

**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE ON 17 JUNE 2008**

SUBJECT: CIFAL FINDHORN

BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To respond to a request to continue funding contributions to the CIFAL Findhorn UN Training Centre
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (8) and (9) of the Council's Administrative Scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Council contribute two annual payments of £6,250 (financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10) to CIFAL Findhorn, subject to contributions also being secured from HIE and Scottish Government.**

Note: a presentation on the past, and proposed future work of CIFAL Findhorn will be given to this meeting by May East, the executive director.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following a full appraisal of the potential to develop a UN Training Centre based on Findhorn Eco village, the Environmental Services Committee agreed at its meeting on 26 April 2006, to contribute £25,000 towards the initial two years of the project. CIFAL Findhorn was established as the twelfth such centre in the world (para 11 of the Minute refers)
- 3.2 The purpose of the training centres is to promote sustainability through governmental agencies; links to the local authority in each centre are critical to their operation.
- 3.3 CIFAL Findhorn is now a company limited by guarantee, comprising a Board and minimal staffing. The Council is represented by Councillor Jeff Hamilton and Councillor Gordon McDonald on the Board. The organisation has run several events and conferences over the two years and has inputted to the CPP Environmental Theme Group, and the Council has been represented at international conventions in Geneva and Atlanta. CIFAL Findhorn has gained a creditable reputation as a small scale, efficiently run rural centre within UNITAR, which, in the light of potential retrenchment of the 12 training centres, is likely to bode well for its future.
- 3.4 The international CIFAL organisation has suggested that at individual centre, CIFAL Boards be chaired by a civic dignitary at the highest possible governmental level, and the Convenor has been approached to consider

taking on this more honorary role. This would not affect the existing two-Member representation of the Council on the current Board, and on this basis the Convenor has expressed his positive support.

- 3.5 CIFAL Findhorn is seeking funding to implement the next stages of its development, but is reducing its request to the original public sector contributors, in anticipation of increased private sector involvement. The request is for 50% of the initial contribution. A Business Plan is being prepared by the Board, on the basis of successful funding commitments.
- 3.6 The Council will seek to achieve continued benefits from its involvement in and support for CIFAL. Through active participation in the CIFAL Board, joint working at officer level, and involvement in events, the Council will ensure that CIFAL activities reflect not only UNITAR obligations but the training themes and subjects which will benefit and be relevant to Moray. The Council and Moray will also continue to build on Moray's recognised role in being a leader in development of sustainable development practice and achievements.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

Membership of CIFAL Findhorn is beneficial to the Moray Council, as it allows access to, and influence upon local training programmes for sustainability and exchange of information and experience across wide areas

(b) Policy and Legal

None

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

Financial

Funding would be from the Economic Development budget, as CIFAL Findhorn is regarded as a prestigious promotion of the Moray area, which stands to benefit visitor interest and tourist facilities in the locality. The ED budget is £500,000 p.a. and currently has commitments for £238,590 in 2008/09, and for £189,075 in 2009/10.

The proposed contribution is £6,250 in 2008/09 and £6,250 in 2009/10.

Risks

None

Staffing

Works involving CIFAL is contained within existing workloads.

(d) Consultations

The Board Member representations are aware of this request. It is understood, from informal consultation, that HIE and Scottish Government contributions will be made from both. The Principal Accountant has confirmed the financial information in paragraph 4(c).

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The continuing development of CIFAL Findhorn is of benefit to the Council and the wider community. It is establishing a reputation for useful training in sustainability, and it is important that the Findhorn centre survives the rationalisation of CIFAL currently being conducted by UNITAR.**
- 5.2 The reduced financial contribution being sought is therefore seen as good value for money.**

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Background Papers:
Ref: DL/KT