

Agenda Item	11
Report No	LA/28/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber Area Committee

Date: 8th November 2021

Report Title: Place Based Investment Funds – Funding application

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 At Area Committee on 9th August 2021, allocations from this fund for the Fort William and Ardnamurchan ward were agreed. Within these, it was agreed to allocate £30,000 to established community groups delivering successfully in the provision of mental health and well-being services. Projects which aid recovery from the harms of Covid were to be prioritised.
- 1.3 An application from Lochaber Hope for £15,000 has now been received for consideration.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - Consider and agree a grant of £15,000 to Lochaber Hope to support the 'New Connections' mental-health project within the Fort William and Ardnamurchan ward.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications – the allocation of funding for this purpose was confirmed at Lochaber Area Committee on 9th August 2021.

- 3.2 Legal implications – under the Scheme of Delegation, any funding awards for a sum greater than £10,000 will be considered at Area Committee.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funding to support mental health well-being across 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.
- 3.5 Risk implications – there are no identified risks as the project is being delivered by a long-established community group.
- 3.6 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications. However, where there is an opportunity the Gaelic language will be promoted.

4. Project proposal – New Connections

- 4.1 New Connections is a new project being delivered by Lochaber Hope which provides a physical hub for a wide variety of partners in Fort William Town Centre. It expands opportunities for community inclusion and directly delivers an opportunity for people to communicate with a wide range of service providers, or just between each other over afternoon tea. The space provides a safe place in the community for people to be cared for and move out of lockdown and safely back into the community, creating new connections, capturing and maintaining the good during lockdown and making new links with people who have come together during this time. During 3 years of hosting Lochaber Breakfast Networking Meetings with over 60 organisational and individual members, all the feedback is that this is the most beneficial networking opportunity Lochaber Hope has had.
- 4.2 While this request for funding relates entirely to year one of the project, Lochaber Hope is already having discussions with other funding partners to consider the longer-term future of New Connections and it is anticipated that further funding will be achieved on the basis of successful outcomes.
- 4.3 **Costs** – Year 1 costs are £27,000. £15,000 is sought towards these costs, with £8,000 match-funding already confirmed and further applications for the balance are awaiting an outcome.

5. Management of Funds

- 5.1 The funds allocated in accordance with this report will be managed by the Senior Ward Manager as per the usual process for all ward discretionary budget grants.

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

Date: 30 October 2021

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

Background Papers: Lochaber Area Committee – 9 August 2021 - Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations