

Sustainable Development Fund Committee

25 January 2023

Present: Councillor M James (Chair)
Councillor S Alderman, Councillor S Hancock, Dr M Havard, Dr R Plummer and Councillor Mrs S Skyrme-Blackhall.

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am –12.00pm)

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

4. Disclosures of Interest

Dr R Plummer made a general (personal) declaration in respect of her membership of the Natural Resources Wales Board and as a trustee of Plantlife. Councillor S Alderman disclosed a personal interest in a number of the Greening Agriculture applications, and a prejudicial interest in GA22/REEF and GA22/COURT. He withdrew from the meeting while these two applications were considered. The Director of Placemaking, Decarbonisation and Engagement also disclosed a personal interest in application GA22/TED and withdrew from the meeting.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5 October 2022 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 5 October 2022 be confirmed and authenticated.

6. Sustainable Development Fund

The report of the External Funding Manager provided an update on the projects previously awarded SDF funding and for which there was a current financial commitment. An end of project report from Awel Aman Tawe had also been circulated.

The Committee was asked to approve an increased funding request in respect of SDF/032022/1 Lawrenny Shop CIC for which an SDF grant of £6,100 for solar panels had been approved at the meeting in March 2022. Further inspection had identified the need for structural improvements to the roof which had delayed the installation of the panels, and subsequently the cost had increased. A request had been made to increase the SDF grant by £1,487 to £7,587 which was 80% of cost of the updated panel quote of £9,484.



It was **resolved** to approve the grant increase.

The External Funding Manager reported that a total of £100,000 had been made available for grant distribution from the National Park Authority for the 2022/23 period and an additional £100,000 from Welsh Government Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places fund, making the total amount of grants available for 2022/23 £200,000. Grants approved during this financial year totalled £190,456.

She noted that 6 new applications had been received in this financial year, but as most of the funding had been allocated, applications would be considered in the next financial year at the April meeting. Applicants had been notified of this.

One Member noted that there were a number of projects to which large sums of money had been paid, but which had not yet been completed. She asked whether a 10% retention had been considered. The officer replied that payments used to be made in arrears, however due to the number of community groups now receiving funding, a discussion had taken place with the Finance Manager and up-front payments were now made. She reassured the Committee that she remained in regular contact with the projects and received regular detailed reports, referencing SDF/2019/3 Sustainable Printing in particular, as this project had experienced a number of problems, but was due to complete in April 2023. She added that for large and complicated projects a claim profile had been sought, so that not all the grant was paid up-front, and agreed to speak further to the Finance Manager regarding phased payments and to provide a further update to the Committee on this matter.

Noted.

7. Greening Agriculture Pilot Project

The report of the Farm Conservation Liaison Officer set out the background to the scheme and listed the projects approved in Phase 1 of the pilot project. It went on to explain that further funding had been secured over the next 3 years from the Sustainable Landscapes Sustainable Places Welsh Government Grant to develop the Greening Agriculture pilot with the aim of further decarbonisation within the agricultural sector both by reducing emissions and sequestration, with £50,000 of funding available for 2022/23. The report listed those applications which had submitted expressions of interest, together with the scoring matrix which had been used to establish priority.

Members were reminded that the Terms of Reference of the Sustainable Development Fund Committee had been changed at the meeting of the



National Park Authority in October 2022 to include decision making in relation to the Greening Agriculture pilot scheme, in order to ensure good governance and transparency. Those funding applications with the highest priority were therefore before the Committee for their consideration.

Members were pleased to see a project that engaged with dairy farmers, as an important sector with a significant impact on the county. They considered that the approach to grant allocation was well-structured and were pleased with the type and scale of projects before them for consideration. They asked whether there was any correlation between the size of farm and its energy use, however the officer replied that there did not appear to be, and that applications needed to be considered on a case by case basis. They hoped to be able to visit successful projects and officers agreed that this would be beneficial and would make the necessary arrangements.

Noted.

9. Exclusion of the public

It was noted that in discussing the applications, information might be shared which was personal or commercially sensitive, and it was therefore requested that the public be excluded from the meeting.

It was **resolved** that the public be excluded from the meeting as exempt information, as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, would be disclosed.

10. Greening Agriculture Applications for Consideration

Before considering the applications, the officer provided an outline of the different technologies for which funding had been sought as well as explaining the scoring matrix so that the Committee could better understand the recommendations that had been made. He also explained that for projects with an estimated project cost of greater than £20,000, a 70% intervention rate had been recommended, whereas for projects under £20,000 the recommendation was for an award of 75% costs.

Members were happy that these intervention rates be applied going forward, and it was **resolved** that for projects with an estimated project cost of greater than £20,000, 70% of costs be funded with the rate to be 75% of costs for projects under £20,000.

Members also considered ways in which the project could be fine-tuned for future years, and their views were noted.



[Councillor M James had to leave the meeting during consideration of GA22/CAERFAI, and the Deputy Chair, Dr M Havard took the Chair for this item. Councillor James abstained from voting on this application.]

The report before the Committee outlined 4 applications made to the fund. These had obtained the highest scores against the priority matrix. The matrix had been developed to allow objective assessment of the projects, and the Farm Conservation Officer noted that while he was aware of the farms, he had had little personal contact with the applicants.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Farm</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Score (20)</u>	<u>Estimated Project Cost</u>
GA22/REEF	Lower Broadmoor Farm, Talbenny	Refrigerant Heat Recovery System and Digital Control Panels for the Water tank,	16	£13,400
GA22/CAERFAI	Caerfai Farm, St Davids	50kwh Battery Storage	15	£30,000
GA22/PENDDU	Penrallt Ddu, Pontfaen	Vacuum pump, double bank plate cooler, Heat Recovery system	15	£22,441
GA22/COURT	Court Farm, Castlemartin	Heat recovery system, Variable Speed Vacuum Pump, 20kwh	14	£39,000

Each application was considered in detail against the scoring template and following discussions, it was **resolved** that funding be granted to the following applications, subject to the usual conditions of grant:

	Reference	Farm	Funding Awarded
a)	GA22/REEF	Lower Broadmoor Farm, Talbenny	Grant of £10,050 offered (75% costs).
b)	GA22/CAERFAI	Caerfai Farm, St Davids	70% of the total approximated cost be granted once a valid quote is produced. A total capped at £21,000
c)	GA22/PENDDU	Penrallt Ddu, Pontfaen	70% of the total approximated cost be granted. A total of £15,709.
d)	GA22/COURT	Court Farm, Castlemartin	Due to limited funding, it was resolved that a grant of £6,750 (75% of £9,000) be offered to undertake one of the three options outlined in the report

