

Aberdeen Community Environmental Improvement Fund

Background

The Climate and Environment Policy Service have an annual budget for delivering Environmental improvements for the benefit of the wider community by funding environmental projects or providing match funding, e.g. through the [Scottish Landfill Communities Fund](#) (SLCF). To maximise the benefits of the fund in recent years we developed different funding models due to uptake of SLCF funding historically being low despite promoting the fund widely.

In 2021/22 we worked with the Fairer Aberdeen Team to deliver citywide environmental projects to engage people with nature and tackle climate change through Participatory Budgeting successfully supporting a [number of projects in the city](#).

We repeated the process in 2022/23 focusing on a single locality, however, for various reasons there were not enough applications for the environmental fund and it went entirely unutilised. This has prompted a fresh look for alternative funding models for 2023/24.

Business need

Aberdeen City Council is committed to responding to the global climate-nature crisis. In March 2023 the Council added its voice to the growing number of local authorities around the world by declaring a climate and nature emergency. The Council is also signatory to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, and the United Nations [Race To Zero Campaign](#).

The [Aberdeen Climate and Nature Pledge](#) is a further commitment by the organisations and people of the City of Aberdeen to act within their own organisations and lives to contribute towards the [Net Zero Aberdeen Route map](#) and [Aberdeen Adapts](#) climate adaptation framework. The [Council Climate Change Plan 2021 - 2025](#) also sets out the Council's ambitions and projects for net zero and interim targets for reduced carbon emissions.

There is a need to empower communities to take action on climate change and nature recovery and make positive environmental changes in Aberdeen to directly support the delivery of Aberdeen Adapts, the [Net Zero Aberdeen Routemap](#), underlying [Net Zero Aberdeen Empowerment Strategy](#) and [Natural Environment Strategy](#) as well as help to deliver place based outcomes in the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026](#).

The Net Zero Aberdeen Empowerment Strategy recognises that empowerment is crucial to achieving Routemap goals through the engagement, participation and capacity building of organisations and citizens on climate change to achieve a just transition and net zero future.

These plans and outcomes can't be delivered without significant action from communities, organisations and individuals and an Aberdeen Environmental Improvement fund can empower people and promote public action on climate change, nature recovery and make positive environmental changes in Aberdeen.

The fund would also support the delivery of the administration's agreement 'Working in Partnership for Aberdeen to build a Greener and more Sustainable City: - Work with communities to review the management of council-managed open spaces to create more sustainable and safer green areas and open spaces and **develop a Community Environmental Improvement Fund, for communities to access, to implement their own small-scale local environmental improvements.**

Funding Options

There are various funding models that have been explored and considered to best deliver and support these goals and objectives:

- 1) **External Partnership delivery** of grant fund by [North East Scotland Climate Action Network](#) (NESCAN HUB)
- 2) Partnership with **Fairer Aberdeen Participatory Budgeting Programme**
- 3) **ACC Grant fund** delivered by Climate and Environment Policy Service
- 4) Partnership with **ACC Housing (HRA) Environmental Improvement Fund**
- 5) Do nothing = keep match funding for **Scottish Landfill Communities Fund**
- 6) Remove fund = **Budget Saving**

Options Appraisal against Objectives						
Objectives	Options: Scoring Against Objectives					
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
a) Empowers communities to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss	3	2	1	1	1	-1
b) Supports delivery of city climate and nature strategies and plans	3	3	3	2	1	-1
c) Supports delivery of Working in Partnership for Aberdeen	3	2	3	1	0	-1
d) Supports delivery of Local Outcome Improvement Plan Place outcomes	2	2	2	2	2	-1
e) Provides value for money & prudent use of resources	2	2	0	2	0	0
Total	13	11	9	8	4	-4
Ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6

Scoring:

- 3 Fully Delivers
- 2 Mostly Delivers
- 1 Delivers to a Limited Extent
- 0 Does not Deliver
- 1 Will have a Negative Impact on Objective

Options Appraisal

The various options and funding models have been assessed and scored using the Corporate Project Management Toolkit Options Appraisal table against the fund objectives.

Options Ranking	Option Summary
1) External Partnership delivery of grant fund by NESCOAN HUB	This option would likely deliver on all the objectives. NESCAN is the North East of Scotland's primary resource on climate action provide a wide-ranging knowledge base on these issues as well as a joined-up approach to action on climate and nature. The project fund would be delivered through a small management fee.
2) Partnership with Fairer Aberdeen Participatory Budgeting Programme	This option would meet some of the objectives. The Fairer Aberdeen Team are however committed to supporting single localities in 2024/25 through a Participatory Budgeting programme. The intention is for this fund to be citywide to have the maximum impact. Previously a locality based approach did not generate enough applications to utilise the fund.
3) ACC Grant fund delivered by Climate and Environment Policy Service	Broad expertise and knowledge in Service on climate change and nature recovery but lack of resource within team to deliver and administer a grant fund in house. If delivered in house then there would be a significant drain and resource impacts on other workstreams, e.g. ensuring statutory compliance on climate and nature.
4) Partnership with ACC Housing (HRA) Environmental Improvement Fund	HRA Environmental Improvement Fund is ring fenced for Council Social Housing amenity land only, so would benefit these and nearby communities but could potentially have less impact than a broader citywide fund. The HRA already has a budget for this type of work, albeit it's unclear how well these are directed at empowering communities to act.
5) Do nothing = keep match funding for Scottish Landfill Communities Fund	SLCF funding would likely not meet all the objectives. The funds uptake and accessibility have historically been low despite wide promotion and the external application processes not being intuitive.
6) Remove fund = Budget Saving	This option would not meet any of the objectives. Removing the fund would not help to support necessary public action on climate change and nature recovery or make positive environmental changes in Aberdeen.

Recommendation/s

Year 1 – Implement Option 1, report & review

Year 2 – Potentially limited expansion via targeted implementation Option 4, report & review

Year 3 – Further expansion, report & review