

Agenda Item	8
Report No	WRSL/015/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Committee

Date: 19 August 2021

Report Title: Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following on from the budget agreed by Highland Council in March 2021, a £100,000 Place Based Investment Fund was allocated to each Ward for the 2021/22 financial year. This fund is intended to enable a flexible local response to address the four harms of Covid which are identified as direct health harms; health impacts not directly related to Covid; societal impacts and economic impacts.
- 1.2 Early discussions with Local Members at Ward level have identified a range of opportunities for spend against the Place Based Investment Fund for the Wards. This report asks the Committee to agree the budget allocations outlined in the report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed allocations of Place Based Investment Funds as follows:
 - a. Investment in footpaths - £40,000
 - b. Investment in community-led projects which offset the harms of Covid - £60,000
 - c. Total = £100,000

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications: as set out in the report.
- 3.2 Legal implications – none
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funds to support local communities will enable activities to be directed in ways that promote equality and tackle poverty.

- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications although investment in local paths may reduce use of vehicles.
- 3.5 Risk implications – there are no identified risks as projects will either be delivered in-house within the known budget or will be provided as grants to established organisations using the standard grants criteria / process.
- 3.6 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications. However, where there is an opportunity the Gaelic language will be promoted.

4. Proposals for Investment

- 4.1 **Investment in path provision - £40,000** – investment is required to improve both residential and rural paths within the area. Provision of funding to improve these paths will encourage more people to walk, leading to better mental and physical well-being. Priorities will be agreed in discussion with the local Access Officer and depending upon the priorities identified, work will either be undertaken internally or through a community led project.
- 4.2 **Investment in community-led projects - £60,000** - these funds will be made available to constituted groups delivering successfully in their communities. Projects must relate to off-setting at least one of the 4 harms of Covid. Projects which bring an element of match-funding will be prioritised over those seeking 100% funding. However, 100% grant award could be made available for exceptional projects. There will be two funding rounds – end-September and end-December. All projects must be completed by December 2022. Applications will be made via the established process for Ward Discretionary Grants.

5. Management of Funds

- 5.1 The funds allocated in accordance with this report will be managed by the Senior Ward Manager with any grants awarded of £10,000 or over being reported to a future Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Area Committee for approval.

Designation: Carron McDiarmid, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 2 August 2021

Author: Dot Ferguson, Senior Ward Manager, Ross, Skye and Lochaber

Background Papers: