

Agenda Item	8
Report No	ERA-26-21

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Easter Ross Area Committee

Date: 18 November 2021

Report Title: Tain & Easter Ross Place Based Funds – Proposed Funding Allocation

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 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 To date the Tain & Easter Ross ward has contributed £2,500 to support the Nigg-Cromarty Ferry and thus the local economy and has also allocated £20,000 towards play equipment. This report recommends that an additional award of £5,000 be made to Seaboard Memorial Hall to cover the increased building costs of the Harbour Toilet Refurbishment. This is a project which the Easter Ross Area Committee has previously supported via the Coastal Communities Fund. The harbour toilet is important to the local community and the economy and serves harbour users, visitors to the beach and the very well used community polytunnel nearby.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed allocation £5,000 of Easter Ross Place Based Funds to Seaboard Memorial Hall to allow the harbour toilet refurbishment to be completed despite increased costs.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Legal implications: there are no legal implications for the Highland Council but it is noted that the Seaboard Memorial Hall has undergone appropriate processes in order to commission the refurbishment works required.

- 3.2 Resource implications: The report recommends that a small amount of the Place Based Funds be allocated to the Balintore Harbour toilet refurbishment project but there are no other resource implications
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) implications –The allocation of funds to allow the refurbishment of the Harbour toilets will provide an important facility for the local community and for visitors alike whether they are harbour users or walkers visiting the local beach.
- 3.4 Risk, Climate Change/Gaelic implications– there are no risk, climate change or Gaelic implications.

4. **Balintore Harbour Project**

- 4.1 The Seaboard Memorial Hall submitted a successful application for £23,980 to the Coastal Communities Fund. The application was based on quotes received and submitted in January 2021 in order to meet the deadline for submissions with work anticipated to start in April 2021 and complete in June. Members supported the refurbishment of this important local facility which helps encourages local beach walkers and well as supporting the users of the harbour and the nearby community poly tunnel. It therefore supports the mental health of local people who are more encouraged to be active outside as well as supporting visitors and so the local economy.
- 4.2 The award was agreed at the Easter Ross Committee in May 2021 but Seaboard Memorial Hall could not award the contract until the Terms of Agreement were signed. During this period of time between submission and the project being agreed with all necessary paperwork in place, building costs have increased. As a result, the project costs are now £5,000 higher than the project budget available.
- 4.3 The Seaboard Memorial Hall made an application to the Ward Discretionary Budget to cover this gap, however there are insufficient funds remaining in the ward budget. Ward Members have indicated they would wish to see this request considered for funding from the ward's Place Based Investment Fund. It is recommended that this top up award be made to allow the successful completion of the project.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Community & Places

Date: 4 November 2021

Author: Helen Ross, Senior Ward Manager, CSER