

ISLANDS PROGRAMME 2023/24

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Islands Infrastructure funding was previously allocated to Local Authorities on a population basis, however for the 2022/23 programme, the Scottish Government introduced a competitive process where Local Authorities had to bid for funding. The change to the process for funding placed an additional resource on Local Authorities.
- 1.2 Following consideration by the RAINE Committee of the mechanism by which the Islands Programme is delivered, the Scottish Government have confirmed that the 2023/24 Islands Programme will be delivered as a simplified and streamlined bid model. This means that the competitive process remains in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:-

- i. Note that the next round of funding will likely be a one stage process;
- ii. Agree that arrangements for the fund be delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Islands in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader, Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Policy Lead for Islands to ensure that the Council can submit a bid(s) within the short timescales proposed by the Scottish Government for round 2023/24; and
- iii. Note that the delegation will also engage with the Argyll Islands Sounding Board in relation to any potential bids for funding for the round in 2023/24.

ISLANDS PROGRAMME 2023/24

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report provides an update on the Scottish Government's 2023/24 Islands Programme and how it will be delivered. The report also seeks agreement from the Policy and Resources Committee to put in place a delegation to ensure that the Council can adhere to the tight timescales set by the Scottish Government in bidding for funding for the 2023/24 Islands Programme.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee are asked to:-

- i. Note that the next round of funding will likely be a one stage process;
- ii. Agree that arrangements for the fund be delegated to the Executive Director with responsibility for Islands in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader, Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Policy Lead for Islands to ensure that the Council can submit a bid(s) within the short timescales proposed by the Scottish Government for round 2023/24; and
- iii. Note that the delegation will also engage with the Argyll Islands Sounding Board in relation to any potential bids for funding for the round in 2023/24.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The Scottish Government, on 31st January 2023, announced their indicative timescales for the application process. The programme has an application deadline of 21st April 2023, with panel recommendations expected in early May 2023 – clear readiness to deliver in 2023/24 will be a crucial point for consideration in the application process.

4.2 The Scottish Government have set out their key objectives of the Islands Programme for 2023/24, which are:-

- To sustain, enhance and develop transformational and critical infrastructure projects based on local priorities whilst supporting the National Islands Plan.
 - To reshape infrastructure by supporting shovel worthy projects, co-ordinating with other funded and planned initiatives on the islands to drive sustainable island growth.
 - To support projects which use clear Place based, Community Wealth principles to support inclusive island growth while working to achieve the Scottish Government's Net Zero Ambitions and a Just Transition.
 - To maximise leverage of partnership, investment, and cross policy funding.
- 4.3 Given the timescales announced by the Scottish Government, the Council wish to agree a delegation to the Executive Director with responsibility for Islands in consultation with the Leader, Depute Leader, Leader of the largest Opposition Group and the Policy Lead for Islands to ensure that a bid(s) can be submitted for funding within the tight timescales set.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 For 2023/24, the Government is investing around £4 million of capital funding through the Islands Programme to ensure delivery of the National Islands Plan. The delegation requested within this report will ensure that the Council are able to engage in the process and submit a bid(s) within the tight timescales set out by the Scottish Government.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – None from this report.
- 6.2 Financial – The Council are seeking a delegation to ensure that a bid(s) can be submitted for the 2023/24 Islands Programme which will provide financial support to our island communities.
- 6.3 Legal – None from this report.
- 6.4 HR – None from this report.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
- 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – None from this report.
- 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None from this report.
- 6.5.3 Islands – The Council will look to place a bid(s) for the 2023/24 Islands Programme funding to continue to support our island communities.
- 6.6 Climate Change – none from this report.

- 6.7 Risk – Should the Council not agree to the delegation set out within the report, there is a risk that agreement from a committee will not be determined within the timescales set out by the Scottish Government, therefore risking the loss of potential funding.
- 6.8 Customer Service – none from this report.

Kirsty Flanagan: Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

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