



Quarterly Progress Report

Section 1 – Project Details

Climate Action Hub	North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub
Reporting Period	April – end September 2022
Report Completed By	Joan Lawrie
Designation / Job Title	Project Manager

Section 2 – Project Report

This section is designed to capture the progress being made with your project during the reporting period towards your agreed outputs and outcomes.

We recommend using a maximum of 500 words per text box, feel free to use bullet points. A guidance note is given at the end of this document.

1. Interim Progress

Please detail the progress you have made towards the achievement of your objectives. You should refer to your Grant Offer Letter. By describing the indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved:

- **Training delivery of workshop to introduce and form Net Zero/Environmental policies to at least 25 groups.**
- Currently being delivered and also available in a self-directed format. We have worked through training with Members to 15 groups to date. Have now embarked on a programme of wider delivery through open workshops and have worked this through with 6 groups on an individual one on one situation – Development Officer going on a visit and delivering self-directed in one on one situation. Total to date 21 groups and will surpass target this annum. **Partially Achieved**
- **Working collaboratively with Climate Action Town's project support the development, design and delivery of at least one community led climate action project in both Alness and Invergordon and ensure community and third sector organisations in both towns receive carbon literacy and net zero policy training.**
- Continue to collaborate in Climate Action Town's Project and working with newly formed Invergordon Anchor Group who are supporting groups in the town and seeking funding for Development Officer for Invergordon Development Trust. Identified and working with the Place in Alness as Community Anchor for that

town. Collaborating with SCDC Sessions ongoing in both places. Pace of delivery is working within CAT structure of role out so delivery has been slower but more meaningful. Have worked with Zero Waste Refill Shop Social Enterprise to form in Alness. **Partially Achieved**

- **Further develop and support existing networks of Future Communities Highlands & Islands and support formation of networks in Orkney and Shetland.**
- Continue to work with Future Communities H&I to develop that network and bring in new attendees. However, recognised that not all groups in the region are as far ahead in their journey towards climate action and now on forming as a CIC are encouraging membership of the Hub and Members Networking Meetings with view to a pipeline though to Future Communities H&I. Continue to support the network in provision of a website and promotions of it as well as being a key anchor within it. Working with Orkney LAG group on the formation of a network on the Islands, have working group looking at further Orkney Climate Festival. Contributed and collaborated on network engagement sessions with Shetland Islands Council to form community climate action network, in early stages but strong network emerging. **Partially Achieved.**
- **Support 40 groups/organisations/projects with seed funding and/or support to access diversified funding portfolios community groups throughout the region**
- We have to date supported 40 community groups with seed funding allocation from startup projects to community engagement on community led climate action. To date we have assisted groups in obtaining further funding of over £500k through the following. Assisted 3 groups with funding for SSE Sustainable Development Fund. JoG Mill Trust – net zero proofing of application, building redevelopment with renewable heating systems (£300k) Re:Circulate Sutherland – plastic recycling (£17k) Farmer Jones Academy – climate skills facility (£95k) – installation of geodesic domes, youth land/biodiversity skills), Ullapool Unpacked – mobile zero waste shop £20k Coastal Communities Funding for full time staff member. £35K – The Place, Alness to secure long term the continuation of Dandelion Project Growing Spaces at the Field (Outdoor Youth Club/Facility) There are further funding applications in pipeline we have assisted with. **Achieved**
- **Introduce community led climate action projects to at least 4 communities in the region where no previous climate engagement is occurring.**
- Working with Wick Development Trust on aligning community led climate action within their tourism project of taking over a campsite and on community engagement in the Wick area. No previous climate action projects or engagement has taken place in the Wick area.
- Working with Golspie Development Trust on community engagement and the funding of community led climate action in the Golspie area. While there has been previous climate action in the purchase of electrical vehicles this has been from the perspective of community transport and not as engagement towards behavioural change in the community. Golspie work involves Green Growth

Accelerator due to the flooding risk and there is ambition to make it a climate conscious place.

- In early stages of working with Dornie Community on a climate action plan for the area instigated due to current cost of living crises and high reliance on oil fired heating systems in a rural area, community wish to approach issue in the longer term through community led climate action solutions.
- **Partially achieved**
- **Provision of monthly climate action events and conversations**
- Regular monthly events and conversations take place, we tailor these to the feedback we receive from the now growing Membership and community groups throughout the region. Changes in staffing did slow progress but we now have timetable for the rest of the annum to deliver these.
- **Partially Achieved**
- **Support region wide Climate Festival programme with at least ten localities operating in person events to engage communities working collaboratively with partners and agencies.**
- Highland Climate Festival had a reach of events being held in 32 localities. Orkney Climate Festival had a reach of events being held in 15 localities. Shetland held its own Climate Week led by the local authority of which we contributed towards 3 events. Operated Highland Climate Festival in conjunction with Highland Adapts and Orkney Climate Festival in conjunction with Orkney Science Festival. We are now working with groups in Highland and the Islands contributing towards a working group for a Highlands & Islands Climate Festival to be held during Climate Week of 2023 based on the evaluation and experiences of 2022.
- **Achieved**
- **Engage with communities throughout the region to both create new community led climate action projects and strengthen, supporting sustainability of existing projects working with at least 25 organisations**
- Have directly assisted 7 organisations in obtaining further funding sources. Have an additional 8 community organisations we have assisted to embed climate action in projects with funding applications pending. Now hosting regular funding masterclasses to community organisations alongside offering tailored support.

2. Responsive Actions

Has there been a requirement to take actions as a result of Scottish Government feedback to previous progress reports? Tell us about the actions that were taken:

Discussions with community organisations in Skye, Lochalsh and Lochaber with actions to now cover their areas officially have met with consensus from the groups and plan to rebrand shortly.

3. Obstacles

Have you experienced any constraints or difficulties? If so let us know what action you have taken to overcome them and what effect they have had on your project:

Staffing has been the made obstacle. A lack of experienced Development Officers across Highlands & Islands has definitely been an obstacle and unable to compete against then local authority positions being created in climate action (still internal work to the LA's and not external.

Due to lack of experience we have now created more senior development officer posts for the staff who do have experience and are attempting to retain them while recruiting for Community Engagement Officers we can give experience and skills development to in the hope of future development officers and succession planning.

4. Experiences

Please provide a short narrative giving examples of positive experiences or success stories stating what objective/target they relate to, that will enhance our understanding of your progress to date:

We are providing the example of Ullapool Unpacked CIC as a group we have worked with from within days of us launched the NH&I Climate Hub. UU CIC came to us initially from interest of what the Hub was as they have been promoting at that time through a stand at community events zero waste refill. They had been awarded funding for a mobile trailer to operate a mobile zero waste refill shop but had a shortfall in that funding to secure the trailer and to start operating. When we launched seed funding we were able to offer them £500 to meet the shortfall that they had. We also arranged for them to secure funding for a Community Learning Exchange to Thurso where a community led zero waste refill shop had already been established. Working with Evie at Ullapool Unpacked CIC we have developed a close relationship from reviewing their Business Plan to assisting with an application with her to the Firstport Social Innovation Challenge where they have recently been awarded £25,000 to assist them with their ambition of opening a local community climate hub in Ullapool with zero waste refill shop and space for workshops and advice in sustainable living through repair and upcycling. We are now currently assisting them in a potential community buyout of a building in Ullapool in which house this local hub. Evie is driving force behind UU CIC and is still in her early 20's. Evie is part of our Climate Festival Working Group and regularly shares her experiences with members.

5. Risks

Have any of the risks identified in your original application been realised during the grant so far? If so, which ones and what actions have been taken in response and how have these impacted on the overall achievement of objectives and outcomes:

Staffing was identified as a risk and we see it still as a risk going forwards given that we are now beginning to see a significant uptake in our membership and the work and role of the Hub. We are frequently keying into large consultations and work ongoing in Highland such as the Green Growth Accelerator and also work within

CPP's to prepare for net zero and offer training and support.

Staffing changes have hindered capacity to deliver but we do feel with the new staffing structure as identified above we are making progress to reduce the risk.

6. Lessons Learned

What lessons have you learned during this reporting period that you feel will enhance the achievements of the overall objectives?

Taking time to relationship build and build up the network across the region has been beneficial and we are now reaping success from that. Using our social media channels and systems of support to make ourselves very approachable has also been highly beneficial. We may not always be the most polished but it is definitely attracting community organisations to us who would not generally engage with climate action. Building the relationships through in person visits which does take time given the geographic location has been highly beneficial and builds a sense of reciprocity and trust.

Another lesson learned is being highly responsive to the issues currently facing communities, we have responded to the cost of living crises by specifically targeting events needed for the communities to respond to the needs of their communities e.g. Food Larders/Community Fridges but also doing it in a way which starts a climate and behavioral change in their communities. We are also working closely with Caithness Poverty Action Group and Sutherland Poverty Action Group (sub groups of CPP's) on longer term plans such as possibility of district heating systems.

Partnership working is a key part of our work and takes time to form but have strong partnerships with Highland Adapts, Local Authorities, Third Sector Interfaces and CPP's.

Section 3 – Finances

7. Expenditure Breakdown

Please provide a detailed breakdown of actual expenditure to date which this interim report relates, compared to the planned expenditure detailed in your grant offer letter:

Agreed Grant Funding	£300,000
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Expenditure Category	Planned Expenditure	Actual Expenditure
Salaries	£108,816.96	£60,873.09
Project Management	£12,000	£12,000
Set up/IT/Equipment Costs	£2,000	£1809.79
Stationary/Postage	£600	£24.18
Staff Training	£600	£0.00
Expenses – Travel & Accommodation	£5250	£7132.86
Marketing	£1500	£1342.86
Subscriptions	£1100	£1677.69
Funding	£9000	£8500
Events	£5,400	£7696.96
Project Costs	£5,000	£5283.46
Office Rental	£3,000	£3,000
TOTAL	£ 154,266.96	£ 109,304.89

8. Expenditure Explained

Please comment on the breakdown of the expenditure above, particularly explaining any significant disparities, particularly in reference to the categories with the most significant variances between Planned and Actual expenditure. Please set out if any underspend at the time of reporting is likely to remain an underspend or if this is forecast to be spent in a future quarter of this financial year:

Staffing has an underspend in first six months due to issues in recruitment however changes being made to accommodate a wider geographic area and more staff having finally come online following staff departures will see this underspend reduce before end of financial year. Travel & Accommodation has seen increase in planned spend due to rising costs in fuel costs and accommodation costs particularly in Highland region. Making use of underspend in other areas to accommodate this and in planning for future expenditure.

Section 4 – Support

This section is designed to capture the support needed and offered. Please share reflections on the following

9. Learning for the Wider Network:

Have you developed resources or tools or ran events that other hubs would benefit from? Are there any demonstrator projects in your area that it would be useful to promote more widely?

- Net Zero/Environmental Policy Workshop & Resources

NH&I Climate Hub have developed a workshop and associated self-directed resource which enables community organisations to develop a Net Zero/Environmental Policy. The Workshop and resource takes the group through the practical considerations they need to be making. While it does not provide a carbon measurement it encourages organisations to make changes and be more environmentally meaningful in their operations from small behavioural changes – ditching disposables, reducing waste, how they deal with waste to larger issues of heating and energy of buildings and facilities. The resource and training provides further signposting for support.

- Funding Masterclasses

Resource developed in achieving funding success led by successful fundraiser and grant writer in how to achieve diversified funding streams for projects and look at wider sustainability in projects. Masterclass specifically designed at current time to be addressing cost of living crises in longer term through climate action projects.

- Potential for replicability in partnership working with Adaptation initiatives and how the NH&I Climate Hub is partnering in local place planning and developing working with communities resources to have climate action plans sitting side by side with climate risk assessments.

10. Support

How can we support you? Please let us know of any advice or support you may need from the Scottish Government, the other hubs or wider stakeholder working group:

We would like to see some kind of standard carbon/climate awareness training or presentation developed, a one hour session that could be delivered to community councils with signposting.

11. Further Comment

Please make any further comments you feel might help illustrate your progress, or any feedback that you would like to give us regarding the grant process:

n/a

Section 5 – Declaration

Signed	Joan Lawrie
Date	2 nd December 2022

Guidance Note
Grants Interim Evaluation Report

Question	Guidance
1. Interim Progress	You should document how you are on track with meeting your objectives. You may wish to refer to your Grant Offer Letter. Please describe indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved.
2. Responsive Actions	Here you should detail any previous feedback from the Scottish Government and what action has been taken.
3. Obstacles	Please comment on any constraints or significant difficulties you have faced over the reporting period and how you addressed them or how you intend to address them. Describe the effect or impact that these have had, or may have, on the achievement of your targets.
4. Experiences	Please provide a short narrative giving examples of innovation or good practice, positive experiences or successful interventions that will help us to understand your progress and success to date. This feedback will be used for publicity purposes.
5. Risks	Comment on any risks that you originally identified that have been realised. Please explain what actions you have taken to address these or what actions you intend to take.
6. Lessons Learned	The Scottish Government is very interested to hear of lessons that you may have learnt during your project/programme and may use your experience in future policy consideration.
7. Expenditure Breakdown	Please provide a detailed breakdown of actual expenditure in the period to which this report relates, against expenditure planned. Please use the expenditure categories agreed with Scottish Government as outlined in your grant offer letter, or during the grant if you have had approval to change categories.
8. Expenditure Explained	Please comment on the detailed breakdown attached in Q8, in particular explaining any significant disparities between planned and actual expenditure.
9. Learning for the Wider Network	The Scottish Government is very interested to hear of resources/tools or events that other hubs could learn from. We'd also be interested in any demonstrator projects that it would be useful to highlight to communities across Scotland. Highlighting any innovative solutions to project financing would also be welcomed.

10. Support	Please highlight any areas / discussion points for the wider network, stakeholder working group or any support the Scottish Government could provide.
11. Further Comment	Please use this space to make any further comments you think will illustrate your progress. Do not exceed 500 words.



North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub 2021-2022 Annual Report



NORTH HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS
CLIMATE HUB

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Summary

The North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub commenced operations in September 2021 with a recruitment and development of branding and presence taking place. The Team formed of Development Officers and Project Manager in November wasting no time in getting activities underway with a process of engagement with agencies and community groups throughout the region. To date the Hub have held seven events from sharing best practice on community growing, community larders and food waste to the circular economy along with mapping events. In total 155 groups throughout the region have been engaged with a strong emphasis on community led climate action as a means to solving community needs.

Outcomes

In the first six months of operation the North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub had the following objectives/expected outcomes of the Scottish Government Grant.

Engage with existing networks in the area to create a linked regional network of planning partnerships, climate action networks, community councils, and other organisations and partnerships.

- Engage with this network on two levels;
 1. To offer support and advice on community led climate action
 2. To gain awareness and compile a directory of localized funding that already exists in the Northern Highlands & Islands Region.
- Develop virtual Community Learning Exchanges where best practice can be demonstrated and shared with other existing networks.
- Develop a range of thematic groups within existing networks where area-specific resources can be linked.

Key Deliverables

The targets/milestones against which progress in achieving objectives/expected outcomes are monitored as:

1. Complete mapping exercise of communities and climate action networks in the region
2. Create thematic groups within existing climate action networks
3. Create groups where non exist with an emphasis on partnerships and creating sustainability within projects
4. Complete mapping exercise of existing projects which relate to climate action, identifying where gaps exist and where linkages between projects could be found
5. Complete mapping exercise of localised funding sources which would welcome climate action projects and identify where gaps exist
6. Promotion of the Hub and how climate action projects can achieve outcomes that are also solutions for other community needs
7. Proactive engagement with communities and Community Planning Partnerships in all areas across the Northern Highlands & Islands region
 - Offer support and promotion for climate action projects
 - Develop a range of events which illustrate best practice
 - Develop a range of resources which reduce bureaucracy on projects from existing literature and examples of best practice

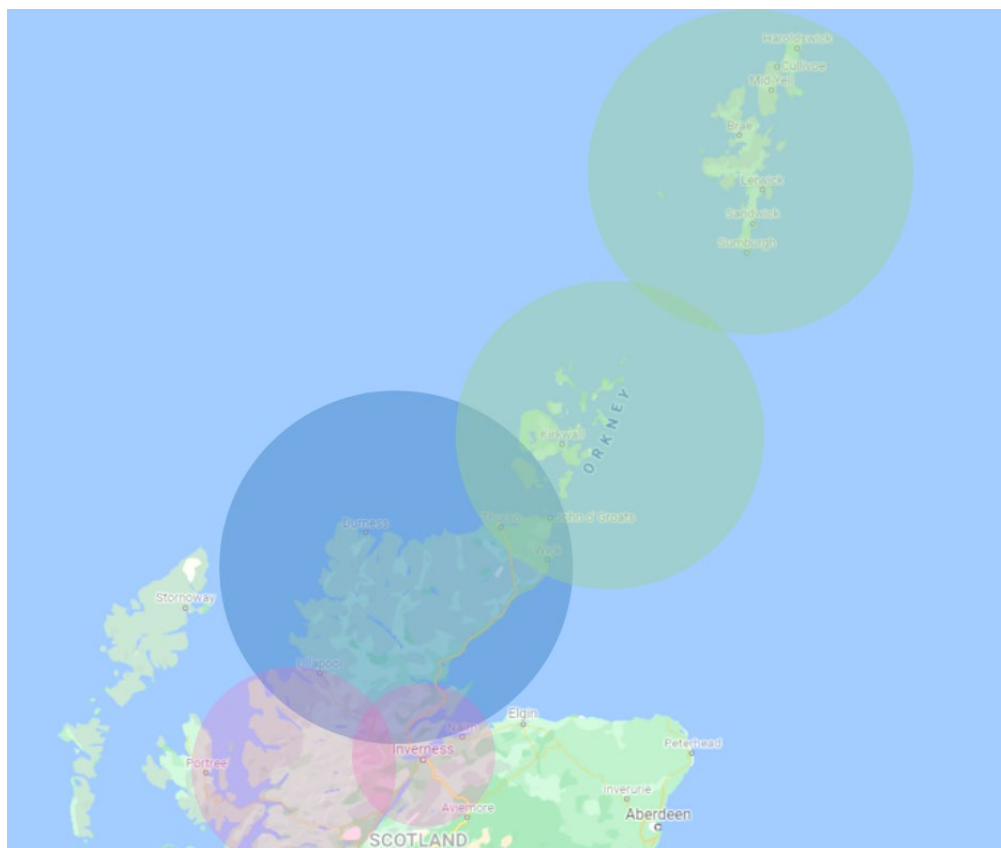
Hub Startup

The North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub commenced operations on 1st September 2021 under Thurso Community Development Trust with the initial challenges being recruitment, setting up of branding and promotional channels of social media and website along with the setup of administrative systems.

As operating under Thurso Community Development Trust who have systems in place including bank account and prior registration with HMRC as an employer and with the Pensions Regulator along with additional regulatory processes of employment and organisational policies this process was straightforward for the Hub on startup.

Area of the Hub

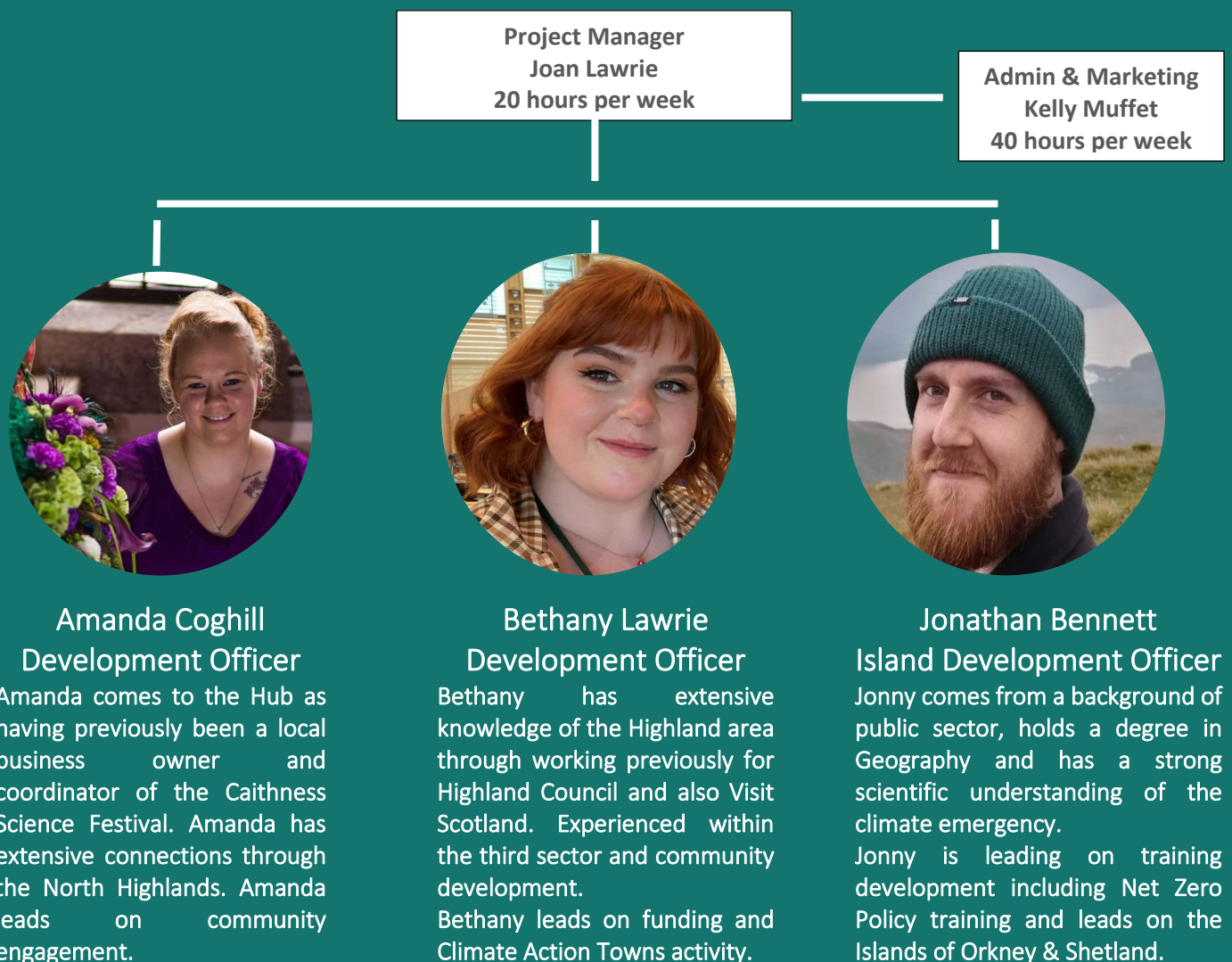
The North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub covers a large geographical area. Orkney and Shetland tend to start apart without linkages to the mainland or to each other. While officially the North Highlands was defined in the original application as from the Inverness City Boundary North in Highland Region due to the nature of Highland communities and the strong links already there between organisations unofficially the Hub offers any group/community within Highland support. We found very early on that this was a sensible decision to have made in both mapping of projects and gaining connections. An early relationship with Highland Adapts, an initiative led by Highland Council looking at both mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the Highland Council area cemented this decision as difficult to refuse support to further communities throughout Highland.



Recruitment

Due to the nature of the geographical area we felt it was important at an early stage to operate in both a virtual and representative manner across the region with recruitment that represented this in having staff based throughout the region. We therefore recruited specifically for an Islands based Development Officer and encouraged applications across Highland for the remaining Development Officer and Admin & Marketing roles. All positions were offered as homebased working with the option of also working from key anchor organisation offices if restrictions allowed for it. We discussed the roles also with key anchor organisations in Highland such as Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, Go Golspie, Moo Food and the Libertie Project Ltd for potential staff shares and looking ahead to ensuring staff were embedded in communities but also available virtually.

Recruitment however, is ultimately dependent on the quality of applicants and we found it difficult to recruit for applicants who were experienced in community development and the third sector or climate action. There are evidenced issues for other posts in Highland for Development Officers. Our appointments for the posts resulted in two Highland based Development Officers, one in Lybster on the East Coast of Caithness and the other in Inverness covering the southern area of Highland for support but with strong links and experience of Caithness and Sutherland based organisations. We also appointed an Islands Development Officer with strong experience in climate change actions. All staff were appointed on full time contracts.



Branding, Marketing & Systems

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY-LED CLIMATE ACTION IN THE NORTHERN HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS.

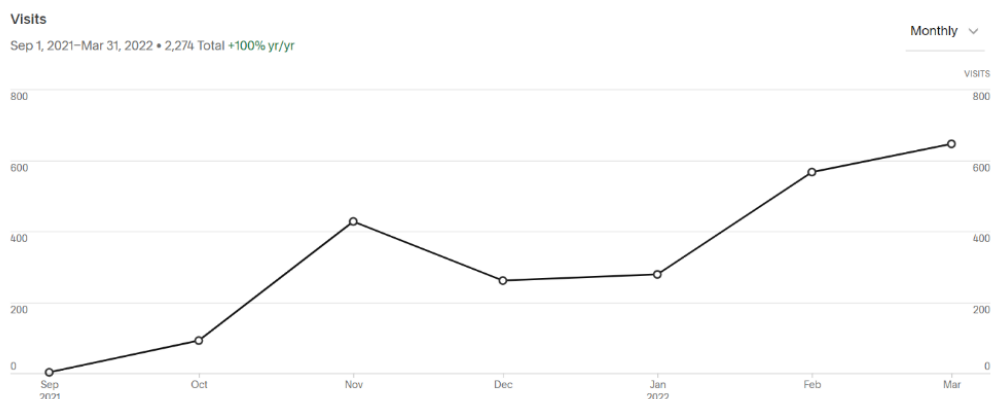
ABOUT THE HUB

Branding

The logo for the North Highland & Islands Climate Hub was developed by a local Caithness designer with the colours representing the region and symbology representing the coast, mountains and glens which is carried through into the font. The symbology has a double meaning where it can appear also as hands to indicate support.

Website

The website was launched in November 2021 and while elements remain under development as needs have been identified acts as a placeholder for the moment with further content under development to be in place by end June 2022. The graphic below records the website visitors over the first six months of operation as 2,274 visitors. Website, social media channels and graphics have all been designed around accessibility requirements. The website has been designed and is updated in house using Squarespace.



Social Media

The Hub operates four social media channels, all of which launched in October 2021. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. The Hub Marketing Plan places the emphasis on encouraging and celebrating community led climate action so the emphasis is on celebrating the activities of groups operating throughout the region, connecting with them and providing engagement with them. We also follow a calendar of awareness days through social media posting our own content and encourage groups to share content e.g. #worldenvironmentday

Content for social media is blended with dynamic content for the website where we frequently publish blog posts with the aim of increasing engagement with the website which are shared to the social media channels to give additional information.

Graphics used on social media are created in house by either our Admin & Marketing Officer or Project Manager while we build a catalogue of images from groups and communities taking climate action across the region.

Social Media Channel	Followers	Reach to 31 st March
Facebook	681	22,062
Twitter	324	25,181
Instagram	383	1,388
LinkedIn	97	383

While Facebook indicates that it has greater engagement we have found that this has been mainly due to recruitment posts having been sponsored posts which has therefore increased engagement levels. To date we have only sponsored recruitment but will consider it further for events. Typically higher engagement is seen on Facebook where we are sharing and celebrating communities. Instagram and Twitter are where we see more organic meaningful engagement.

Systems

To date of 31st March we have used two systems, one as a project management system with Asana and the second using Airtable as a customer relationship manager to record details of community organisations and groups forming a database of contacts. We have found this to be useful but not tied together enough for our needs so are now exploring a joint customer relationship manager (CRM) system and project management system through Monday.com which is in the early stages of being set up. We want to have systems in place where if any member of staff is absent then another can take up the casework without any issue and have a case file to track through.

These systems have been invaluable in tracking funding awards and creating dashboard for monitoring and evaluation and are integrated into Microsoft Teams which we also use on a daily basis.

Templates for the systems which we have in use could be made available to additional Hubs and we are finding while in the early stages of developing Monday.com we can integrate Eventbrite bookings to this alongside survey responses and track our membership.

Summary of outputs from deliverables

Complete mapping exercise of communities and climate action networks in the region

- Highland – a network exists named Future Communities Highlands & Islands which connects Climate Action Groups. We have worked with this existing network and are capacity building within it having created a website for the network and working with Planet Sutherland to develop it further.
- Orkney – No climate action network currently exists, our Orkney Development Officer is working with key groups including Voluntary Action Orkney and Westry Development Trust to build this network with the first incentive being a climate week/festival in Orkney later in 2022.
- Shetland – No climate action network currently exists, Islands Development Officer is working with Shetland Islands Council Climate Officers (8 appointed towards the end of 2021) to build a network.

Create thematic groups within existing climate action networks

- Future Communities Highlands & Islands is a high level climate action network. While the network exists we do not want to duplicate and there are currently insufficient members to create thematic groups. We are therefore looking towards building that network and working with existing networks including CPP sub groups and throughout 2022 building a Membership of the Hub to have varying levels of climate action which is accessible to all with the view of building capacity within Future Communities Highlands & Islands.
- Have concentrated on thematic shared learning opportunities and have held events on Community Fridges/Larders, Community Growing and Circular Economy/Recycling.

Create groups where non exist with an emphasis on partnerships and creating sustainability within projects

- Offering of seed funding has been the route to developing this further with several groups linked together due to their funding awards including the most successful of Incredible Edible Inverness, The Libertie Project and Crown Connects. We are looking to join these projects further with other groups across Inverness having initial introductions and working with Velocity, Clachworks and Culduthel Community Woodlands.
- Funding a pilot community composting using excess wool in Sutherland has connected this group with another group we have been assisting but not yet funded who are looking to create a wool mill in Sutherland with no waste. The groups are now working together and have secured an Interface grant to explore both options further through introductions and assistance from the Hub.

Complete mapping exercise of existing projects which relate to climate action, identifying where gaps exist and where linkages between projects could be found

- Mapping is ongoing as new projects are developed, Orkney and Shetland in particular has identified a number of gaps where there are little clear climate action projects ongoing particularly in the main settlements of Kirkwall, Stromness and Lerwick. Shetland has identified few community led climate action projects with no clear networks in place.
- We have organised two community learning exchanges in person and carried out thematic networking/information sessions along with mapping events within each area and are in early stages of linking projects together. For example, in Caithness a Community Growing Network has formed through the work of the Hub linking projects together.

Complete mapping exercise of localised funding sources which would welcome climate action projects and identify where gaps exist

- Mapping completed of local wind farm funds for Orkney, Shetland, Caithness and Sutherland. The region is well covered however we have found that main settlements generally miss opportunities for local renewables community benefit funds are these are more concentrated in rural areas with some rural areas having large amount of unspent funds from several community benefit sources. Main settlements of Caithness such as Thurso and in Sutherland on the East Coast (as Beatrice SSE Community Benefit Funds come to an end) Golspie, Brora and Helmsdale struggle to access local funding sources. The Caithness & North Sutherland Fund from Nuclear Decommissioning Authority funding makes a difference however, this is coming to an end in 2023.
- All local funding sources will accept climate action projects however there is reluctance with many for revenue funding and funding is concentrated on capital spending.

Promotion of the Hub and how climate action projects can achieve outcomes that are also solutions for other community needs

- Promotion via social media, website content.
- Information session.
- Continual promotion via various networking channels with the Hub present as below in various CPP's and sub groups.
- Caithness CPP have committed to embedding and proofing all sub groups with a net zero policy.
- Sutherland CPP have committed to similar and a Climate Action Sub group.

Proactive engagement with communities and Community Planning Partnerships in all areas across the Northern Highlands & Islands region

- Attendance at Caithness Community Planning Partnership, Sutherland Community Planning Partnership, various sub groups of both CPP's, Caithness Poverty Action Group, Venture North Destination Tourism networking sessions, Highland Resilience Network, Orkney Community Development Forum, Shetland Association of Community Councils, Highland Food Providers Network.
- Introduction to the NH&I Climate Hub sessions attracted 68 participants over two sessions.
- Creation of guides and templates for use for Members of the Hub through a Member's section of the website. We have done this to act as an incentive to membership.
- Creation of tools and resources as training materials/sessions for groups to form their own Net Zero/Environmental policies.
- Further CPP's have proven difficult to engage with although the Hub has had an attendance at the Highland CPP, other CPP's in Highland have not been meeting are in the process of reorganising themselves.
- CPP's in Orkney and Shetland are only for the CPP partners and do not include a community element. We are working on attendance through the Community Development Forums on Orkney and Shetland.

Stakeholder & Relationship Engagement

Highland Adapts

Highland Adapts aims to bring communities, businesses, land managers and the public sector together to facilitate transformational action towards a prosperous, climate ready Highland. The initiative is made up of founding partners of Highland Council, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Nature Scot, Zero Waste Scotland, NHS Highland, Forestry and Land Scotland, Changeworks, Adaptation Scotland and now the North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub.

The governance structure of Highland Adapts is based on sociocracy principles and takes in a wider range of partners through the use of sub groups including High Life Highland, community organisations, Trees for Life and others. The Hub is integrated into the Climate Advocates group who have formed a climate charter for adoption across Highland. The Engagement Team working on Climate Action Towns, North West 2045 RLUP and consultation for UNESCO Heritage status for Forsinard Flows and Green Growth Accelerator Pathfinder at Golspie and Coul. Development Officers are part of the Communications Team with several shared digital engagement campaigns having taken place. The Project Manager for the Hub sits on the Highland Adapts Project Board and Development Officer Bethany Lawrie on the Highland Adapts Core Group which feeds in from each of the strategic groups.

The relationship with Highland Adapts has assisted greatly in consulting and engaging with Stakeholders from agencies throughout Highland, in addition to this Development Officers have met with and built relationships with the following agencies and stakeholders throughout the region.

- Zero Waste Scotland
- Changeworks
- Local Energy Scotland
- Home Energy Scotland
- Orkney Islands Council Climate Change Team
- Shetland Islands Council Climate Change Team
- Highland Council Climate Change Co-Ordinators
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise Strengthening Communities Team (across all of the region)
- Orkney Islands Council Local Area Group (LAG)
- Adaptation Scotland
- Development Trust Association Scotland
- Association of Community Councils (Caithness)
- Association of Community Councils (Shetland)
- CFINE/Fareshare
- Community Growing Co-Ordinator (Highland)
- Community Support Assistants (Highland)
- Community Food & Health
- Sustrans
- Cycling UK & Cycling Scotland
- Highland Third Sector Interface, Caithness Voluntary Group, Voluntary Groups Sutherland, Voluntary Action Orkney.



Community Engagement

17
Development
Trusts

24 Community
Councils

34 Community Groups

75 Community
Climate Action Groups

Highland

Highland has proven to have higher levels of engagement from all sections of the community/third sector in the North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub. We have engaged with all groups we have found to date who are leading on community led climate action in the region. Arranged two community learning exchanges, Moo Food and Ullapool Unpacked CIC and have assisted in community engagement sessions with Crown Connects, Climate Action Towns and Lochcarron.

There exists in Highland already strong third sector networks and connections between Community Planning Partnerships, Third Sector Networks, Associations of Community Councils and the Development Trust network. Both Sutherland and Caithness CPP's recognise the importance of climate action and it being a route to address inequalities in the region.

There has been less engagement towards the West Coast and the East Coast of Ross-Shire, possibly due to disengagement in main networks. East Coast Communities engaged in the Sutherland CPP have been very active in engaging with the Hub but this lessens when considering Dornoch, Tain, Dingwall and interest increases once we reach Inverness. On the West Coast it is mainly Wester Ross, communities which we know are doing high levels of Climate Action, e.g. Applecross who have been disengaged and this may be due to a sense of self-sufficiency.

Orkney

There exists in Orkney a strong sense of the Local Authority leading in terms of community development. Most work has been channeled through the Local Area Group (LAG Group) which still exists due to some LEADER funding. We were met with some initial resistance to the Hub from the LAG as it was felt that the Hub should be a mechanism for funding support similar to LEADER rather than a support and networking organisation. We have worked to build this relationship and understanding in Orkney and have forged a strong connection with Westry Development Trust and Voluntary Groups Orkney with a view to building a climate action network on Orkney.

Shetland

Similar to Orkney, progress in Shetland has been slow due to a lack of existing networks and sparsity of community groups. Shetland Islands Council appointed eight Climate Action officers in December and we have been working with them to build interest within community groups through the Island in community led climate action.



Mapping

A key outcome for the first year is to map the climate action projects ongoing throughout the region. The map above represents the groups to have been mapped to date who are solely looking at a climate action focus within their projects and work.

Development Officers have engaged and discussed work with the community groups. The higher concentration in Orkney relates in part to the number of community renewable projects based on the Islands but these groups are not necessarily including other climate action projects within their communities nor engaging on climate action.

We attempted to make the key criteria when adding groups/projects to the map.

- Actively carrying out a climate action project in their community
- Project has some focus around climate awareness within the community

A full interactive version of the map can be found here:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1yDQF3S8huQgV2B8_QTKRQxmKHde3ihiB&usp=sharing

Mapping & Needs Analysis

Communities

- The strongest theme to emerge from the mapping exercise was that many communities are taking climate action without thinking that they are taking climate action. In Highland in particular due to Covid-19 there has been a significant rise in Food Tables, Community Larders and Community Fridges. While these are dealing with food waste and encouraging the reduction of waste they are not engaging with their communities about climate change, generally due to a lack of skills and knowledge to do so.
- Similarity was found as above with community growing projects which generally have the main priority of improving health and wellbeing above climate action.
- Typically we found that due to strong organisations within Highland having been previously funded for community led climate action through the Climate Challenge Fund it meant that other groups within the same area would look to that group to lead on climate change awareness and activities. Key examples include in Caithness looking towards Thurso Community Development Trust as the key climate organisation or in Sutherland looking towards Lairg Learning Centre even for strong community anchors such as Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust. However, we found recognition that all communities and organisations need to be embedding climate into their work.
- As mentioned previously under Engagement we found that the West Coast and the East Coast past Sutherland have been slower to engage than other areas. This is a key area of work for us throughout 2022 to encourage those communities to connect. The reach of the Hub however has extended to include Lochaber as a key partner and member but we are missing around the Wester Ross area.

Funding

- There exists funding gaps, several large settlements are not covered by localised funding sources due to the nature of community benefit funding from renewables being based close to where they are placed which generally results in rural community council areas.
- Community Benefit Funding will not always support revenue funding, many favour capital funding.
- Several funding streams for Highland through community benefit – Beatrice (SSE) and Caithness & North Sutherland Fund (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) are coming to the end of their lifespan.
- Skills development and capacity building is needed within voluntary boards to optimise success in funding with several key organisations without experienced development officers. There is a recruitment issue across Highland and the Islands in skilled community development officers.
- The Islands particularly Orkney are perhaps more self-sufficient for communities due to the investment in their own renewables.

Training

- We carried out a survey within the groups we have engaged with throughout March 2022 and the greatest need within groups was greater training and support around funding applications with climate and sustainability embedded in them.
- Developing Net Zero/Environmental policies was also identified as a need within groups, the Hub have developed this training in house.
- Carbon literacy and climate awareness are also key training needs.

Funding

A total of £4,295 of seed funding was allocated to groups throughout the region in the from September 2021 – 31st March 2022. The following indicates the funding awarded to groups. The key criteria we have set for funding is to that it is to be used for projects which provide an example to others and/or engage within a community on climate change and climate conscious behaviours. We plan throughout 2022 to invite groups who are funded to provide talks and presentations at Member's Meetings on what the funding has achieved for them and what learning can be taken from it.

Crown Connects	£500
Crown Connects SCIO are a group who formed initially as a community support group. The group have since formed into a Charity and have created a community larder in Inverness City Centre adjoined and in partnership with the SHIMCA Lotus Blossom Café and Multicultural centre. The funding supported them to run a large community engagement session where support was given by the Hub not only in funding but also in Development Officer time. Further details are available in the case study at the end of the report.	
Lochaber Environmental Group	£500
The funding to LEG supports the active travel element of their projects and supplies funding to enable them to operate a pilot for 12 months which recycles inner tubes.	
RE:Circulate Sutherland	£500
Re:Circulate Sutherland are exploring recycling of farm plastics and looking to start a workshop to run a pilot on collection of farm plastic, processing and manufacture of useful material. The funding awarded will assist in the purchase of tools and moulds for the workshop. We have also connected RE:Circulate Sutherland with Plastic@Bay and Green Hive in Nairn who have similar schemes for shared learning experiences.	
Lochcarron Community Development Company	£500
Similar to Crown Connects and listed a case study, Lochcarron Community Development Company held a Climate Feis event with a variety of stands from both local organisations and national agencies including Zero Waste Scotland engaging with the community on how they can become more climate conscious. We also lent Development Officer capacity to the event and carried out engagement at the event for a Community Larder and Tool Library.	
Ullapool Unpacked CIC	£500
Ullapool Unpacked CIC are developing a new approach to providing zero waste and plastic free shopping in rural areas through the provision of a mobile refill shop. The funding award supports staff time and some costs to assist them in piloting this through their area. In addition to this we also arranged for a community learning exchange for representatives of the group to visit Socially Growing, Thurso Community Development Trust's Zero Waste Refill Shop.	
The Libertie Project	£500
Previously Climate Challenge Funded the Libertie Project had distributed urban garden, 'grow your own kits' the funding supplied to them enables them to operate another round of this in 2022 and also encourages joint working with Incredible Edible Inverness and Crown Connects.	
Planet Sutherland	£100
Literally seed funding to purchase peat free compost and seeds for edible plants, salads and vegetables for planters throughout the village of Lairg. The group have the purpose of engaging with the community through the planters with a view to establishing a larger community growing project.	

Plastic@Bay	£295
An established project on the North Coast which collects marine plastic and then recycles it through their workshops. Recent profile raising of their project had led to an influx in volunteers to operate both the workshop and complete collections. The Funding award enabled the group to carry out engagement sessions and open days to new and prospective volunteers and engage the local community in Durness and the North West in climate conscious behaviours.	
Incredible Edible Inverness	£490
A relatively new group operating mainly in the Inverness city centre area having created some city centre growing spaces. The funding enabled them to operate a series of 5 seed planting events. Due to this funding application, the engagement with Crown Connects and the funding award to the Libertie Project we were able to connect this group to the others and they are now working together on future projects.	
Hemsdale Crafty Sew and Sews	£500
Helmsdale Crafty Sew and Sews run repair, upcycling and crafting alongside fashion shows, swap shops and raise awareness of effects the fast fashion industry has on the planet. Funding was allocated to the group to support a series of training sessions from beginners sewing to more advanced sewing.	
Composting Sutherland c/o Scottish Wildlife Trust	£500
As a result of the Crofting Project - Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape (coigach-assynt.org) project a group had formed in Sutherland who are looking to create a community composting scheme using bracken and sheep's wool. The project sees several crofters working together under the co-ordination of the Scottish Wildlife Trust until they are constituted. Wool is literally a waste product to crofters currently and this provides both a localised solution and potential for income generation as growers move away from peat based compost.	



helping residents with anything they may need. As restrictions eased, the group wanted to keep the feeling of cohesion within the community so set out to explore different projects.

Residents of the Crown & Hill area have shown an interest in projects such as active travel, community food growing, and reducing food waste. This led the group to their first project, a community fridge.

I visited Crown Connects for a walk around the area on a joint event with Eden Project Communities in September 2021. This was the first event that Hub staff attended, myself and Joan Lawrie, our project manager. We were taken on a tour of the Crown & Hill area, pointing out key areas that the community would like developed for community spaces and areas of urban food growing, as well as visiting Crown Connects Community Cupboard. Lunch was also served to us by SHIMCA, previously known as the Lotus Blossom Eco Café – who had been a recipient of Climate Challenge Funding previously. Crown Connects have a great relationship with SHIMCA and their community cupboard is on the premises of the café.



Crown Connects had put a survey out into the community in partnership with the Libertie Project and Incredible Edible Inverness to scope out ideas for future projects within the Crown and Hill community following the main project ideas of community green space and growing, physical environment and transport, and individual health and wellbeing. On the back of this, the group had decided they would like to hold an in person event to celebrate the community and gather further ideas for what the community would like to see in the area, and any ideas or projects that could be developed.

I assisted Crown Connects with the planning and delivery of their community engagement event from December 2021 up until the day of the event on the 26th March 2022. I met with the group on a regular basis either through online meetings or face to face. Initial planning was to hold an event that based around community engagement, and my role was to be there as an advisor of how to engage the community with interactive ideas and activities. I encouraged the group to drive forward with their own ideas to engage the community and fed back examples of engagement I knew were effective and creative. The group had already decided they wanted the community engagement event to have creative elements within it, to interest the residents and due to the newly refurbished Inverness Creative Academy building right in the centre of the crown.



After some planning meetings I compiled a community engagement toolkit that could assist any groups we have coming forward to carry out a community engagement event. The team at Crown Connects were very keen to get the local schools involved, so young people could shape the way they see the area and how they imagined it in the future. Within our community engagement toolkit, we purchased 6 polaroid cameras to give a fun and interactive way to capture the community. The team at Crown Connects had great links with Crown Primary School, so we were able to loan these cameras out the Primary 1 class, for them to capture what they liked about the area and create a piece of art for the community engagement event that could be displayed on the day.

Crown Connects were already working very closely with other community groups in their area such as Incredible Edible Inverness, and the Libertie Project. The idea that formed was to have several groups under 'one roof' to showcase the partnership working going on in Inverness, and to give these groups a chance to engage with the community in a way that has not been possible due to the pandemic. On the day, there were representatives from Clachworks, a new social enterprise in Inverness focusing on the circular economy and a tool library, Incredible Edible Inverness, the Libertie Project, Partnerships for Wellbeing, Spokes for Folks, Culduthel Community Woods, Inverness RSPB Wildlife Explorers Groups, Hi-Bike Inverness, and Circus Artspace.

In total, over 120 residents of Crown and Hill attended on the day. The mapping exercise proved to be popular, as did the place standard. Residents were happy to feedback their thoughts, concerns and ideas about the Crown and Hill area. Drew Hendry, the local MP for Inverness, Badenoch & Strathspey also came along to check in on the event and see the suggestions and ideas of residents.

Bethany Lawrie – NH&I Climate Hub Report





End of Year Grant Report

Section 1 – Project Details

Climate Action Hub	Highlands & Islands Climate Hub
Reporting Period	1 st April 2022 – 31 st March 2023
Report Completed By	Joan Lawrie
Designation / Job Title	Hub Manager

Section 2 – Project Report

This section is designed to capture what you have delivered over the year with a focus on the outputs and outcomes achieved.

We recommend using a maximum of 500 words per text box, feel free to use bullet points. A guidance note is given at the end of this document.

1. Progress

Explain the progress that has been made in response to comments made on any previous progress reports? Please give a summary below of action taken:

2. Grant Delivery Activities

Please provide a summary of the activities your grant has helped to deliver:

3. Achievement of Objectives

Please detail the progress you have made towards the achievement of your Objectives listed in your grant offer. If you have been successful in supporting groups in applying for training, or have been able to secure any local funding for projects, please highlight this here:

- **Provision of regular, consistent community climate action digital engagement in the form of Vlogs, Blogs, website information, social media and podcasts.**
- Facebook 207.6% and Instagram 49.7% increase reach on previous annum
- 656,907 impressions over Facebook & Instagram over year

- Average engagement rate monthly over both approximately 10k per month
 - Website visitors average 1200 per month with spikes where blogs are more frequent.
 - Podcast and Vlog content currently under development (staffing changes impacted)
 - Film commissioned to highlight and promote community led climate action through region to be released in later 2023.
-
- **Delivery of climate literacy training to at least 25 community groups and community councils throughout the region. Sessions reaching at least 100 individuals.**
 - 13 sessions totalling 48 individuals.
 - Groups/Organisations put off by length of training. Shortened version would be welcomed as an alternative.
-
- **Training delivery of workshop to introduce and form Net Zero/Environmental policies to at least 25 groups.**
 - 34 organisations took part in either online training sessions or one to one in person sessions with development officers. Training is also offered in self directed format and 9 groups have taken materials back to Boards/Management Groups to complete policies.
 - Currently updating training to link with following discussion SCVO materials including carbon footprint/net zero assessment tool in the materials.
-
- **Working collaboratively with Climate Action Town's project support the development, design and delivery of at least one community led climate action project in both Alness and Invergordon and ensure community and third sector organisations in both towns receive carbon literacy and net zero policy training.**
 - Seed funding supplied to Alness & Invergordon Groups
 - Working with Invergordon Museum on renewable heating project for building, net zero policies and general climate proofing of operations
 - Working with the Place in Alness (Youthwork) on climate proofing of operations and growing spaces.
-
- **Further develop and support existing networks of Future Communities Highlands & Islands and support formation of networks in Orkney and Shetland.**
 - Future Communities H&I Network promoted to now have 45 unique members, group is upper level of climate and environmental action in Highland & Islands
 - Supporting Highland Adapts Climate Advocates network
 - Climate Action Network with Shetland Isles Council now established
 - Working with Orkney LAG Group to form network, Orkney proving more challenging as there are not existing networks to tap into and no culture of networking between groups.
-
- **Support 40 groups/organisations/projects with seed funding and/or support to access diversified funding portfolios community groups throughout the region**
 - We have to date supported 40 community groups with seed funding allocation from startup projects to community engagement on community led climate action.
 - To date we have assisted groups in obtaining further funding of over £500k through the following. Assisted 3 groups with funding for SSE Sustainable Development Fund. JoG Mill Trust – net zero proofing of application, building redevelopment with renewable heating systems (£300k) Re:Circulate Sutherland –

plastic recycling (£17k) Farmer Jones Academy – climate skills facility (£95k) – installation of geodesic domes, youth land/biodiversity skills), Ullapool Unpacked – mobile zero waste shop £20k Coastal Communities Funding for full time staff member. £35K – The Place, Alness to secure long term the continuation of Dandelion Project Growing Spaces at the Field (Outdoor Youth Club/Facility)

- Assisted with two successful Investing in Communities (Scot Gov) funding applications.

- **Introduce community led climate action projects to at least 4 communities in the region where no previous climate engagement is occurring.**
- Working with Wick Development Trust on aligning community led climate action within a tourism project and moving forwards with group to consider wider climate action plan for the town.
- Working with Go Golspie Development Trust on climate action plan, currently capacity building and working with organisations in the village.
- Dornie working through initial community engagement using place standard with climate lens to then further work through heating issues.
- Working with Melvich in North West Sutherland on climate proofing local place plan.

- **Provision of monthly climate action events and conversations**
- Held 16 events throughout the year from peer learning on requested topics (buildings, community fridges, growing spaces)
- Supporting roll out of Climate Cafes across region, regularly now being held in 6 localities
- Support monthly Highland Climate Advocates group rolling out Highland Climate Charter signed by 360 individuals and adopted by senior leaders in Highland

- **Support region wide Climate Festival programme with at least ten localities operating in person events to engage communities working collaboratively with partners and agencies.**
- Highland Climate Festival had a reach of events being held in 32 localities. Orkney Climate Festival had a reach of events being held in 15 localities. Shetland held its own Climate Week led by the local authority of which we contributed towards 3 events. Operated Highland Climate Festival in conjunction with Highland Adapts and Orkney Climate Festival in conjunction with Orkney Science Festival. We are now working with groups in Highland and the Islands contributing towards a working group for a Highlands & Islands Climate Festival to be held during Climate Week of 2023 based on the evaluation and experiences of 2022.

- **Engage with communities throughout the region to both create new community led climate action projects and strengthen, supporting sustainability of existing projects working with at least 25 organisations**
- Worked throughout the year with 86 organisations offering advice and support, high level to 22 groups, lower level with remaining.
- Membership grew to 135 members.
- Capacity building workshops in funding masterclass reaching 36 individuals/organisations throughout year.
- Directly assisted 13 organisations to secure further funding.

4. Contributions

Please highlight how you have supported the Scottish Government's national outcomes National Outcomes | National Performance Framework. In particular 'environment' and 'communities'. (for discussion, it would be good to draw out key links around supporting the CCP, adaptation and just transition (voices and skills/jobs). However maybe this would come out via the outcomes or other boxes below.)

- Lead Sutherland Community Planning Partnership Climate Sub Group
- Climate proofing embedded in Caithness Community Planning Partnership action and locality plans and H&I Climate Hub lead on this
- Working with Caithness CPP Sub Group Poverty Action Group on long term ambitions including district heating system for Thurso
- Working with Sutherland CPP Sub Group on food poverty to create growing spaces and link food projects
- Community engagement work on behalf of Highland Council in Golspie for Green Growth Accelerator project – nature based solutions to flooding
- Working with Highland Resilience Network sub group under Highland CPP on climate proofing Resilience Plans for local areas
- Key Partner in Highland Adapts – partnership of Highland Council, HIE, Zero Waste Scotland, Adaption Scotland and others focusing currently on climate risk assessments for Highland. Working on place based consultation work for Climate & Weather Map leading to community climate action plans to sit alongside climate risk assessments.
- Adaptation Routemap, working with DTAS, Adaptation Scotland and NESCAN Hub to design and delivery the Adaptation Routemap for use by communities.

5. Fair Work

Where applicable, please provide details of the progress made on each of your organisation's Fair Work First commitments. Your specific commitments will be set out in section 2.4 of your grant offer letter. Guidance is available [here](#).

- All staff encouraged to join Unison with payment via salary deduction offered
- All staff actively encouraged to shape the organisation from values to business case, development and projects, all have equal voice.
- As a Community Interest Company currently staff are invited to serve on the Board and take a role in Governance if they choose, allowed under CIC structure
- Operate 360 appraisal system based not only on staff performance but organisational and governance feedback.
- No zero hours contracts are offered to either staff or any contractors
- Real Living Wage accreditation in progress
- Diversity and inclusion promoted and encouraged, no gender pay gaps exist

6. Risks

Have any of the risks identified in your original application been realised over the course of the grant? If so, which ones and what actions have been taken in response and how have these impacted on the overall achievement of objectives and final outcomes:

Staffing still remains to be a key risk to operations and staffing changes along with the capacity required for recruitment and subsequently induction impacts hugely on what we are able to do and maintain momentum on.

We have struggled to recruit Development Officers who have significant experience of the sector in order to be able to advise groups. With the sector being so vast this has created frustration and meant that leading members of the Team experience high workload to compensate and support.

To mitigate against the risk we have put in place the following:

- Creation of Community Engagement Officer posts at lower skills point who work directly on engaging in communities and with groups funnelling any development work then through to Development Officers
- We had enquired regarding Community Development Modern Apprenticeships for staff but found no learning provider available and are therefore now working with University of the Highlands & Islands on provision of a Community Development CPD for staff.
- Retaining those staff however is an issue where local authority or other public sector salaries are higher than we can offer. We therefore are compensating by offering additional benefits of annual leave flexibility and creating a good workplace to retain staff along with other learning and development opportunities.

7. Issues

Have you experienced any other issues/problems? Let us know what actions have been taken in response if you have:

North Highland to Highlands & Islands

Initially the North Highland & Islands Climate Hub. Yet unofficially due to lack of a Hub supporting groups in rest of Highland. No SCCAN network co-ordinator could be found and therefore worked with groups in rest of Highland to officially cover further. Worked in consultation with main groups in the areas concerned including Lochaber Environmental Group, Broadford & Strath Community Development Company and Skye Climate Action followed by Cairngorm Partnership in Badenoch & Strathspey. Working closely with the communities/groups and involving them fully in the decision making process have eliminated any concerns/tensions.

Third Sector Interfaces

Good relationships formed early with TSI's in Orkney & Shetland along with Caithness & Sutherland. Highland characterised as TSI being Highland Third Sector Interface with various local delivery partners including Caithness Voluntary Group and Sutherland Voluntary Group. We developed good relationships with delivery partners but HTSI more reticent due to we suspect tensions over funding. Have worked throughout the year on resolving these issues through attendance at HTSI events, standing as Third Sector Rep on Highland CPP and building relationship to now a strong supportive clarified channels relationship.

8. Seed Funding

Please outline:

- The total amount of seed funding provided to community groups in your region
- The total number of projects and a summary of the types of activity supported
- Any applicable learning, replicable activity or impact as a result of the funding
- Any specific cases you'd like to highlight

Green Hive – Nairn

Funding enabled them to commence a growing project working with new groups of volunteers at the recently acquired through Community Asset Transfer, Seaman's Hall and start a community garden at the site. Grow with us series of workshops working with new volunteers attracted to the organisation through green social prescribing trial with NHS.

Dunnet Forestry Trust

Funding enabled the Trust to work with Plantlife on a collaborative project hosting a series of workshops with families and young people on how to record biodiversity within the forest. The project focused on species recording of vulnerable biodiversity and provided training in species identification, monitoring and practical conservation skills. The project in particular focused on working with young people currently excluded from mainstream education in providing tasters of green skills and working in the forest.

Ullapool Unpacked CIC

Ullapool Unpacked have been operating a mobile zero waste refill shop around Ullapool, funding enabled them to carry out community consultation regarding moving to a bricks and mortar shop in Ullapool and creating a localised climate hub where vertical growing, climate themed workshops would also take place. The community consultation work will be eventually used to inform either a Community Asset Transfer of a building or inform a Scottish Land Fund application to purchase a building.

Transition Black Isle

Funded a launch and community engagement event for the Active Travel Map of the Black Isle along with a booklet for visitors focusing on slow tourism with articles on footpaths, woodland, ecology and the rationale behind slow tourism. Booklet was printed through the funding made available from the Hub. The Black Isle in particular the areas of Cromarty and Rosemarkie suffer heavily from tourism in the summer months. The launch event funded also provided the opportunity to host a community engagement event giving those attending the opportunity to provide views to the Black Isle Place Plan.

Melvich Community SCIO

Melvich Community SCIO formed initially to consider issues around their local Village Hall which had been condemned due to asbestos and other issues. The group have gone on to clear the site of the original hall and to purchase further land to build a new Community Hall. A Hall which they hope to build to passivhaus standards. Funding from the Hub enabled them to carry out community engagement and consultation into their plans and the Hub continues to work with them on their ambitious plans linking them to further contacts for passivehaus style builds and to the DTAS network for registration as a development trust.

Homestart Caithness

Homestart Caithness work with parents in the Caithness area to support them on their parenting journey. Funding provided to Homestart Caithness to run a series of baby led weaning sessions with parents using local food with growing food taster sessions included throughout the workshop series working with the Thurso Grows Community Garden.

Highland Wool CIC

Follow on funding from initial feasibility funding in 2021-22 to match fund the pilot project of building a no-waste micro mill for the processing of waste wool and creation of compost from the sludge created in the cleaning process. Funding supplied match funds funding from ZWS to build a prototype water recycling plant at the Mill.

Dornie Community Council

Funding to carry out community engagement towards a Climate Action Plan for the area. Initially Dornie CC came to us as there is a marked need in the area to plan towards the retrofitting of homes and reliance on oil based heating systems. Rural community with high proportion of home owners but low income and experiencing issues due to cost of living crises. An Energy Sub Group has formed under the CC to look specifically at these issues but community wanted to take a more holistic view of the engagement and then work on drilling down. Funding supplied has enabled climate conversations, workshops and events to engage the community.

Sutherland Food Partnership

Sutherland Food Partnership is a sub group under the Sutherland Community Planning Partnership. Funded to host an event in February 2023 to encourage people to come together for a community meal and community engagement with the partnership on cost of living crises, long term aims for the community and building a resilient local food system.

Shieldaig Primary School Parent Council

Funding towards the 'Glorious Veggies' Project held by the Parent Council celebrating their new community garden and spending a week focused on the benefits of fruit and local food growing with their community and other schools in the area through creative workshops and celebratory events.

Lochview Rural Training Centre

Lochview provide training in rural skills to young people in the Sutherland and wider area. The funding enabled them to create raised beds and work with a new youth group on a dedicated food growing project on dedicated land at the centre.

Raigmore Community Residents Association

Funding supplied for community engagement around a community asset transfer of land for a forest food garden. More details below in case studies.

Helmsdale & District Development Trust

Establishment of a kitchen garden next to Helmsdale Primary School running workshops in growing and carbon literacy to the community.

Darah Social Croft

Funding supported a one year subscription for app development to support an app aimed at identifying natural space for community and individual use which lends itself to nature based activities e.g. forest bathing, exploring biodiversity. The app has an associated website and this funding has enable the development of the app and website.

Ballifeary Community Council

Ballifeary is a known area of deprivation in Inverness city, funding enabled the CC to take over greenspaces from Highland Council in the housing estate and plant pollinator friendly plants and fruit bushes. They also ran workshops with families in the area to encourage them to grow pollinator friendly species at home.

Ullapool Sea Savers

The Sea Savers are a youth led group operating in Ullapool who have operated a number of projects aimed at reducing waste in the marine environment. Funding enabled the Sea Savers to purchase 3 ballot bins installed around the village to for cigarette butts to be placed, these are not the same as simple bins, the ballot bins show the number of butts and educate at the same time around the dangers of these being in the marine environment. Alongside the ballot bins, the funding also enabled the group to campaign around this and to further lead on their drain campaign.

Skye Climate Action

Working with Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association on a project to assess the condition of

housing on Skye and identify what is needed to make homes warmer and more efficient to heat. The funding enabled working with Changeworks for a survey to be rolled out across Skye and for community engagement sessions to be held into the project.

Red Chair Highland

Operating from the Crown area of Inverness the funding enabled Red Chair Highland to create 200 Grow your Own kits for distribution to local families and people throughout the area. They were also made available at the Food Waste Cupboard working with Crown Connects in Inverness. Alongside the kits 'fun days' were held where people could get demonstrations of how to use the kits and come together in community celebration.

Carrbridge Community Orchard

Funded to create the community orchard, a space taken over from Highland Council including fruit trees, stakes and wildflowers as pollinators. Workshops in fruit tree grafting and engagement with the wider community.

North Sutherland Forestry Trust

Funded for a community engagement session held over Easter Weekend which relaunched their cabin for community usage and engaged the community in opportunities both in the forest and in the wider area.

Bressay Development Company

Funded for skills share with Transition Turrieffield for the growing groups to meet and share skills while commencing a community growing space on Bressary. Workshops and Growers Question time sessions were held. Events and project fostered a stronger relationship between the two islands and shared knowledge of community growing on the islands.

Reay Young Stars

Funding enabled Reay Young Stars to start a community larder in their village. The Larder is now used by people in Reay and the surrounding area of North West Caithness and Sutherland.

Thurso Community Benefit Society

Provided funded towards the redevelopment of the Socially Growing website including commencing e-commerce activities on the website to be able to grow the social enterprise and the use of refill and sale of plug plants to a wider audience.

Lairg & District Learning Centre

Funded the Letters to Earth Exhibition to be held at Rogart Mart and in a Glasgow location. The exhibition supports the delivery of an international climate action project in the Highlands. Letters to the Earth: Between Despair and Hope is a project commenced by Carmel Brennan an artist and curator in Ontario, and a finishing MA student in Contemporary Art and Archaeology at the University of the Highlands and Islands. Spurred on by climate activism and the response by artists, she has organised international participants to submit their own "Letter to the Earth" complimented by interdisciplinary works illustrating concerns.

9. Case studies

Please provide example case studies of activity undertaken thanks to the support of the hub.

Raigmore Community Residents Association

- Started small community growing project following Covid-19 in woodland on the

housing estate

- Housing estate backs onto Raigmore hospital in Inverness. Housing estate while not ranking highly due to adjoining areas on SIMD does have issues. Deprivation evident but mix and overflow from hospital area.
- Group came to Hub seeking support to develop growing area and wanted to take a larger piece of land offered in Community Asset Transfer to them at back of Raigmore hospital.
- Hub assisted in CAT request helping group to secure. Provided seed funding as a match and also directly and intensively supported a funding application to Highland Council Nature Restoration Fund, successfully achieving £12,000 funding.
- In addition to this, Hub have directly support and advised group forming relationship with the NHS including registration to the NHS portal for community benefit support. We have also linked the group with other growing groups in the area which achieved for the woodland garden surplus trees and plants being made available to them.
- The group lacks a significant amount of capacity in terms of dealing with forms, funding and bureaucracy with the Hub playing the role of supporter and mentor to assist them in completing their ambitions, capacity building with them through any issues.

Skye Climate Action

- Healthy Homes Project
- Skye Climate Action Skye Climate Action teamed up with Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association and green builders/architects to develop a project to assess the condition of housing in Skye and Lochalsh and identify what is needed to make homes warmer, healthier and more efficient to heat. This addresses issues of fuel poverty and greenhouse gas emissions from housing. The first phase is a survey of homes across Skye and Lochalsh. Home Energy Scotland are funding a Communications Coordinator who will organise the rollout of the survey. HES are also supplying free advice on publicity & social media campaigning, and have arranged Changeworks support to allow comparison of the Healthy Homes data with the wider Highland/Scotland situation. Funding from the Hub enabled the group to roll out the survey to the wider community and direct support from the Hub in the form of Development Officer support has assisted in building the capacity of the group to hold in person sessions throughout Skye engaging with the community on the project.

10. Examples of engagement

Please provide examples of successful engagement with community groups in your region.

Golspie

- Hub became involved in the Golspie area through proposal to Green Growth Accelerator programme for nature based solutions to flooding and coastal erosion in the Golspie/Coul Links area.
- Hub has carried out community engagement in the Golspie/Coul Links area
- Large community engagement session reaching 300+ people
- 3 smaller workshop events discussing nature based solutions, climate action in Golspie with 56 participants
- Stakeholder consultation working with Highland Council and the Design Council on how to progress nature based solutions
- Hub has worked directly with 6 organisations in the Golspie community on climate proofing operations
- In 2023 will now be working towards engagement with the wider community on climate action and how this fits with longer term aspirations for the community in terms of tourism and community development to community need in a place based

approach.

Caithness Community Planning Partnership

- Working with the Caithness CPP Poverty Action Group designed and delivered surveys with the Caithness area to ascertain levels of fuel poverty across the region
- Research into impact of district heating system operating in Wick to ascertain duplication for Thurso
- Hub has worked with the CPP to ensure that long term solutions to fuel poverty which also reduce carbon emissions are included in the Caithness Poverty Action Group Action Plan
- Long term solutions currently include district heating system for Thurso with aim to provide low cost and low carbon heating system to homes in the Ormlie area (generally falls into top ten of multiple deprivation SIMD stats) in the Warmlie Project, linking Changeworks, Local Energy Scotland to the group and carrying out community engagement in the community

Dornie Community Council

- Hub approached by Energy Sub Group from Dornie Community Council who are looking to find solutions to heating in the community
- Dornie is characterised by being a remote and very rural Highland Community with older properties, many converted and extended from original croft buildings. Homes are scattered throughout the area rather than clustered into a village as a typical Highland community. Stone properties, generally owner occupied (little LA/social housing) and main heating systems are thought to be oil based. The area while consisting mainly of owner occupied properties does have significantly hidden levels of poverty and high levels of fuel poverty.
- Energy Sub-Group had approached various agencies for help and support including Local Energy Scotland and were advised that the best approach for them was to form a place based climate action plan which holistically looked at the whole area and other areas for improvement including community capacity and additional community needs.
- Based on this advice the group came to the Hub for support. We have been working with them to build capacity within the sub group initially and have held smaller workshop sessions with the group and community council to identify skills, early needs and direction.
- Community engagement taking place on climate action through climate conversations building to use of Place Standard with climate lens.

11. Expenditure Breakdown

Please provide a detailed breakdown of the total actual expenditure which this final report relates, compared to the planned expenditure detailed in your grant offer letter.

Salaries – underspend of £61,625 in salary costs due to recruitment issues as further explained below.

Project Management – Hub Manager was contracted for most of the year through Thurso Community Development Trust as a project management Fee. In February, Hub Manager commenced as a FTE to the Hub and therefore no further project management fee payable.

Setup/IT/Equipment – Costs increased on changes to the H&I Climate Hub operations in extending across all of Highland Region therefore requiring additional staffing and therefore additional equipment for all staff. Also invested in certain pieces of equipment to complete video editing and website design in house rather

than outsourcing in future in spend to save under this grant agreement.

Travel/Accommodation – Costs rose in terms of travel and accommodation both due to covering a wider area and also due to the costs in real terms of fuel and accommodation rising. It is now nearly impossible to source overnight accommodation for staff as required in either Highlands or the Islands at less than £100 per night.

Marketing – Marketing budget rose significantly due to the commissioning of a short film of the work of groups throughout the Highlands & Islands.

Subscriptions – Subs include our Customer Relationship Manager and project planning software/system which we have now paid for annually to get a larger discount in a change from monthly at the end of the year. With a change to a SCIO currently being processed we anticipate much of these costs to reduce as we take up offers for non-profits/charity pricing.

Funding – Total grants distributed were less than forecast originally marginally we suspect due to funding a number of groups for events and community engagement activities under events budget for the Highland and Orkney Climate Festivals. Also we were later opening the seed funding awards due to staff capacity.

Events – Events budget was less due to significant in kind support from Highland Adapts and the Orkney Science Festival in the Highland & Orkney Climate Festivals.

Office Rental – Expansion of the Hub and expansion of staffing required new office spaces to be found, not originally forecast but forecast for future years.

Project Costs – Not originally broken down, much of these costs are the set up of offices and for the purchase of equipment which is not IT related. Again in knowledge of more Hubs coming online we have invested in key pieces of event equipment such as cameras, heavy duty gazebos, community engagement toolkits.

Original Grant Amount	300,000
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Expenditure Category	Planned Expenditure	Actual Expenditure
Salaries	£217,633	£156,008
Project Management	£24,000	£22,000
Setup/IT/Equipment	£2,000	£9,669
Stationary/Postage	£1200	£903
Staff Training	£1200	£409
Travel/Accommodation	£10,000	£15,382
Marketing	£2700	£20,578
Subscriptions	£1800	£2905
Funding	£18,000	£15,955
Events	£21,400	£16,278
Office Rental	-	£11,584

Project Costs	-	£15,955
TOTAL	£ 299,993	£ 285,020

12. Expenditure Breakdown – Continued

Please comment on the breakdown of expenditure in Question 9 above, particularly explaining any significant disparities between planned expenditure and actual expenditure: [An end of year financial monitoring report should be attached]

The main disparity is in terms of staffing costs as explained further below. In addition to this the marketing budget significantly increased due to the commissioning of a short film to be released in September 2024.

13. Underspend:

Was any underspend reported? Let us know why and the cause of this:

Underspend of £14,980 was recorded which was due to the main underspend around staffing costs. Issues surrounded retention of staff who secured local authority contracts, recruitment in having to readvertise posts and also then differences in where budget forecasts aimed at having staff in post but notice periods did not match up.

14. The Positive Impacts

Please give us a short narrative demonstrating the positive impact(s) the grant funding has had. Please make any further comments you feel might help illustrate your progress:

The first full year of grant funding has enabled us to really establish initially the North Highlands & Islands Climate Hub as a recognisable support agency which is community led. It has enabled us to forge key partnerships and become an established organisation which has a key reputation for support, professionalism and trust within the community organisations, agencies and local authorities within the Highlands & Islands region. 'The Hub' as we now seem to be mainly referred to in the region have established a brand and presence which means both community groups and the agencies operating within the larger third sector see us as a key means to build capacity and to support communities.

These relationships have meant that membership numbers have increased, relationships are being forged with a view to ongoing work and the sector as a whole across Highlands & Islands is more joined up and less fragmented. The Local Authority, more so in Highland see us as a key means of reaching communities and of capacity building within them.

The trust of community organisations has been a main positive impact with prior to December 2022 official coverage of the Hub being to only North Highlands but following consultation with groups in the West Highland moving to cover all of the Highland Regional Council area. Badenoch and Strathspey have then followed with

a key partnership formed with the Cairngorm Partnership and their Climate Futures 2023 programme.

15. Learning for the Hub network

Is there anything you wish to raise that could be useful for the wider network. This could be to highlight specific resources that others may find useful, engagement that has been particularly successful, or any challenges you have had to overcome that others could learn from:

■

16. Additional Information

If there is any additional information you would like to provide please do so, including any feedback you would like to give us. Please include a note of any sessions, training or resources that you think could be carried out for the network as a whole:

Guidance End of Grants Report

Question	Guidance
1. Progress	You should document how you are on track with meeting your objectives. You may wish to refer to your Grant Offer Letter. Please describe indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved.
2. Grant Delivery Activities	Please describe the activities your grant has helped to deliver/achieve during the life of the grant.
3. Achievement of Objectives	Please detail the progress you have made towards the achievement of your Objectives.
4. Contributions	Please describe the progress your project has made over the last 12 months towards the relevant national outcomes. It might help you to refer to your grant offer letter.
5. Fair Work	Describe the Fair Work First commitments that the grant has helped to deliver. Specific commitments will be set out in each grant offer letter.
6. Risks	Comment on any risks that you originally identified that have been realised. Please explain what actions you have taken to address these or what actions you intend to take.
7. Issues	Please comment on any issues or problems you have faced over the reporting period, how you addressed them or how you intend to address them.
8. Seed Funding	Please provide detail of any seed funding granted to groups within the hub's region.
9. Case Studies	Please provide example case studies of climate action supported by the hub.
10. Engagement	Please provide examples of successful engagement with community groups in your region. Focus primarily on groups that were previously not involved in climate action.
11. Expenditure Breakdown	Please provide a detailed breakdown of expenditure incurred against expenditure planned over the last 12 months.
12. Expenditure Breakdown - Continued	Please comment on the detailed breakdown attached in Q10, in particular explaining any significant disparities between planned and actual expenditure.

13. Underspend	Please comment on any outstanding amount that is left in the budget and provide an explanation for why it has not been spent, bearing in mind that you should have previously alerted the Scottish Government if you were expecting to have an underspend at the end of the financial year. You will need to include a proposal for how you will spend any remaining budget.
Question	Guidance
14. Positive Impact	We would be interested to hear any stories that illustrate the positive impact the Programme has had. Please include any further information or comments you feel are important but not covered in this form, that might facilitate the effective monitoring and evaluation of the progress made on your Programme.
15. Additional Information	If there is any additional information you would like to provide please do so in this text box.



Quarterly Progress Report

Section 1 – Project Details

Climate Action Hub	Highlands & Islands Climate Hub
Reporting Period	April – June 2023
Report Completed By	Joan Lawrie
Designation / Job Title	Hub Manager

Section 2 – Project Report

This section is designed to capture the progress being made with your project during the reporting period towards your agreed outputs and outcomes.

We recommend using a maximum of 500 words per text box, feel free to use bullet points. A guidance note is given at the end of this document.

1. Interim Progress

Please detail the progress you have made towards the achievement of your objectives. You should refer to your Grant Offer Letter. By describing the indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved:

- **Work with at least 8 communities throughout Highlands & Islands to form community climate action plans in a place based approach. In particular at least 5 communities in Highland Region aligned with Climate Risk Assessment work being carried out by Adaptation Scotland and Highland Adapts.**
- Investigative piece has been carried out by team to compile resources on frameworks for creating community place based climate action plans. A suite of tools has been considered from Place Standard with a climate lens to Long Termism workshops to create engagement practices which can be used as most suitable with communities. For instance, some are in need of general engagement sessions before utilising more thorough engagement tools like the Place Standard.
- We are currently working to varying levels with the following communities: Thurso, Dornie, Golspie, Kinlochleven and Fort William. We are in early discussions with Stromness and with Wick.
- Work continues with Highland Adapts and we are working proactively with them on the Climate and Weather Story Map place based consultation and incorporating it into the engagement being carried out with the communities above with the exception of Stromness.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Raise awareness and widen participation through regular digital engagement, the development of a short film and delivery of climate literacy training to at least 30 community organisations throughout the region. Sessions reaching at least 150 individuals.**
- Digital engagement: Facebook engagement: average 16k per month, Instagram engagement 6k average per month, Twitter 4k impressions per month.
- We are working to increase consistency and engagement across social media and use it as a call to action to visit the website, from April to end June the website received 13k visitors and increase of 77% from previous year.
- Climate Action Highlands & Islands is currently in filming to be launched during climate week and the Highlands & Islands Climate Festival in September. We are very excited about the early edits and progress of the film and it is already attracting interest from Climate Film Festivals in Scotland, UK and abroad.
- Climate Literacy training is not currently being promoted due to capacity issues, previously this was delivered by our Senior Development Officer who is now on maternity leave or Hub Manager who is at capacity and with new staff on board we need to firstly ensure that they are carbon literacy trained before commencing on train the trainer sessions. This will be achieved by the end of Quarter two as we want all staff to be able to deliver to avoid a single point of failure. To date prior to maternity leave 3 organisations has received carbon literacy training in this quarter reaching 13 individuals. We do find a barrier in delivery of the training in that at 7 hours with the addition of self directed work to complete it is not in the capacity of many organisations.
- **Partially Fulfilled**

- **Design and development of a shortened climate emergency and community climate action short course (one hour) for delivery to community councils and smaller new entrant groups reaching 30 Community Councils and 100 individuals.**
- Framework is in place and currently undergoing design process but has been hampered by capacity issues to complete. Will be completed and ready to be shared across the Hub Network as well as through our own channels by end of Quarter Two. The short course can also be delivered self directed and hosted on the Hub website.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Work with and support the long term ambitions of the Caithness Poverty Action Network and Sutherland Poverty Action Network in short and long term solutions to the cost of living crises including signposting for at least 40 community organisations to lower energy resources for community members and supporting long term solutions of formation of groups to take forward district heating solutions in at least two communities.**
- We operate within the steering group for the Warmlie project which is now at feasibility and survey stage working with Changeworks in Thurso to create a district heating system in the Ormlie area of Thurso, an area that frequently falls into the top 20% of multiple deprivation in Thurso. We are assisting with the role out of the survey to local residents.
- The Sutherland CPP has changed its focus from district heating to transport in a response to several public bus routes being cancelled across the area particularly in North West Sutherland. We have worked with the Sutherland CPP to form a guide to public transport as multiple bus operators are now working in the area and are looking with them at concepts around community transport which we are assisting with through signposting to agencies for support. A survey is currently being carried out in the area.
- As Sutherland CPP are no longer pursuing feasibility around a district heating system (Ardgay) while we will work on sharing learning from the outcomes of the Warmlie project in the future we are currently working with Dornie Community Council on a climate action plan for their community which involves as a priority solutions around heating systems. Dornie characterised by older properties with a reliance on oil heating systems. This is in early stage engagement.

- We have supported the development of the Highland Cost of Living Crises Community Support training and have rolled this out to 13 organisations to date. We are working on this project collaboratively with Thurso Community Development Trust where the training is based on understanding of the cost of living crises and energy costs in Highland and participants then received access to a support website designed to be mobile optimised where they can receive up to date information on support available both short and long term for community members to save energy, reduce bills and access grant support. <https://www.highlandcommunitysupport.org/> An E-learning will also be developed to accompany this and have wider reach.
- **Partially Fulfilled**

- **Training delivery of workshop to introduce and form Net Zero/Environmental policies to at least 40 groups.**
- We placed a pause on this training to redevelop and pivot the training towards a link with the resources and assessment available through SCVO. This has now been completed and we have taken to end June 7 groups through the process.
- We are looking towards a train the trainer session with the NESCAN Hub to share this resource.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Support 30 groups/organisations/projects with seed funding and/or support to access diversified funding portfolios community groups throughout the region.**
- Our seed funding went on hold while we reassessed where we felt we should target in this annum. See success stories and learning to share with the wider Hub network. We have now relaunched and we offered discretionary funding while on hold to two groups, North Sutherland Forest Trust to enable them to carry out community engagement work and Stromness Museum to enable them to stream online to groups throughout the Islands (without the need for travel) the Creative Carbon Springboard event.
- Seed funding has now relaunched alongside Highlands & Islands Climate Festival funding.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Learn from and support the Carbon Neutral Islands Programme and work with a further two islands from that learning to form community climate action plans.**
- Attended CNI Conference in Shetland.
- Discussions ongoing as to how the Hub can assist with capacity building within the Development Officers working on the CNI project and survey has commenced into training needs.
- It remains however that there could be better linkages between the projects as does not have the same sense of collaboration as between ADS for Climate Action Towns. We are working on solutions and in next quarter will have an Islands Development Officer to link to Orkney and Shetland CNI projects with greater capacity.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Introduce community led climate action projects to a further 4 communities in the region where no previous climate engagement is occurring. Key areas to target are Wick, North West Sutherland, Dingwall and Orkney Mainland.**
- We are currently engaged with Wick Development Trust and in discussions around a project on sustainable tourism with them and making their plans for their recently acquired Camping and Caravan Site climate friendly, from this the ambition is to launch a climate action plan for the community. Alongside this we are working with them on Sustrans project for the town centre and how this could promote climate friendly behaviours in active travel in partnership with Cycling UK.

- Northwest Sutherland, working in partnership with the RLUP and local stakeholders to capacity build in the area. Natural Capital audit has been completed and we are working with them on climate engagement in the local communities.
- Also in Northwest Sutherland working with Melvich Community SCIO who have the ambition of creating a community hub to passivhaus standards and are currently working alongside the Melvich Community Council on a local place plan for the village which they are embedding climate action into.
- Dingwall we have as yet had no contact with but have recently employed a Community Engagement Officer for Ross-shire who is focusing in on the town and making early contacts.
- We are working with Stromness Museum on early engagement through the Creative Carbon Springboard event to be held in Quarter two and building relationships, this work will intensify with an Islands Development Officer in place.

Partially fulfilled

- **Provision of monthly climate action events showcasing the work of communities and giving peer learning support through high quality delivery and skills development.**
- Held an event with Tansy Hoskins, author of several books on fast fashion during fashion week with 53 attendees.
- Further events have been around training and lead up to the Highlands & Islands Climate Festival.
- Held Funding Masterclass with 27 attendees.
- Partnered with Lyth Arts Centre to host a fast fashion event in person.

Partially fulfilled

- **Design, develop and deliver working with community organisations throughout the full region a month long climate festival in September of events and activities which engage with the wider communities.**
- Working group consists of 12 community organisations and the leads from the Highland Community Waste Partnership who represent a further 8 organisations. Identity and brand for the festival has been established along with a low carbon website and associated social media which uses work of a local illustrator for low carbon load. <https://www.hiclimatifest.co.uk>
- Currently working with groups to support capacity building for events through guides, funding and support.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Engage with communities throughout the region to both create new community led climate action projects and strengthen, supporting sustainability of existing projects working with at least 35 community organisations.**
- Currently working directly with 6 organisations who are new to climate action projects in early formation to establish and constitute including Croy Community Garden, Dalneigh Community Fridge, Reay Young Stars.
- Established new project with Moray Firth Coastal Partnership – Seashore Hubs
- Working with all partners across Highland Community Waste Partnership, 8 organisations in all to establish sustainability and take on further projects which have been developed as standalone on grant exit from National Lottery.
- Provision of capacity building and training to 15 organisations who are funded under BSA Science Ceilidh climate research project.

Partially fulfilled

- **Develop an attractive offering and investigate private investment for communities throughout H&I leveraging support from at least one private sector investor.**
- We are currently in talks with both Balfour Beatty and SSE regarding both sponsorship of the Highlands & Islands Climate Festival and on how we can work together on other projects and support.
- We are in process of confirming a contract with Caithness Chamber of Commerce to deliver carbon literacy training.
- We are in discussions with Dounreay Site Restoration Limited Socio Economics regarding similar access to training and also private investment opportunities.
- We are researching with above the development of an initiative which would see a web portal developed for community organisations to list the type of support they are in need of, either financial or in kind and for procurement bidders to be able to use this for identifying areas of community benefit they could support. NHS have a similar portal however in Highland and the Islands due to these being smaller health boards who look at national procurement there is little opportunity for our rural groups. This is in early stage development and discussion.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Support 2 communities who are community land owners to develop plans towards use of land as carbon credit investment.**
- We are currently taking learning from Community Land Scotland and others to understand the carbon-credit systems and workings. While understanding the needs of those communities who are land owners.
- Working with Knoydart under Science Ceilidh research who have conducted a partial carbon audit of land.
- Working with NW2045 who now have a natural capital assessment of land in their region.
- Outcome at this time is focused on capacity building, learning and research with peer support.
- **Partially fulfilled**

Host climate assemblies and at least ten communities throughout the H&I area.

- This is the outcome that we have under the most deliberation as we feel on investigation of how climate assemblies have worked in other places that these are attracting the usual suspects and we want to work on a way that we could do these differently and work with those who are harder to reach.
- We are gathering information and looking to partner with Highland Adapts in the future on these but as yet unfulfilled. Our aim would be to hold these by quarter four as we want to get these right and for the process to be meaningful with a wide reach.
- **Not fulfilled at present**

2. Responsive Actions

Has there been a requirement to take actions as a result of Scottish Government feedback to previous progress reports? Tell us about the actions that were taken:

N/A

3. Obstacles

Have you experienced any constraints or difficulties? If so let us know what action you have taken to overcome them and what effect they have had on your project:

Consistent staffing and recruitment remains an issue, one which we are gradually working on. During the time period a Senior Development Officer commenced maternity leave and we also lost the Community Engagement Officer for the Inverness area who as a young person left to go travelling. As both of these members of staff were based in Inverness this left this area without any staff coverage and other members of staff had to step in to provide support. Our plans for a net zero network across Inverness therefore suffered setbacks.

We also discovered issues in terms of training provision for staff. There is a shortage of people who are skilled and experienced in community development in Highland and the Islands. Many community organisation have new entrants to the sector so therefore finding staff who can support community organisations given the number of new entrants is challenging. We had identified a community development modern apprenticeship which we felt that we could offer to staff with less experience however have subsequently discovered that there is no learning provider. To combat this we have approached UHI to access the Workforce Development Fund and offer a CPD in Community Development to staff which forms part of the Sustainable Development programme offered.

We are also continually seeking out and offering training to staff members accessing the HTSI portal for compliance themed training and making use of any courses available to us including training we can develop ourselves. We would be interested in any types of training that can be shared within the Hub network as a whole.

4. Experiences

Please provide a short narrative giving examples of positive experiences or success stories stating what objective/target they relate to, that will enhance our understanding of your progress to date:

Moray Firth Coastal Partnership

Requested support in funding for the Seashore Hub project to provide groups with litter picking equipment. We then purchased in bulk initially as a cost saving exercise but through this gained sponsorship from a commercial company, Waterhaul who wish to collect ghost gear. This has set in motion a chain of connections and research into how marine plastics collected from beaches could actually benefit communities when the end product is high value commercial products. We are looking at feasibility and logistics on how this could be a significant pilot to collect, sort and obtain commercial fees for the waste on beaches.

Web portal

In early development and research on how a web portal could be created or system to enable private sector procurement which need to demonstrate community benefit be linked to community climate action projects.

5. Risks

Have any of the risks identified in your original application been realised during the grant so far? If so, which ones and what actions have been taken in response and how have these impacted on the overall achievement of objectives and outcomes:

Recruitment and staff retention are still the key risks. We do feel that we are in the place of now having a good team but it is still a young team and we need to capacity build and train, share knowledge within the team which is not always easy in what is a very fast moving project where the more successful we are seen, the more in demand we are. It is still a key risk but it is one that we feel we are making progress in.

6. Lessons Learned

What lessons have you learned during this reporting period that you feel will enhance the achievements of the overall objectives?

The organisations we are working with as our members are being faced with a very challenging landscape. There has been within this quarter funding released by the local authority which for many is a key strand of the work that they are doing but was inaccessible to most as it opened with only a two week window to submit applications (Highland Council Community Regeneration Funding). This is happening more frequently with funding of no prior warning and very short closing dates. We are having to work with more groups to pivot their offerings and are now in the stage of advising a number of organisations on how to write directly to foundations rather than wait for funding opportunities to emerge. There needs to be a key change in how funding is operated particularly from local authorities.

Section 3 – Finances

7. Expenditure Breakdown

Please provide a detailed breakdown of actual expenditure to date which this interim report relates, compared to the planned expenditure detailed in your grant offer letter:

Agreed Grant Funding	£439,078
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Expenditure Category	Planned Expenditure	Actual Expenditure
TOTAL	£0	£0

8. Expenditure Explained

Please comment on the breakdown of the expenditure above, particularly explaining any significant disparities, particularly in reference to the categories with the most significant variances between Planned and Actual expenditure. Please set out if any underspend at the time of reporting is likely to remain an underspend or if this is forecast to be spent in a future quarter of this financial year:

Have attached copy of current management accounts which track forecast spends against actual spends for more detailed analysis.

The main area that we are unspending in at present has been staffing costs and this has been due to the timing of recruitment and also now maternity leaves.

Funding is also at considerable underspend at present. This was due to seed funding being on hold during this quarter so we could reassess how we are using it. This element will now catch up with itself as seed funding has re-opened.

Office costs have also been lower due to recruitment timings but again will catch up now that we have more staff in place and further office rentals.

Not currently concerned about underspend as it will now catch up.

Section 4 – Support

This section is designed to capture the support needed and offered. Please share reflections on the following

9. Learning for the Wider Network:

Have you developed resources or tools or ran events that other hubs would benefit from? Are there any demonstrator projects in your area that it would be useful to promote more widely?

Seed Funding

In grant year 2022-23 we dispersed seed funding with the following criteria:

£500 available to community groups who were seeking to start new activity around climate action or were seeking to carry out community engagement around climate action.

£1000 available for collaborative projects between community organisations.

The plan behind this seed funding criteria was to encourage more community organisations to work together collaboratively but we found that the majority of applications received were to collaborate with large charities or agencies rather than community organisation to community organisation. The example being Dunnet Forestry Trust and Plantlife, the project is good however it didn't have the sense of a truly collaborative project as it was ultimately Plantlife delivering activity for that community organisation.

In 2023-24 we have now changed the criteria for grant funding to only promote £500 being available for new climate action or for community engagement with higher than £500 (up to £1500) now being a discretionary fund for Development Officers who are working with community organisations to request. We are trialling this as an approach to encourage innovative projects to come through which we can not only assist in piloting but can also provide in kind assistance. The example being the project reported above with the Moray Firth Coastal Partnership.

10. Support

How can we support you? Please let us know of any advice or support you may need from the Scottish Government, the other hubs or wider stakeholder working group:

Aware that it is currently in planning but a shared resource/collaborative space for Hubs to share resources, plans and for staff to meet and collaborate. Shared Teams space discussed previously.

Can we please get a better form with text boxes you can type in that move with the report and not essential as I know from other projects that it is a standard grant claim form but if at all possible a spreadsheet rather than a word document for grant claims?

11. Further Comment

Please make any further comments you feel might help illustrate your progress, or any feedback that you would like to give us regarding the grant process:

We are finding that we are increasingly being requested to take part in stakeholder partnership events and activities which while they align with our outcomes are frequently additional to them. There is a sense of a growing movement and greater collaboration therefore it is difficult to refuse but as we are a young team who has had recruitment challenges it falls to senior members of staff to deliver within these collaborative events and activities which can be difficult within individual capacities. We are seeking to address this through upskilling, confidence building of our staff but nonetheless an issue that other Hub Managers and senior staff may need to be aware of.

Section 5 – Declaration

Signed	
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Date	
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18th August 2023

Guidance Note
Grants Interim Evaluation Report

Question	Guidance
1. Interim Progress	You should document how you are on track with meeting your objectives. You may wish to refer to your Grant Offer Letter. Please describe indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved.
2. Responsive Actions	Here you should detail any previous feedback from the Scottish Government and what action has been taken.
3. Obstacles	Please comment on any constraints or significant difficulties you have faced over the reporting period and how you addressed them or how you intend to address them. Describe the effect or impact that these have had, or may have, on the achievement of your targets.
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Quarterly Progress Report

Section 1 – Project Details

Climate Action Hub	Highlands & Islands Climate Hub
Reporting Period	July – September 2023
Report Completed By	Joan Lawrie
Designation / Job Title	Hub Manager

Section 2 – Project Report

This section is designed to capture the progress being made with your project during the reporting period towards your agreed outputs and outcomes.

We recommend using a maximum of 500 words per text box, feel free to use bullet points. A guidance note is given at the end of this document.

1. Interim Progress

Please detail the progress you have made towards the achievement of your objectives. You should refer to your Grant Offer Letter. By describing the indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved:

- **Work with at least 8 communities throughout Highlands & Islands to form community climate action plans in a place based approach. In particular at least 5 communities in Highland Region aligned with Climate Risk Assessment work being carried out by Adaptation Scotland and Highland Adapts.**
- Following investigative piece on various methods for engagement have created a toolkit within Members area of website for communities to consider various tools for the creation of climate action plans. Commencing from climate conversation utilising the Climate Action Highlands & Islands film Local place planning process.
- New structures in place within Highland CPP and presenting linkages between Climate Action Plans and Local Place planning/Locality plans in November to Highland CPP Chairs. Working within Highland CPP structure to streamline plans to avoid over consultation of communities.
- Continue to work to varying levels with the following communities: Thurso, Dornie, Golspie, Kinlochleven and Fort William. Wick and Stromness has been on hold over the summer period with majority of work being carried out in Kinlochleven who are currently undergoing local place planning. Much work has been on hold over the summer period to continue during the winter period. Golspie in particular scheduled to have high level of work quarter 3.
- Work continues with Highland Adapts and we are working proactively with them on the Climate and Weather Story Map place based consultation and incorporating it into the engagement being carried out with the communities above with the exception of Stromness.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Raise awareness and widen participation through regular digital engagement, the development of a short film and delivery of climate literacy training to at least 30 community organisations throughout the region. Sessions reaching at least 150 individuals.**
 - Digital engagement: Facebook engagement: 31k reach, Instagram engagement 6.9k reach, Twitter 6k impressions per month. We had a spike in September due to Climate Festival which has skewed our engagement.
 - We are working to increase consistency and engagement across social media and use it as a call to action to visit the website, from July to end September the website received 9.9k visitors and increase of 25% from previous year.
 - Climate Action Highlands & Islands Film is complete and has been released. Link to the film found here: <https://youtu.be/FAlvP6NnHtg>
 - Carbon literacy training still relatively unpromoted due to capacity issues but is being included in suite of tools available for climate action plans.
 - **Partially Fulfilled**
-
- **Design and development of a shortened climate emergency and community climate action short course (one hour) for delivery to community councils and smaller new entrant groups reaching 30 Community Councils and 100 individuals.**
 - One hour now in place completed to design and training pack. Incorporates elements of the Climate Action Highlands & Islands Film with reference to Golspie and adaptation work – clear linkages between community councils. Now working in winter and spring period on roll out.
 - **Partially fulfilled**
-
- **Work with and support the long term ambitions of the Caithness Poverty Action Network and Sutherland Poverty Action Network in short and long term solutions to the cost of living crises including signposting for at least 40 community organisations to lower energy resources for community members and supporting long term solutions of formation of groups to take forward district heating solutions in at least two communities.**
 - We operate within the steering group for the Warmlie project which is now at feasibility and survey stage working with Changeworks in Thurso to create a district heating system in the Ormlie area of Thurso, an area that frequently falls into the top 20% of multiple deprivation in Thurso. Survey in final stages with feasibility studies favourable to the scheme.
 - Working with Changeworks on a submission to TNL Climate Action Fund for a similar project to Highland Community Waste Partnership but focused on energy efficiency and retrofitting of homes.
 - Highland Council now have in place Net Zero strategy and working with LHEES to form a stakeholder Group.

- We have supported the development of the Highland Cost of Living Crises Community Support training and have rolled this out to 24 organisations to date. We are working on this project collaboratively with Thurso Community Development Trust where the training is based on understanding of the cost of living crises and energy costs in Highland and participants then received access to a support website designed to be mobile optimised where they can receive up to date information on support available both short and long term for community members to save energy, reduce bills and access grant support. <https://www.highlandcommunitysupport.org/> An E-learning will also be developed to accompany this and have wider reach.
- **Partially Fulfilled**

- **Training delivery of workshop to introduce and form Net Zero/Environmental policies to at least 40 groups.**
- We placed a pause on this training to redevelop and pivot the training towards a link with the resources and assessment available through SCVO.
- 23 groups have now received training.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Support 30 groups/organisations/projects with seed funding and/or support to access diversified funding portfolios community groups throughout the region.**
- Seed funding has now relaunched alongside Highlands & Islands Climate Festival funding with two closing dates and active promotion in place.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Learn from and support the Carbon Neutral Islands Programme and work with a further two islands from that learning to form community climate action plans.**
- Discussions ongoing as to how the Hub can assist with capacity building within the Development Officers working on the CNI project and survey completed into training needs.
- Change of staff lead on this outcome with contacts made now with each of the CNI officers and the CNI team. Plan in place to introduce replicability and working with CES on development.
- **Partially fulfilled**

- **Introduce community led climate action projects to a further 4 communities in the region where no previous climate engagement is occurring. Key areas to target are Wick, North West Sutherland, Dingwall and Orkney Mainland.**
- Wick Development Trust and in discussions around a project on sustainable tourism with them and making their plans for their recently acquired Camping and Caravan Site climate friendly, from this the ambition is to launch a climate action plan for the community. Alongside this we are working with them on Sustrans project for the town centre and how this could promote climate friendly behaviours in active travel in partnership with Cycling UK.

- Northwest Sutherland, working in partnership with the RLUP and local stakeholders to capacity build in the area. Natural Capital audit has been completed and we are working with them on climate engagement in the local communities.
- Also in Northwest Sutherland working with Melvich Community SCIO who have the ambition of creating a community hub to passivhaus standards and are currently working alongside the Melvich Community Council on a local place plan for the village which they are embedding climate action into.
- Working actively in Dingwall to bring groups together.
- Creative Carbon Springboard in Orkney has led to a climate action network forming which we are chairing on Orkney and have action plan in place.

Partially fulfilled

- **Provision of monthly climate action events showcasing the work of communities and giving peer learning support through high quality delivery and skills development.**
- Online events on hold during the summer period and to make space for H&I Climate Festival. Winter/Spring programme planned and in place to commence in Q3.
- Attended several in person events over the summer from supporting community organisations who are members to larger events – Durness Games, Belladrum, Morven Games, Highland Pride

Partially fulfilled

- **Design, develop and deliver working with community organisations throughout the full region a month long climate festival in September of events and activities which engage with the wider communities.**
- See attached additional project report on H&I Climate Festival
- **Fulfilled**

- **Engage with communities throughout the region to both create new community led climate action projects and strengthen, supporting sustainability of existing projects working with at least 35 community organisations.**
- Have experienced an influx of new members due to H&I Climate Festival with 32 new groups funded and now actively working with them.
- Established new project with Moray Firth Coastal Partnership – Seashore Hubs
- Working with all partners across Highland Community Waste Partnership, 8 organisations in all to establish sustainability and take on further projects which have been developed as standalone on grant exit from National Lottery.
- Provision of capacity building and training to 15 organisations who are funded under BSA Science Ceilidh climate research project.
- **Fulfilled (yet ongoing)**

- **Develop an attractive offering and investigate private investment for communities throughout H&I leveraging support from at least one private sector investor.**
- We are researching with above the development of an initiative which would see a web portal developed for community organisations to list the type of support they are in need of, either financial or in kind and for procurement bidders to be able to use this for identifying areas of community benefit they could support. NHS have a similar portal however in Highland and the Islands due to these being smaller health boards who look at national procurement there is little opportunity for our rural groups – still under development in quarter 2.
- Finalising contract with [redacted] to provide carbon literacy training to supply chain in financial year 2024-25
- Contract in place with Caithness Chamber of Commerce to provide carbon literacy training.
- Working Group for H&I Climate Festival working through framework for accepting sponsorship avoiding greenwash.
- **Partially fulfilled**

Support 2 communities who are community land owners to develop plans towards use of land as carbon credit investment.

- Work in quarter 1 has continued – no substantial further progress from that period but work to continue in Quarter 3
- We are currently taking learning from Community Land Scotland and others to understand the carbon-credit systems and workings. While understanding the needs of those communities who are land owners.
- Working with Knoydart under Science Ceilidh research who have conducted a partial carbon audit of land.
- Working with NW2045 who now have a natural capital assessment of land in their region.
- Outcome at this time is focused on capacity building, learning and research with peer support.
- **Partially fulfilled**

Host climate assemblies and at least ten communities throughout the H&I area.

- We are currently in planning for delivery of these to be held in Quarter 4 and have pivoted the concept of climate assemblies into an arts based project looking at long termism and future headlines as after extensive research and consultation with community groups we do not feel that climate assemblies will attract those other than the usual suspects.
- Planning will continue in Quarter 3 for delivery in Quarter 4.
- **Not fulfilled at present**

2. Responsive Actions

Has there been a requirement to take actions as a result of Scottish Government feedback to previous progress reports? Tell us about the actions that were taken:

N/A

3. Obstacles

Have you experienced any constraints or difficulties? If so let us know what action you have taken to overcome them and what effect they have had on your project:

We have experienced a significant staffing issue during the last quarter where external HR assistance has been required to support the Board and Hub [redacted]. We currently have limited capacity in our senior staff team due to maternity leaves and the HR issue concerned [redacted].

We have now put systems in place including taking a retainer with an external HR company for ongoing support and have refreshed and tightened staff policies. We attempted recruitment to increase the senior staff team but found no suitably qualified applicants.

The Staff Member concerned has since left the organisation on 30th September and completing reporting now towards end October – the situation has vastly improved. We are currently now focusing on upskilling the existing staff team and taking external support where required.

4. Experiences

Please provide a short narrative giving examples of positive experiences or success stories stating what objective/target they relate to, that will enhance our understanding of your progress to date:

Highlands & Islands Climate Festival

See attached report on the Highlands & Islands Climate Festival including a guide for the Hub Network.

5. Risks

Have any of the risks identified in your original application been realised during the grant so far? If so, which ones and what actions have been taken in response and how have these impacted on the overall achievement of objectives and outcomes:

As above in (3) staffing remains a key concern but we feel that with the exception of the recent experience in terms of staffing issues which was very much a one off and we do not expect to see repeated we have now in place a good team which requires some capacity building but works well together.

6. Lessons Learned

What lessons have you learned during this reporting period that you feel will enhance the achievements of the overall objectives?

Capacity building within the team is essential. We have during the last quarter and will continue in quarter 3 to focus on building the capacity and skills within the team for delivery of the outcomes. We have experienced a considerable staffing issue which impacted on everyone within the team and distracted from delivery. Taking in external support has been invaluable to resolving issues experienced. While members of the team particularly the Board and Hub Manager have been impacted by the issue experienced it has now meant coming out of this that the remaining team have pulled together and we have pivoted to a better place with greater collaboration.

Essentially the lesson learned in the last quarter has been that we've grown so quickly in terms of the work that we are doing that we need to now reflect, consolidate and emphasis team working which is already now yielding greater results.

Section 3 – Finances

7. Expenditure Breakdown

Please provide a detailed breakdown of actual expenditure to date which this interim report relates, compared to the planned expenditure detailed in your grant offer letter:

Agreed Grant Funding	£439,078
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Expenditure Category	Planned Expenditure	Actual Expenditure
TOTAL	£0	£0

8. Expenditure Explained

Please comment on the breakdown of the expenditure above, particularly explaining any significant disparities, particularly in reference to the categories with the most significant variances between Planned and Actual expenditure. Please set out if any underspend at the time of reporting is likely to remain an underspend or if this is forecast to be spent in a future quarter of this financial year:

Current management accounts attached.
Changes in staffing mean that we are likely to be in underspend where staffing is concerned.
Funding is at underspend but seed funding is relaunched.

Section 4 – Support

This section is designed to capture the support needed and offered. Please share reflections on the following

9. Learning for the Wider Network:

Have you developed resources or tools or ran events that other hubs would benefit from? Are there any demonstrator projects in your area that it would be useful to promote more widely?

Highlands & Islands Climate Festival

See attached supplementary report and guide on carrying out the Highlands & Islands Climate Festival which can be shared with the wider Hub network.

10. Support

How can we support you? Please let us know of any advice or support you may need from the Scottish Government, the other hubs or wider stakeholder working group:

No change from quarter one in support required.

Aware that it is currently in planning but a shared resource/collaborative space for Hubs to share resources, plans and for staff to meet and collaborate. Shared Teams space discussed previously.

Can we please get a better form with text boxes you can type in that move with the report and not essential as I know from other projects that it is a standard grant claim form but if at all possible a spreadsheet rather than a word document for grant claims?

UK Shared Prosperity funding – HIE are currently legally investigating this as appears community orgs may not be able to source funding over £320k over a 3 year period and that all funding is now subject to this (where as in the past funding would be categorised as state aid or non state aid) is this the case for Scot Gov funding?

11. Further Comment

Please make any further comments you feel might help illustrate your progress, or any feedback that you would like to give us regarding the grant process:

Section 5 – Declaration

Signed	
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Date	
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[signature redacted]

27th October 2023

Guidance Note
Grants Interim Evaluation Report

Question	Guidance
1. Interim Progress	You should document how you are on track with meeting your objectives. You may wish to refer to your Grant Offer Letter. Please describe indicators used to monitor progress and state if your outcomes have been fully/partially/not achieved.
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