

Agenda Item	<b>7</b>
Report No	<b>BSAC/03/22</b>

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee

**Date:** 15 February 2022

**Report Title:** Badenoch & Strathspey Ward Place Based Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations

**Report By:** Interim 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. As previously reported to this committee, 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 Ongoing discussions with local Members at ward level have identified a range of opportunities for spend against the Place Based Investment Fund, including the priorities agreed at this committee on 9 August 2021 and 9 November 2021. Governance for spend of this funding is through the area committee therefore this report asks the committee to agree the update on these budget allocations outlined in the report.
- 1.3 Members will recall that the creation of a challenge fund with a focus on community regeneration projects was agreed at this committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021. This report seeks approval of the proposed allocations of the remaining ward 20 Place Based Investment Funds following an open call for applications.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree to the reallocation and retention of funds as follows:
- i. Housing Needs Feasibility Study – reallocate the remaining balance of £9,500 via the Community Challenge fund which would increase the funding available for allocation to £64,500;
  - ii. Housing for Businesses Project Scoping Project – build upon feasibility studies and business case already developed and targeting the remaining funds of £1,700 in support of concluding the joint work started with the Cairngorm Business Partnership;

- iii. Independent Audit of Empty Commercial Units and Proposals for Potential Solutions - utilising the funding of £10,000 to investigate potential support to local business based on the findings of the audit;
  - iv. The total funding pot for community regeneration projects of £64,500 comprises £50,000 allocated at the November area committee, £9,500 reallocated from the housing needs project and £5,000 remaining of the total PBIF.
- 2.2 Following a call for applications to support community regeneration, Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed allocations of Place Based Investment Funds of £64,500 as follows:
- i. Aviemore Community Enterprise, Myrtlefield Redevelopment Feasibility Study - £14,500
  - ii. Grantown Initiative in partnership with the Highland Council, Dulaig Playing Area and Pitch Project - £10,000
  - iii. Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council, Glebe Ponds Restoration Feasibility Study - £9,779
  - iv. Badenoch Heritage, Storylands Session - £1,950
  - v. Kincaig & Vicinity Community Council, Kincaig Community Toilet and Parking Feasibility Study - £9,312
  - vi. Aviemore & Glenmore Community Trust, Dalfaber Land Community Park Feasibility Study - £10,000
  - vii. Contingency provision for Play and Project Development - £8,959

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource implications – The resource implications are set out in the report. The proposals outlined would allocate the remaining £64,500 from the Badenoch and Strathspey Place Based Fund. This includes a sum of £9,500, which has been reallocated from the housing feasibility funds study.
- 3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be awarded 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 of up to £10,000 can be administered locally by the Ward Manager in consultation with Members.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funding proposed targets a range of projects and activities, all of which addresses one or more of the 4 harms of covid. Projects also specifically address access, improved access to outdoor space and supporting and improving mental health and wellbeing,
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications, but some projects will have positive climate impacts such as the improved access to outdoor space.
- 3.5 Risk implications – Grants will follow established grant making procedures to minimise risk of project failure. A contingency has been allowed for, due to potential impacts of supply chain demand and availability, particularly with regard to the provision of play and outdoor equipment.
- 3.6 Gaelic implications – The Storylands Sessions have resulted directly from the Badenoch Great Place Project, which was a Cairngorm National Park led Heritage Lottery partnership project. This project resulted in the creation of 'Badenoch The Storylands' which created a range of resources and branding for the local community,

businesses and for visitors focusing on the rich heritage of the Badenoch area including promoting the local Gaelic tradition.

#### **4. Place Based Investment Funds Allocation Update**

4.1 The August Badenoch and Strathspey Committee allocated spending to a range of projects with the aim of addressing housing need and supporting business development. Spend was allocated for a housing needs feasibility study, scoping for a housing for businesses project and also for the commissioning of an independent audit on empty commercial properties and bringing forward proposals for potential solutions.

4.2 **Housing needs feasibility study.** Cost for the housing needs feasibility study was significantly below estimate and therefore it is proposed that balances of £9,500 will be reallocated via the Community Challenge Fund, giving a total funding pot for community regeneration applications of £64,500.

4.3 **Housing for businesses project.** Work has been carried out in partnership with the Cairngorm Business Partnership (CBP) to develop feasibility studies and a business case and is well underway. The Head of Development and Regeneration has requested that the remainder of the funding allocated of £1,700 be retained to conclude the project costs incurred by CBP, including legal fees.

4.4 **Independent Audit of Empty Commercial Units and Proposals for Potential Solutions.** The audit was carried out internally and therefore it is proposed to retain the original funding allocation of £10,000 to investigate potential support to local business based on the findings of the audit

#### **5. Community Challenge Fund Applications**

It was agreed at the Badenoch and Strathspey Committee on 9 November 2021, that a Community Challenge Fund would be created combining the remaining balance of the Ward Place Based Investment fund with the Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme funding. This fund would seek to support projects focusing on community regeneration. With the reallocation of funding proposed at 4.2, the total ward place based investment funds for the Challenge Fund were £64,500. The following outlines the applications received and proposed for funding.

##### **5.1 Aviemore Community Enterprise (ACE), Myrtlefield Redevelopment Feasibility Study.**

Aviemore Community Enterprise is seeking funding to engage a landscape architect to develop a design for the upgrading of the currently unmanaged amenity site at Myrtlefield in Aviemore and to involve the local community through consultation. The site lies between the boundary of the new retail park and Grampian Road. The proposal meets the funding criteria as it is in a key location and has the potential to play an important part in improving the public and visual amenity of this area as an accessible and available public space that would enhance the continued efforts to regenerate this largely uncared for space in the centre area of Aviemore. This proposal would support the first stage of this project.

It is proposed to agree the grant application of £14,500

##### **5.2 Grantown Initiative in partnership with the Highland Council, Dulaig Playing Area and Recreational Area Project.**

Working in partnership with the Highland Council within whose ownership the land sits, the Grantown Initiative Dulaig Group are taking forward two complimentary projects to redevelop and regenerate the recreation ground and play areas at Dulaig Court. This

application focusses on the recreational ground area adjacent to the play area and aims to improve and upgrade the pitch and playing field, install multi goals, erect new fencing and introduce a selection of multi-generational outdoor exercise equipment. This proposal meets the criteria by improving outdoor recreational space for the community, encouraging outdoor activity and wellbeing.

It is proposed to agree the grant application of £10,000

### 5.3 **Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council, Glebe Ponds Restoration Feasibility Study.**

Kingussie & Vicinity Community Council is seeking funding to commission a feasibility study to establish what would be required to bring the Glebe Ponds area back into full community use. The area in question has been a benefit to the local community for many years however more recently the area has become neglected, overgrown and is no longer the welcoming space it was. The pond area is of particular concern as it appears to be stagnant as a result of drainage issues with the inlet and outflow. In addition, it has become home to a resident population of mixed wildfowl. This project meets the criteria by improving outdoor space for the community and visitors.

It is proposed to agree to the grant application of £9,779

### 5.4 **Badenoch Heritage Storylands Project**

The Storylands Sessions project has been designed to use resources created by the Badenoch Great Place Project <https://badenochstorylands.com/> to create and provide the opportunity for the local community to gather, socialise, make links and to support each other. The focus of the sessions will be on fostering creative skills through music, storytelling and poetry and creating a supportive environment for community members to contribute alongside more experienced performers, and also in building confidence in attending community events. The project meets the criteria through promoting mental health and wellbeing, and local people who have been constrained by Covid and the impacts that this may have had on their mental health and their confidence to be with other people will have the opportunity to start socialising again in a safe and supportive environment.

It is proposed to agree the grant application of £1,950

### 5.5 **Kincraig & Vicinity Community Council, Kincraig Community Toilet and Parking Feasibility Study.**

Kincraig & Vicinity Community Council are looking to undertake a feasibility study and community consultation into the potential of converting the former telephone exchange into a toilet available for community and visitor use. There is no current public toilet provision in the community. The study would also investigate the options around improving and increasing parking. The building is to be gifted to the community for the sole purpose of toilet provision. Funding sought would be for the feasibility study and structural survey. The project meets the funding criteria as it is the first stage of an overall project to bring a disused asset back into use for the good of the community and visitors.

It is proposed to agree the grant application for £9,132

**5.6 Aviemore & Glenmore Community Trust (AGCT), Dalfaber Land Community Park Feasibility Study.**

AGCT have been working in partnership with ACE on the preferred uses of the vacant Highland Council land at Dalfaber Drive, Aviemore. Work carried out so far has identified a high level of support for community ownership of the site and for a number of key community desires that include a wheeled sports and climbing area, a multi-use community park which would include a community growing space and also for community buildings. There is a lack of community space within the Aviemore community. This application seeks to funding to create a design brief for the area and to continue with community consultation on the overall design. This project meetings the funding criteria as it is the first stage in an overall project to utilise a vacant area of land for wider community needs.

It is proposed to agree the grant application for £10,000

**6. Contingency**

- 6.1 A sum is proposed to be retained for contingency purposes in recognition of the current issues with supply chain demand and potential increases in cost. As the contingency sum is less than £10,000 this can be administered locally by the Ward manager in consultation with Members.

Designation: Allan Gunn, ECO, Communities & Places

Date: 1 February 2022

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