



REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 22 SEPTEMBER 2009

SUBJECT: CIFAL UN TRAINING CENTRE

BY: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To respond to an urgent request from CIFAL Findhorn to increase the Council's funding contribution over the next 3 years.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section E of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to applications for funding assistance.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- **Agree to contribute to CIFAL Findhorn £15,000 per annum over the next 3 financial years.**
- **Agree a one-off contribution of £2,500 this year towards the relocation of CIFAL Findhorn to the Forres Business Park.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has been affiliated to CIFAL Findhorn for the past 4 years, and has contributed to its budget along with Highland & Island Enterprise, and the Scottish Government. CIFAL also receives income from its programme of conferences and seminars, in-kind contributions from Findhorn Eco-Village, and private sector sponsorship of events.
- 3.2 Reports on CIFAL's Business Plan, constitution, and funding have been submitted to the Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee.
- 3.3 The Council's present funding commitment ends on 30 September 2009; it has paid £6,250 over the past two financial years, and £12,500 pa for the two years previous to that.
- 3.4 In the past year of operation, the Chairmanship of the CIFAL Findhorn Board has been accorded to the Convenor of the Council, which brings CIFAL Findhorn into line with other UNITAR Centres where the local governmental organisation is closely affiliated.

- 3.5 Also in the past 6 months, CIFAL Findhorn has moved offices from Findhorn Eco-Village to Horizon Scotland in Forres Business Park, to project a more prestigious and business-like location. The move has largely been funded and facilitated by HIE, however a request for a £2,500 contribution from the Council has been received.
- 3.6 This report would normally be submitted in the first instance to the Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee as holder of the Economic Development budget, from which these funds are paid. However, due to the urgency of the funding situation with CIFAL Findhorn, whose budget year runs from 1 October each year, this request is being submitted direct to the Policy & Resources Committee.

4. THE PROPOSED FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

- 4.1 CIFAL Findhorn is the smallest of UNITAR's training centres worldwide. When CIFAL Findhorn was accorded UN status in 2005, it became the eleventh such centre; since then, there have been no additions, and in the past year, UNITAR HQ in Geneva have closed down three of the eleven, with two others (in Europe) under threat.
- 4.2 CIFAL Findhorn has consistently been among the best performing of the Centres; it operates "on a shoestring" by comparison with the others, but manages to return the best value-for-money audits.
- 4.3 UNITAR HQ are seeking to not only rationalise the number of centres, but to centralise operations, and in doing so, are requiring an increased proportion of each centre's funding to be subscribed annually to Geneva. CIFAL Findhorn has protested, but, in the present stringent climate of rationalisation, is reluctantly looking to commit the extra funds. (Some of this may be by 'in-kind' professional support to Geneva by the CIFAL Findhorn Executive Officer.)
- 4.4 In return, UNITAR has pledged to increase the profile of the CIFAL Centres and permit the increased usage of the "UN badge" and to that extent, Moray (not just CIFAL Findhorn) is displayed and promoted on its newly designed website.
- 4.5 The Scottish Government has agreed to contribute £30,000 pa over 3 years; HIE has followed with a £15,000 pa contribution over 3 years; the Council, as the primary 'patron' of CIFAL Findhorn, and as its other main funding partner, is being asked to match these commitments with £15,000 pa over the next 3 years (2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13).

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) *Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan*

- i) The commitment to CIFAL is part of the programme or priority outcomes with the Community Planning 'Greener' Strategic Group.
- ii) Joint working with CIFAL Findhorn, and HIE is accommodated with the Planning & Development Service Improvement Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implications arising.

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

Financial Implications

The Economic Development budget for year 2010/11 has commitments extending to some £190,000 of the total £850,000.

The Economic Development budget for the current year 2009/10 has £88,743 uncommitted as at mid September.

Staffing and Property

There are no implications arising.

(d) Consultations

Consultations have been held with CIFAL Findhorn and Highlands & Islands Enterprise in producing this report.

The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted and his comments will be made available to the meeting.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council is committed to the work and advancement of CIFAL in Moray. The Centre has proved a viable success, and has survived the rationalisation and downsizing of operations imposed by the UN's UNITAR headquarters in Geneva, largely because of its efficiency and unique rural setting (all other CIFAL operations are in major urban centres).
- 5.2 While the central funding demands are regrettable, the 'UN Badge' of CIFAL Findhorn is a valuable asset for Moray to forego, and in view of the other main partners' commitment to increase this financial backing, it is recommended that Moray Council also commit the extra funds requested.

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Background Papers:
Ref: DL/JC