



CROWN ESTATE REVENUES – ROUND 5 DISTRIBUTION

Report by Depute Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to agree the criteria for distribution of Round 5 Crown Estate Revenues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Crown Estate Round 5 distribution award to the Comhairle is £1,620,840. The award is broadly similar to recent years.
- 2.2 The administrative process for previous years of the Crown Estate funding was a balanced approach between community level distribution and strategic investment. As this approach met the Comhairle's policy goals in the areas of community empowerment, community wealth building and participatory budgeting it is proposed to maintain that broad approach for Round 5.
- 2.3 The four Rounds of Crown Estate funding to date are administered by Community Learning and Development staff in consultation with local economic fora and Ward Members and the same approach will be in place for Round 5. The criteria and application processes will be the same as last year and will be an online application process. The national priorities around green recovery, blue economy and a just transition to net zero are part of the application process.
- 2.4 Following a Members Seminar held in the Comhairle Chambers and online on 11th April 2024, proposals for Year 5 were discussed. It was deemed preferable to ensure parity of allocation across all Wards.
- 2.5 As in previous years, as well as Ward allocation, it is proposed to allocate an element of Crown Estate funding to strategic requirements. These strategic priorities are outlined at section 5.6 of the Report.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Comhairle agrees to:
- a) approve the allocation for Crown Estate Round 5 Ward distribution,
 - b) approve the allocations for the Comhairle's strategic investment as outlined in paragraph 5.7;
 - c) defer consideration of financial support to community groups seeking schools lets until an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed; and
 - d) prioritise Levelling-Up Partnership towards development activity in Uist and Barra.

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IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	The financial implications are dealt with in the body of the Report.
Legal	None
Staffing	The main staffing requirement will be through day-to-day implementation of the Fund through the Community Engagement Unit. Financial and management inputs will also be required.
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	The community empowerment approach to the implementation of the Fund are aligned with the Corporate Strategy.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	A Members' Seminar was held on 11 th April to discuss proposals.

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) was introduced as a UK-wide programme created and funded by the UK Government with the aim of encouraging the economic development of UK coastal communities by awarding funding to create sustainable economic growth and jobs. New Scottish arrangements were announced by Scottish Ministers in 2019, replacing the CCF and allocating funding to coastal Local Authorities to deliver coastal community benefit. The funding allocations come from revenue generated from Scottish Crown Estate marine assets out to 12 nautical miles.
- 5.2 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has utilised the Fund for a mix of strategic investments and to create a local Fund to support local projects and initiatives. Over the previous four Rounds the Comhairle sought to stimulate community wealth building and community empowerment by devolving project consideration and decision-making down to each council Ward through area fora. It is proposed to maintain that approach for Round 5.
- 5.3 Last year the criteria were amended to scope out stronger community economic projects that met the original requirements of the CCF. There is scope for future rounds to move towards a greater contribution to national priorities around green recovery, blue economy and a just transition to net zero, through larger-scale approaches, leverage, and innovation.
- 5.4 The above community-based approaches will be balanced by support to strategic level projects and in particular support towards the implementation of the early-stage projects in the Islands Growth Deal and support with the implementation of the Comhairle's Investment Plan under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) and the future Levelling Up Partnership (LUP) funding.
- 5.5 The LUP funding allocated by the UK Government to the Comhairle will require geographical context by using Place Based approaches in distributing its funding. Officials from the Department of Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities are due to meet local stakeholders in May and June this year to initiate

the LUF process. As discussed at the Seminar it is proposed that LUP funding will be focussed on development activity in Uist and Barra.

- 5.6 At the Seminar the potential for support towards community groups undertaking school lets was also discussed. There was support for this objective, but it is assessed that final determination on this should be deferred pending an Equality Impact Assessment and assessment as to whether there may be other competing community-based proposals.
- 5.7 Based on the above approach it is proposed to allocate the Round 5 funding as follows:

Evening Bus Services	£ 120,000
Creative Industries Transition	94,000
Athletes Fund	25,000
Stornoway Town Centre / Cruise Uplift	100,000
Museum Visitor Assistants	20,000
Planning Support	100,000
Whale Strandings / Ocean Debris	25,000
UHI / Archaeology Projects	45,000
Ward Distribution (£75,000 per Ward)	825,000
Pan-Island Competitive Fund	150,000

	£ 1,504,000

Balance to Contingency	116,840

	£ 1,620,840
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CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposals for the Comhairle's strategic spend summarize the approach for Round 5 with the Comhairle's Corporate Strategy and the Outer Hebrides Economic Recovery Strategy. The proposals in the Report are assessed to provide the most appropriate balance between local and strategic investment.