

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Isle of Skye and Raasay

**Date:** 30 November 2020

**Report Title:** Skye and Raasay Investment Plan – Proposed Approach

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the proposed approach to engagement for the preparation of a place-based investment plan for Skye and Raasay. The aim of this work is to bring public sector agencies, businesses, community interest groups and the wider community together to agree a joined-up investment plan which supports economic recovery and addresses the unique challenges and opportunities that the area faces.
- 1.2 The proposed engagement aims to:
- re-affirm and refine the priorities and outcomes already identified through the Local Committee and Recovery Board; and
  - identify the projects that can deliver added value in achieving these. The main output will be an Investment Plan which spells out actions for coordinating and securing funding, and for implementation of the plan.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. agree the proposed approach to engagement as outlined in paragraph 6 and the proposal to refer a final draft Skye & Raasay Investment Plan to a future Committee meeting for approval;
  - ii. note that the outcomes for Skye & Raasay outlined in Section 5 take account of pre-existing priorities and outcomes and will be used to consider the benefits of projects; and
  - iii. note that it is proposed that all Council ECOs are engaged in this process along with relevant teams, as well partner agencies and representatives of community organisations.

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource: There are no direct resource implications from this paper in itself, but the work that will be undertaken will provide an opportunity to agree how partners and communities work together and maximise resources to address the priorities for the area.
- 3.2 Legal: None
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island): The engagement proposed in this paper would enable a collaborative approach to agreeing outcomes and investment priorities for the future.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever: Given the clear importance being placed on climate change by the Council and Scottish Government, local priorities must align as closely as possible to the aspirations of both bodies.
- 3.5 Risk: None
- 3.6 Gaelic: The important place of the Gaelic language from a cultural and economic point of view will be an important focus of the place planning work being undertaken.

### **4. Development of a place-based investment plan**

- 4.1 The proposed programme of work outlined in this report relates to the wider Council aim of developing collaborative place-based strategies for service delivery and local environmental and infrastructure improvements. The Council proposes to undertake this work for the Skye and Raasay area over the next few months. It aims to re-affirm the priorities and outcomes already identified (see Section 5) and to consider the projects that can best deliver against these outcomes and provide added value. The intended way of working will be focused and dynamic with the main output being an Investment Plan which spells out actions for coordinating and securing the funding and implementation of the plan.

### **5. Outcomes, Projects and Associated Benefits for Skye and Raasay and projects**

- 5.1 Outcomes represent the qualities, values and benefits that people wish to achieve for an area. For Skye & Raasay considerable work has been done to identify the outcomes that any development or investment should contribute to in Skye & Raasay. These are:
  - 1) Sustainable tourism – For Skye to retain its reputation as an internationally renowned sustainable tourism destination a coordinated approach is required to identify priorities and investment.
  - 2) Diverse and green economy – A strong and diverse economy with a range of employment opportunities will promote wellbeing and attract investment.
  - 3) Digital and Transport infrastructure – Access to modern digital connections and the maintenance of a high-quality transport network is vital for ensuring the area is competitive and supporting the wider ambitions for the area.
  - 4) Strengthening communities – Strong, capable and resourceful communities which are properly housed is vital for the social and economic growth of the area.

5) Health and education – Delivering modern health and education facilities makes the area resilient and an attractive place to live.

5.2 These outcomes and priorities for Skye and Raasay are intended to act as the measures against which the benefits of projects are assessed both individually and collectively. They have been distilled from a wide range of considerations, including:

- the Highland IRSS - the Council's submission to Scottish Government which represents the contributions that Highland will make on the national stage in the next 30 years;
- the adopted West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan (WestPlan);
- priorities identified by the Highland Council Recovery Board;
- the area priorities identified by the Skye & Raasay Local Committee; and
- an extensive range of previous consultations and studies that have already taken place.

5.3 A list of projects that are actively being progressed across the area is being collated and will be developed further with engagement from key stakeholders. Commentary on the benefits that are likely to accrue from each project when compared to the outcomes listed above will be a key consideration in the discussion around prioritisation and delivery. This will help to ensure that projects are aligned to the outcomes and stand the best possible chance of being funded.

## 6. Proposed Engagement and Next Steps

6.1 The outcomes/priorities and projects referred to above are intended to act as basis for our engagement with wider partners in the area. The particular benefits of the proposed way of working is to maintain focus on identifying and agreeing priorities and opportunities for adding value and progressing projects. This work will also initiate a coordinated approach to delivery by agreeing actions and responsibilities for all partners in jointly implementing the Investment Plan including securing any funding required. A list of potential funding sources would also be collated to understand opportunities and limitations of available budgets.

6.2 A simple four step approach to the engagement is proposed, as follows:

### 1. Re-affirming / checking the priorities and outcomes for the area

- Are they up to date? Do they reflect consensus view on area outcomes?
- How does COVID inform/change outlook on these priorities
- What are service priorities (as public partners)?
- What are you (partners) doing to address these priorities? (i.e before we get into any projects).

### 2. Consider the projects in terms of their benefits, cost, value for money, cross-over and interdependencies between other projects;

- How might existing projects address the priorities
- What outcomes might projects deliver? What benefits might they bring for area and wider region?
- What are the inter-relationships and added value between projects?

### 3. Identifying funding options for delivery and addressing budget gaps

- Collate potential funding sources – are there any missing?

#### **4. Identify responsibilities and timescales for delivery in the short, medium and long term**

- 6.3 The proposed engagement events will be carried out in two stages during December and early January. The first event would involve lead partners, agencies, Development Trusts, project leads and key community representatives. Other stakeholder meetings will also be used to inform and update the background information for these events, including a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership on 24 November. The second event would broaden the audience to include the wider public and any other interested parties. All events will be held online. Interactive mapping may be used to engage the audience and act as a forum for collating feedback.
- 6.4 To make this approach work most effectively cross-agency and relevant partner participation is essential. This has been the hallmark of success of previous place-based events. In particular, it is proposed that all Highland Council Executive Chief Officers are engaged in this process along with relevant teams from their service.
- 6.5 The Highland Council and HIE will lead the process of making arrangements for the events and consider seeking assistance from Architecture and Design Scotland and Scottish Futures Trust to provide independent facilitation of the engagement sessions. It is believed that these organisations could also add value in terms of place making, design and feasibility and in identifying the funding opportunities, actions and responsibilities for delivery.
- 6.7 The investment plan will be finalised at the start of 2021 and a final draft is intended to be presented to the Area Committee on 1 March 2021 for approval.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer - Infrastructure and Environment

Date: 18 November 2020

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Background Papers:

[Council's indicative Regional Spatial Strategy](#)

[West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan \(2019\)](#)

[Council's Recovery Board](#)

[Skye and Raasay Area Committee - Area Priorities](#)