bute;
 - RRF will operate on a first come first served basis;
 - £10,000 of the RRF will be allocated to marketing;
 - RRF will be administered within Economic Development and Strategic Transportation using existing structures; and
 - Officers will proceed with the development and delivery of RRF.
- 2.4 RRF was formally launched on 31st October 2016 in line with Argyll Enterprise Week. This report will provide members with an update on the performance of the fund thus far.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The recommendations for Policy and Resources Committee are as follows:
- To note the contents of the report.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Table 1 below provides an update on performance of the fund so far.

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4.2 Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the RRF Personal Relocation Grant approvals per administrative area.

RRF Personal Relocation Grants	B&C	H&L	MAKI	OLI	Total
No of approvals	3	0	3	11	17
No of relocated residents	9	0	4	29	42
Value	£15,000.00	£0.00	£15,000.00	£51,078.03	£81,078.03

4.3 Interest in the fund was raised when the initial paper went to committee and a press release was issued. Over 100 people registered interest in the fund prior to it being launched in November 2016.

4.4 Since the launch, officers have been working with partner organisations to promote the fund:

- HIE promoted the fund to account managed businesses who may be recruiting new staff;
- Key local businesses known to be recruiting new staff were contacted directly;
- Community planning partners were provided information on the RRF; and
- All local estate agents were mailed with information about the fund and posters for their offices.

4.5 On July 3, an eight-week digital campaign with S1 Homes and S1 jobs targeting people looking for new jobs and new homes was launched.

4.6 Of the seventeen PRGs grants which have been approved, fourteen have been accepted and this has resulted in 35 new Argyll and Bute residents due to many of these relocating with families.

4.7 3 Self Employment Relocation Grants have been approved and accepted resulting in 3 business relocating. A fencing contractor to the island of Colonsay, a patisserie to the island of Bute and a plastic mouldings repair engineer relocating to Dunoon.

- 4.8 Officers are collecting case studies where possible to use for future marketing. The following is an example of feedback in relation to the scheme. The first candidate for RRF had the choice of jobs in Newcastle and Oban. The candidate opted for the job in Argyll and Bute favouring a rural upbringing for the children. The additional benefit was support from the Council's RRF which helped with some of the expenses incurred when moving almost the length of the UK from Cornwall to the Oban area. The candidate said "it really helped to smooth the path. We think the country isn't that big, but it is when moving the entire length with two small children. It was reassuring not to have to start a new life in deficit".

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Take up of the Rural Resettlement Fund has got off to a stronger start for the Personal Relocation Grant. Marketing of the fund through national media is expected to accelerate the number of applications to the fund, and a further report on the success of this measure can be provided to P&R after the eight week campaign.
- 5.2 On average, every Personal Relocation Grant results in an additional 2.5 residents into Argyll and Bute.
- 5.3 Take up of the Self-Employment Relocation Grant has been slow and to date we have had no applications for the Business Relocation Grant. The Business Gateway team do refer clients who are looking to relocate their business to the area to the grant.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

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| 6.1 | Policy | The proposed fund will offer the opportunity to support the objectives and long term outcomes of the Single Outcome Agreement together with the Local Development Plan Action Plan, with the Local Development Plan and the area-based and overarching Economic Development Action Plan. |
| 6.2 | Financial | An allocation of £500k was identified in the 2016/2017 budget. No additional funds are sought. |
| 6.3 | Legal | None at this time. |
| 6.4 | HR | None. |
| 6.5 | Equalities | The dissemination of the RRF will comply with all Equal Opportunities policies and obligations. Applicants to the fund must be over 18 years with no upper age limit. |
| 6.6 | Risk | The efficient delivery of this fund will be critical to its success in assisting population growth In Argyll and Bute. |

6.7 Customer Services None.

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