

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Report No</b>	<b>CIA/4/23</b>

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** City of Inverness Area Committee

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023

**Report Title:** Inverness Wards Repurposing COVID-19 Fund

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for the allocation of local ward-based funds; covid-19 funding.
- 1.2 It was agreed at a meeting of the Highland Council on 7 January 2021 that Wards with unspent COVID-19 funds could decide to spend this on projects to assist children and adults post covid, especially within deprived areas. Any re-purposing of COVID-19 funds should be agreed at the local committee. Inverness West and Culloden & Ardersier Members have indicated that they wish to repurpose COVID-19 funding to support projects identified within their wards.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree the repurposing of the following COVID-19 funds:
  1. **Ward 13 – Inverness West**  
£6,285 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Muirtown Growing Project
  2. **Ward 17 – Culloden & Ardersier**  
£21,000 from the Ward COVID-19 Fund to support Ardroy Road, Croy - Playpark

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications – The resource implications are set out in the report and set out the proposed allocations against each of the City Wards.
- 3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be made internally to Council Services so will be compliant with the Council's own legal liabilities.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funding proposed targets a range of projects, which specifically address access, inequality and improved outdoor space to encourage greater use and promote mental wellbeing.

- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications, but some projects will have positive climate change impacts such as the community growing projects.
- 3.5 Risk implications – There are no specific risk implications, the funding will be managed and delivered by Council Services.
- 3.6 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications.

#### **4. Ward 13 – Inverness West**

- 4.1 During local discussions Ward Members have proposed re-purposing funding from their COVID-19 budget towards the Muirtown Growing Project at Muirtown Primary School. This project will replace the current polytunnel which is at end of life and replace with a new more sustainable polytunnel which will allow the school to re-establish a culture of 'growing our own' across our school and nursery. This will improve outdoor activities for the school and community and aligns with the aims of the Council's Community Food Growing Strategy agreed last year.
- 4.2 Members are asked to note that the full project costs are £12k with other funds coming from School funds and Ward Discretionary Budget to enable this project to be fully funded
- 4.3 Members are asked to agree to repurposing the funding of £6,285 from the COVID-19 budget for the Ward.

#### **5. Ward 17 – Culloden & Ardersier**

- 5.1 During local discussions, Ward 17 Members have proposed re-purposing funding from their COVID-19 budget towards the Ardroy Road, Croy – Playpark. This project has previously been allocated £50,000 from Place Based Investment Funding for the Ward for the upgrading of the existing play park. This amount will be fully used for the purchase of 3 items of play park equipment (estimated £17,000 per item) thus funds will still be required towards the costs of dismantling, removal, disposal of the old equipment and delivery / installation of the new equipment and ground surfacing.
- 5.2 It is estimated that these works will cost a minimum of £20,000 to complete, with detailed designs / costs awaited from suppliers and expected mid-February. Should the final project works costs be below this figure, only the required amount will be re-purposed from the COVID-19 budget for the ward. Opportunities will also be investigated for the local community to get involved in the project works which may assist in reducing overall costs. The total project cost is currently estimated at £71,000.
- 5.3 The village of Croy has been identified as a priority for improved access to outdoor play with the play area at Ardroy Road highlighted as in particular need of upgrading and enhancement. This project will improve outdoor activities for children of the local community by providing a play park with natural, sustainable, inclusive and high play value equipment. The equipment will also be low maintenance with an expected minimum 15 years life span.
- 5.3 Members are asked to agree to repurposing the funding up to a maximum of £21,000 from the COVID-19 budget for the Ward towards this project.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Communities & Place

Date: 26 January 2023

Authors: Mark Greig, Ward Manager  
Mark Mackay, Ward Manager