
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY FINANCE COMMITTEE

FOR DECISION

Title: Update on the distribution of the Beaully-Denny SSE (Scottish Southern Energy) funding for the communities of Laggan and Dalwhinnie.

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Purpose

To update the Finance Committee of the current position on the 50K funding allocated to the CNPA to promote the businesses of Laggan and Dalwhinnie who will be disrupted by the effects of the five-year Beaully Denny pylon project.

Recommendations

- That the Committee notes the progress made so far with Laggan and Dalwhinnie on distributing the Beaully Denny SSE funding in a fair and impartial way.
- That the Finance Committee agrees to the release of 15K to the Laggan Community Association for the purposes of upgrading Broad Band service in the area.

Executive Summary

1. Beaully Denny Planning Condition Number 72 states:
“No works in connection with the Development in the area of CNP shall be commenced until the applicant has made a payment of £50,000 to Cairngorms National Park Authority to enable Cairngorms National Park Authority to support marketing initiatives over a 5 year period with a view to ameliorating the loss of trade to local businesses, primarily within the Laggan and Dalwhinnie areas, as a consequence of the proposed development.”
2. It has been agreed after discussions with local agencies and community representatives that the funding will go to the communities of Laggan and Dalwhinnie who will feel the greatest disruption during the lifetime of the Beaully Denny project. It has also been agreed that the funding will not be used for individual businesses but be used for the business community as a whole to make the most of match funding opportunities
3. Dalwhinnie have currently decided to wait until most of the works are completed before re-launching the community as a visitor destination. However, Laggan is keen to use the funds in the short-term and wish to split the funds (25K) to cover two

projects: upgrading Broad Band provision in the area, and developing a focussed marketing strategy for enhance the profile of local businesses.

Background

4. It is important because of the potentially sensitive nature of the Beaully Denny project and its potential negative impacts that the CNPA, as the custodians of the funding are transparent and even handed in distributing it.
5. Throughout 2010 the CNPA with others partners from the B&S Community Planning Partnership met with the communities (Laggan Community Association and Dalwhinnie Community Council) These community groups contacted the local businesses to ensure a wide range of feedback on how the funds should be spent. It was agreed at an early stage that:
 - The funding would be evenly split between the communities of laggan and Dalwhinnie .
 - The funding would not be used for individual business but be used collectively to maximise match funding potential.
 - That the communities should liaise with the Cairngorms Business Partnership to link into opportunities they might offer.
6. Dalwhinnie, decided to defer using the BD funding in the short term. The effects of the BD project will heavily impact the village in the short term. They wish to wait until the most of the work is completed and re-launch Dalwhinnie as a tourist attraction at that point.

Laggan Proposal

7. Laggan however wish to use their part of the funding more quickly. The Laggan Community Association conducted a survey with the community (including 15 local businesses) in February 2011. The purpose of the survey was to ask businesses and local residents if the SSE funding could be spent on upgrading Broad Band provision in the Laggan area. A majority of those consulted (24 out of 27) wanted the upgrade. However shortly after the BB proposal was submitted for consideration by the CNPA it was clear that a significant minority of businesses where not happy with the outcome and wished the funding to be spent on a more formal marketing strategy.
8. The CNPA Communities and Education Manager , Cllr Rimell and the Leader Manager then met with a wide representation of Laggan businesses and interests to explore a way forward that ensured a greater level of agreement around the distribution of the funds. Several options were considered.
9. After further meetings (including a presentation from the Cairngorms Business Partnership to the business community) the following actions are proposed by the Laggan Community Association:
 - That 15K is released to the Laggan Community Association for upgrading Broad Band in the Laggan area. This funding is being matched by Leader and a

potential 10K loan from the Laggan Trading Company Ltd. It is important that this project starts as soon as possible because of match funding and works timescales.

- The remaining 10K is withheld by the CNPA to be used for developing a marketing strategy for Laggan businesses. The timescale on this project is longer in order to: develop a small business-led sub group (reporting to the Laggan Community Association) that will flesh out the details of the strategy, to look at potential match funding to maximise the BD funds.

Recommendation

- **That the Finance Committee agrees to the release of 15K to the Laggan Community Association for the purposes of upgrading Broad Band service in the area.**

Next Steps

10. It has been agreed that the Community Development Officers (Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey) along side the Laggan Forest Trust development manager will support the above actions. Firstly the helping the Broad Band project get additional funding, and secondly to support the newly formed business sub- group developing a more detailed, fully costed marketing strategy.

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