

Agenda Item	URGENT ITEM
Report No	BSAC/21/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: **Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee**

Date: **9th November 2021**

Report Title: **Badenoch & Strathspey Ward 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 4 harms of Covid which are identified as direct health harms; health impacts not directly related to Covid; societal impacts and economic impacts.
- 1.2 Discussions with Members at ward level identified two initial priority areas for spend against the Place Based Investment Fund for the ward and a report outlining these and other potential additional priorities was brought before this committee on 9th August 2021.
- 1.3 Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) funding of £129,222 has now also been allocated to the ward. This follows a decision by the Economy and Infrastructure Committee that an area-based approach be taken for investing the PBIP grant. Governance for spend of this fund is also through the area Committee.
- 1.4 Discussions on how best to deploy both funds have resulted in a proposal to instigate a community challenge fund with a focus on regeneration projects, therefore this report asks the Committee to agree the further budget allocations detailed.
- 1.5 The proposed approach for both these funds was outlined to the Badenoch and Strathspey Community Partnership on the 25th October and was fully endorsed by all partners present.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Consider and agree that the remaining balance of the Ward Place Based Investment fund is combined with the PBIP funding to create a challenge fund for Badenoch and Strathspey focusing on community regeneration projects.
- ii. Note that reports will be brought back to this committee as required for future budget allocation in terms of the projects identified.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications – The resource implications are set out in the report. The proposals outlined would allocate the remaining balance from the Badenoch and Strathspey Place Based Investment Fund and also propose how to respond to the PBIP funding allocation.
- 3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be made to external groups and/or other Council services in line with the details agreed in the report and the Scheme of Delegation. This means that grants related to the Council's Place Based fund of up to £10,000 can be administered locally by the Ward Manager in consultation with Members and grants larger than £10,000 will require further approval through this Committee.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The allocation of funds proposed would target a range of regeneration projects and activities for local communities which will align with addressing the 4 harms of covid.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – There are no specific climate change implications, but some projects will provide opportunities for carbon clever solutions.
- 3.5 Risk – Some funding allocations may be dependent upon additional external funding being identified in order to complete the funding package and enable the project to progress. Place Based funding will only be allocated once the complete funding package is in place. Grants will be made following established grant making procedures to minimise risk of project failure. PBIP funding required to be legally committed by the end of March 2021.
- 3.6 Gaelic – There are no specific Gaelic implications. However, where there is an opportunity the Gaelic language will be promoted.

4. Place Based Funds

4.1 *Place Based Investment Fund*

As part of the Highland Council budget setting process, a Place Based Investment Fund was created for 2021/22 allocating £100,000 to each ward across Highland. The aim of this fund is to address the four harms of covid - direct health harms; health impacts not directly related to Covid; societal impacts and economic impacts. Any funding needs to set out how it will address one or more of the four harms of covid. Allocation of this funding needs to be agreed by the Area Committee.

To date, £50,000 of the Badenoch and Strathspey Place Based Investment Fund has been allocated, principally for a series of studies to support housing.

4.2 *Place Based Investment Programme*

The Scottish Government has allocated the Council £1,963,000 ring-fenced Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) funding for 2021/22. The grant is capital in nature and can be used to fund capital expenditure of the local authority, or a third party. On the 1st of September 2021, Members of the Economy and Infrastructure Committee agreed an area-based approach for investing the PBIP grant. This resulted in Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee receiving £129,222 for 2021/22. The area allocation calculation mirrors that used by the Scottish Government when distributing funds across Scotland.

5. Proposal for Allocation of Funds

- 5.1 Discussions have taken place with Members at ward level to consider how to deploy the remaining £50,000 PBIF and new £129,222 PBIP funding. It is proposed that the remaining balance from the ward Place Based Fund be combined with the PBIP fund to create a local Challenge Fund that would be open to all communities across Badenoch and Strathspey for regeneration projects. The projects should consider the four harms of covid, particularly in relation to recovery.
- 5.2 Recognising that the PBIP funding is capital in nature and will be in place for 5 years, to enable and advance place-based investment, the ward Place Based Funding could compliment the PBIP funding through provision of support for both one-off and longer-term project development, thus providing the opportunity for community groups to consider more impactful projects for their communities. Applications can therefore be sought for both revenue and capital projects although only capital projects can be funded from the PBIP funding.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Communities & Places

Date: 3 November 2021

Author: Liz Cowie, Ward Manager