

Agenda Item	12e
Report No	RC/035/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Ross and Cromarty Committee

Date: 14 August 2019

Report Title: Tain Common Good Quarter 1 Monitoring Report

Report By: Acting Head of Policy

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides information on income and expenditure in relation to the Tain Common Good Fund for the period April – June 2019.

2. Implications

2.1 Resource - With a relatively low level of income for property and grazing, and essential maintenance such as the replacement of the Alexandra Bridge fixings, the fund will once again operate at a deficit. Similarly, although no expenditure has been incurred to date this year in relation to the fishery, the mussel survey work required to identify if/when the stock quantities have risen to sustainable levels for fishing must be incurred at some point if the possibility of future income is to be identified. With the amended budget as outlined in the report, an overall deficit of £23,800 is anticipated at the year end. As noted in the report, the maintenance work is essential and unavoidable. This is against a figure of usable revenue reserves of £220,649 as at 31 March 2019 (NB this is an unaudited figure).

2.2 Legal – the application of funds will fall within the competency guidelines set out both in statute and in common law in relation to Common Good Funds. Additionally, through the governance being applied by the Finance Service, funds will remain compliant with all financial regulations.

2.3 Risk – The Council does not have in house expertise in relation to the operation of a mussel fishery but is dependent on external professional advice.

2.4 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - none

2.5 Climate Change/Carbon Clever - none

2.6 Gaelic implications – none

3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to scrutinise and note the report.

4. Quarter 1 Monitoring Statement

- 4.1 A monitoring statement showing transactions to the end of June 2019 against budget and estimated year end position is attached at Appendix One.
- 4.2 **Income** - When the budget was set in January 2019 it was anticipated that Units 4/5 Market Street stalls were about to be let, and a full year's income was therefore expected. Unfortunately, the potential tenant did not take on the property. It has been re advertised and it is hoped a new tenant will be taken on soon. There have not been any occasional lets so this will also result in reduced income. However, income is forecast for the grazing lets; one is already let for grazing and the other smaller site is intended for the solar panel project which has been previously reported to Members. It is proposed that the estimated outturn be reviewed in the next monitoring report when overall income figures will be clearer.
- 4.3 **Expenditure** – Expenditure to date relates largely to final repairs to units 4/5 Market Street stall, annual maintenance visits regarding the trees which have been re-planted at Woody Braes and some repairs to the skate park. However, more significant repair costs are anticipated. Members will recall that some repair work is required to the Alexandra Bridge as there is an issue with the bridge hangers and the main suspension cables which requires to be corrected. The recommendation from Development and Infrastructure colleagues is that this work is essential to maintain the integrity of the bridge and ensure its long-term safety.
- 4.4 D and I colleagues have designed a solution involving new clamps and the planning service have confirmed that, subject to colour-finish, the proposed fixings are acceptable although the change in detailing will require Listed Building Consent to ensure an accurate record is kept of alterations to the bridge. This application is free.
- 4.5 The fabrication of the fixings will be approximately £2,000. Fitting the new clamps will require special expertise given the complex environment and a quote has been sought from a suitable company. The cost is anticipated to be approximately £10,000 based on using a small elevating platform onto the bridge deck. The quote will require to be confirmed after a site visit.
- 4.6 This work will mean that the budget set for all property works will be exceeded. There may also be additional minor property works to other Common Good assets, e.g. fencing. It is therefore proposed that the budget be increased to £16,500. This will impact on reserves, as noted in the implications section of the report. However, this expenditure is regarded as essential and unavoidable.
- 4.7 Members will recall that the mussel fishery was being rested pending a further stock survey. It had been hoped that a survey to prospect for mussel spat would have been undertaken in early summer and depending on the results a more comprehensive survey would then be commissioned. This has been delayed but Herriot Watt

University have advised us that they intend to do the survey towards the end of August 2019. If the spat survey results are poor no further survey work will be done for a period of time and the budget is likely to be underspent. However, if the results are promising, more detailed survey work may be undertaken to provide additional stock information prior to seeking competitive bids to lease the fishing rights for an agreed period of time. Meantime the assumption is that the budget will be fully spent.

Designation: Alison Clark, Acting Head of Policy

Date: 25 July 2019

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**Appendix 1
Tain Common Good - Quarterly
Monitoring
Period to 30 June 2019**

	Actual to date £	Budget £	Estimated Outturn £	Variance £
INCOME				
Rents	1,891	9,100	9,100	-
Interest and investment income	-	1,600	1,600	-
TOTAL INCOME	1,891	10,700	10,700	-
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs	595	2,000	2,000	-
Property costs	1,997	12,000	16,500	4,500
Central Support Charges	-	1,000	1,000	-
Tain Mussel Fishery		15,000	15,000	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,592	30,000	34,500	4,500
Income less Expenditure	(701)	(19,300)	(23,800)	(4,500)