

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Agenda Item | <b>10.</b>      |
| Report No   | <b>CC/06/22</b> |

## **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** Caithness Committee

**Date:** 9 February 2022

**Report Title:** Reallocation of Highland Council Place Based Investment/Covid Funds

**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 The Caithness Committee agreed at its meeting 12 August 2021 to allocate up to £60,000 of Ward 2's Council Place Based Investment funds to carry out drainage works at Sir Georges Park, Thurso (aka The Dammies). A further £15,000 was allocated to this project at the meeting of the Caithness Committee on 3 November 2021, repurposing unspent Covid Response Funds. This gave the project a total allocation of £75,000.
- 1.3 Since these decisions were taken, Scottish Government Placed Based funds have become available. This capital funding is more suited to the Sir Georges Park Project and a report on this is found at item 9 on the agenda. This report therefore seeks approval to reallocate the £60,000 Council Place Funds for other local priorities, targeting Active Travel and community amenities support.
- 1.4 The report also seeks to allocate the remaining covid funds for both wards 2 and 3. Whilst the funds could still be utilised to support covid resilience activity, it is proposed to be targeted at addressing the four harms of covid.

## **2.**

### **Recommendations**

#### **2.1** Members are asked to agree:

- a) To reallocate the £60,000 Ward 2 Highland Council Place Based Funds previously allocated to the Sir Georges Park Project;
- b) To reallocate the £15,000 covid funds previously allocated to the Sir Georges Park Project;
- c) If agreed at recommendation a), to allocate the £60,000 remaining Place Based Funds from Ward 2 as follows:
  - o Create a £20,000 grant fund to develop active travel related community projects;
  - o £30,000 to previously agreed projects highlighted in the Thurso Active Travel Plan with agreed match funding from the Active Travel Capital budget;
  - o £10,000 to investigate the creation of a community amenities equipment scheme.
- d) If agreed at recommendation b), to allocate the remaining £15,385 remaining Ward 2 Covid Investment Funds to a grant fund to address the 4 harms of covid;
- e) To allocate the remaining £6,246 Ward 3 Covid Investment Funds to a grant fund to address the 4 harms of covid.

## **3. Implications**

3.1 Resource implications – are set out in the report.

3.2 Legal implications – under the Scheme of Delegation, any funding awards from the small grants stream 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 will support mental health well-being across local communities by improving amenity spaces promoting active travel, improving mental wellbeing and improving both local and visitor experience.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – the proposed grant scheme for active travel projects will encourage the use of alternative travel and thereby reducing carbon emissions.

3.5 Risk implications – Grants will be made following established grant making procedures to minimise the risk of project failure, funding shortfall or funding being used for other purposes. Grants will be awarded and managed in accordance with the standard ward discretionary grants process and in line with the scheme of delegation. The community amenities equipment scheme will need to consider insurance and maintenance requirements as part of the development to minimise risk.

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 **Ward 2 Place Based Investment Fund - Investment in Active Travel - £50,000**

It is proposed to develop a £20,00 grant scheme for community groups to develop projects to support and promote active travel. The aim of the scheme will be to promote outdoor activity and physical forms of travel. This could include improving existing footpaths, cycle paths and amenity space or creating new facilities. It will have a positive impact on mental and physical wellbeing as well as improving outdoor spaces for visitors and residents. Criteria will be developed in consultation with local Members and the Active Travel team.

It is proposed to allocate £30,000 to previously agreed active travel projects – Janet street, to provide safe route for all users, in particular school children and Pennyland/Ormlie link, Improving a well-used link between residential areas and onwards to education, Both highlighted in the Thurso Active Travel Plan. Match funding for these projects will be provided from the Active Travel Capital budget.

4.2 These active travel projects will be managed by the Active Travel Team.

**Community Amenities Equipment Scheme - £10,000** – it is proposed to explore developing a scheme to support community groups access shared grass cutting/maintenance equipment. This will be developed in consultation with Community Councils, Members and the Amenities Manager. The aim is to support

4.3 communities to undertake local amenities projects to improve local community spaces.

**Reallocation of Ward 2 Covid Funds - £15,385** – it is proposed to allocate the remaining covid resilience funds for ward 2 for community projects and to address the four harms of covid through a community grant scheme. The funding could continue to be used to support resilience activity, but the criteria has been broadened to cover the four harms of covid. The grant scheme will be managed by the Ward

4.4 Manager in line with the scheme of delegation. Members consider this will greatly improve the well-being of people in their ward.

**Reallocation of Ward 3 Covid Funds - £6,246** – it is proposed to allocate the remaining covid resilience funds for Ward 3 for community projects to address the four harms of covid. This will be delivered through a community grant fund. The funding could continue to be used to support resilience activity, but the criteria has been broadened to cover the four harms of covid. The grant scheme will be managed by the Ward Manager in line with the scheme of delegation. Members consider this will greatly improve the well-being of people in their ward.

Designation: Allan Gunn Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 09 February 2022

Author: Mackenzie Sutherland - Ward Manager, Caithness

Background Papers:

Caithness Committee/s 12 August and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021