

Agenda Item	4.
Report No	NC/10/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Nairnshire Committee

Date: 23 June 2021

Report Title: Use of Ward Covid Response Funds

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Community and Places

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following on from the decisions made at Highland Council on 7 January 2021, Ward 18 Members have requested that a portion of the Ward's remaining Covid-19 Ward Discretionary funds be used to support safe access to the (old) Farmer's Showfield in Nairn to enable health and well-being activity to continue on the site. This is in line with the decision taken at a meeting of the Highland Council on 7 January 2021. As this will repurpose the funding, approval at Area Committee is required.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Agree to allocate funding from Covid- 19 Ward Discretionary funds to support the provision of grass cutting on the (old) Nairn Farmer's Showfield in support of health and well-being activity.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Legal:** Whilst the Council has no legal duty to maintain recreational grounds not in its ownership, Section 15(2) of the Local Government and Planning Act (Scotland) 1982 allows a local authority to contribute towards the expense of providing such facilities as they consider appropriate.
- 3.2 **Resource:** the report asks Members to agree to allocate a portion of the remaining Covid-19 Ward Discretionary Budget for the cutting of grass at the (old) Farmers Showfield to enable the site to remain accessible for recreational activities which promote the health and well-being of the community. This is in line with the Council decision on 7 January 2021, enabling Members to decide to set aside existing covid monies for spend

on projects to assist children and adults post covid, such as contributing to the provision of outdoor play and recreational space.

- 3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island):** Reallocating covid Ward funds will result in a reduced sum being available to support vulnerable communities within the Ward on resilience related support. The repurposed covid Ward funds will however support communities in deprived areas and help local families to enjoy good quality outdoor recreational and leisure space.
- 3.4 **Risk:** There is a risk that allocating Covid-19 funds at this point for other purposes may result in the Ward running out of budget to support local resilience activity, depending upon how long the pandemic and response lasts for.
- 3.5 **Climate Change / Gaelic:** There are no implications

4. Background

- 4.1 It was agreed at a meeting of the Highland Council on 7 January 2021 that Wards with unspent covid-19 funds to spend this on projects to assist children and adults post covid, especially within deprived areas. Should Members within a Ward wish to set aside a portion of their remaining Covid-19 Ward Discretionary fund for other purposes than originally intended, then this would be agreed at a meeting of the appropriate Area Committee. It was also agreed that any covid ward discretionary funds remaining at 31 March 2021 could be carried forward for use in 2021/22.
- 4.2 Following discussions at a Ward Business meeting, this report seeks agreement on the request by Members to set aside a proportion of their covid funds for spend on outdoor recreational space.

5. Current Covid-19 Ward Discretionary Budget Position

- 5.1 All Wards across Highland were awarded a sum of £16,000 in April 2020 to support covid resilience activity. This was augmented by £10,000 in 20 covid-vulnerable communities across the area, including Nairn West and Nairn East. The total available covid-19 ward discretionary funds for Nairn were £36,000. It was agreed at Council on 7 January 2021 that to increase flexibility, there was no requirement to spend the additional monies on the covid-vulnerable communities originally identified and that the sums available per ward could be deployed across the area as appropriate.

At 31 March 2021, there was £9,326.09 funds remaining

6. Nairn Member's Proposal

- 6.1 Following discussion at Ward Business Meeting on the 4th June 2021, Members agreed to pursue a proposal to set aside £1,470 of their Covid-19 Ward Discretionary Budget for grounds maintenance during the 2021 growing season at the Farmers Showfield.

6.2 These funds, in consultation with the amenities team, the site leaseholder and users of the field will enable outdoor community activities to continue on the site.

Designation: Carron McDiarmid, ECO, Community & Places

Date: 6 June 2021

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