

Sustainable Development Fund Committee

24 January 2024

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

Also in attendance: Arwel Evans (Farming Conservation Officer), Clare Flynn (Conservation Officer), Georgia Jones (Democratic Services Officer) Tegryn Jones (Chief Executive), Jamie Leatham (Decarbonisation Officer), Sarah Mellor (Conservation Team Leader / Lead Ecologist), Jessica Morgan (Head of Decarbonisation), and Jamie Taylor (Dark Skies Officer).

(Virtual Meeting: 10.00am –11.50am)

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Dr R Plummer made a general declaration as a Board Member of Natural Resources Wales and a Trustee of Plantlife. Councillor S Alderman made a general declaration as a Member of the National Farmers Union. Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall and Councillor M James disclosed personal interests in report 01/24, the SDF Update. All Members remained for the duration of the meeting.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 13 September 2023 were presented for confirmation and authentication.

On the proposal of Dr R Plummer, seconded by Councillor S Hancock, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 13 September 2023 be confirmed and authenticated.

4. Action Log

Members noted that all actions had been completed.

Noted.

5. Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Report

The Chair welcomed the Head of Decarbonisation who confirmed that a new Decarbonisation Officer, Jamie Leatham, was now in post. The Head of Decarbonisation presented the SDF report that included a summary of



current financial commitments for the scheme, a map of approved projects, an update of projects completed since the last meeting and the SDF financial position 2023/24.

Further to a discussion held in the last meeting, the Officer confirmed that the underspend from the SDF fund had successfully been carried through to the new financial year. She clarified that with the underspend (£14,708), the total amount available for SDF projects in the new financial year would be £64,708.

It was noted that a small number of projects had fallen behind schedule and a Member requested that more details regarding the progress of these projects be featured in the 'Update/comment' column of the table in future reports. This was noted by the Officer.

The report featured a map that illustrated the geographical spread of the SDF recipients and a Member asked why there had not been any applications from the Haverfordwest and Milford Haven areas. The Officer confirmed that the SDF fund had initially been promoted to communities within the National Park however projects outside of the boundary could also be eligible if the benefactors were from within the Park. The Officer confirmed that Members were welcome to refer eligible projects from outside of the National Park boundary to the Authority as Officers would be happy to discuss further with applicants.

As requested in the previous meeting, the Dark Skies Officer was invited to give a brief presentation to update Members on the SDF funded Dark Skies project. The presentation provided a brief overview of the project, details of relevant accreditation, a summary of the project aims, next steps and also engagement events for the project. Members acknowledged the importance of the project and agreed that a lot of work was needed to raise awareness of the impacts of light pollution.

Noted.

6. Greening Agriculture Project Update

The Chair welcomed the Farming Conservation Officer who presented a report that provided Members with an update of current and completed projects, the current financial commitments of the Greening Agriculture scheme and a funding breakdown over three years.

The Officer provided further details on how each ongoing project was progressing and stated that he aimed to feature more progress details in future reports. It was noted that the Hafod Grove project had been hindered by grid capacity issues and a Member commented that this



experience could prove to be a good learning point for the Authority. The Officer agreed and confirmed that he would keep it in mind.

Noted.

7. 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.

On the proposal of Councillor S Skyrme-Blackhall, seconded by Councillor S Alderman, 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.

8. Connecting the Coast Applications for Consideration

The Chair welcomed the Conservation Team Leader / Lead Ecologist who presented a report that introduced Members to the Connecting the Coast Pilot and applications received that were in excess of £20,000. The report featured details of the grant scoring and prioritisation process and provided a breakdown of all proposals that Members approval was sought for. It was noted that the applicant and farm name for each application had been omitted from the report and the Officer confirmed that this had been done for data protection purposes. A summary of the scoring system was provided to Members and due to the complexity of it, the Officer confirmed that a report would be stored on record should further clarification be required in future.

In response to a query raised, the Officer confirmed that standard rates had been applied across all applications.

Each application was considered in detail against the scoring template and following discussions, it was **RESOLVED**, on the proposal of Dr R Plummer and seconded by Dr M Havard, that the following proposals in principle be approved up to the maximum value presented:

	Ref no	Farm Type	Proposal Overview	Maximum Funding Awarded
a)	CTC/01/PC	Coastal Dairy farming operation with diversification	The management of a coastal slope, creation of a new hay meadow habitat, trialing of a simple herbal lay and hedgerow restoration.	£31,618.53



b)	CTC/02/ DH	Coastal mixed arable and livestock farm	To support wildlife dependent on rare arable habitat, to provide support for managing existing mixed Heathland and Purple moor-grass dominated habitats and hedgerow restoration.	£30,801
c)	CTC/03/ LF	Mixed livestock and arable	The management of a coastal SSSI and semi-natural habitat, renewal of fencing and ongoing support for the farmer. The creation of 2 invertebrate rich pastures and coastal slope.	£25,527.50
d)	CTC/04/ SST	Coastal livestock	This proposal combines and supports the management of an existing coastal slope and species rich pastures adjacent to the National Trail.	£23,332.50
e)	CTC/05/ SPK	Estuarine livestock farm	The management of an ancient, rare and species-rich pasture and hay meadow, the sowing of an enhanced herbal ley and hedgerow restoration.	£25,730
f)	CTC/06/ SHF	Coastal Dairy Farm	To support the retreat of intensive agriculture from the tops of coastal slopes by using precision agriculture techniques; to support wildlife dependent on rare arable habitat.	£25,150
g)	CTC/07/ BIF	Coastal mixed arable and livestock farm	The management of an extensive coastal slope and hay meadows which form a valuable swathe of semi natural habitat and to provide the farmer with ongoing support.	£23,640

9. Proposed Changes to the Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) Committee Terms of Reference

The report outlined proposed changes to the SDF Committee's name and terms of reference. The report featured background information of the SDF Committee and the reasons as to why the review was proposed.

A discussion ensued regarding the name of the Committee, and it was agreed that 'The Grants Committee' would be the most appropriate choice. The Chief Executive agreed and confirmed that a report seeking final approval of the changes would be presented to the National Park Authority.

Noted.

