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| Agenda Item | 7 |
| Report No | CIA/5/23 |

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 13th February 2023

Report Title: Ward 12 Aird & Loch Ness - Repurposing Place Based Investment Funding Allocation

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for the repurposing of Place Based Investment funding for Ward 12 Aird & Loch Ness.
- 1.2 At the City of Inverness Area Committee on 21st August 2021, it was agreed that £100,000 Place Based Investment Funds for each ward was to be allocated within Ward 12 – Aird & Loch Ness as follows:
 - Investment in Play Parks - £20,000
 - Investment in paths/trails - £30,000
 - Investment in cycle networks - £15,000
 - Community led proposals - £35,000
 - Total = £100,000
- 1.3 To date £46,575 has been issued or been allocated to associated projects leaving £53,425 currently unspent.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - Agree to repurpose £46,800 of Place Based Investment Funds for Ward 12 to support the re-instatement, for 12 months, of the Inverness to Kiltarlity / Kiltarlity to Inverness early morning and evening public bus services.
 - Agree the remaining unspent Place Based Investment Funds of £6,625, are allocated for play parks across the ward.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications – The resource implications are set out in the report and set out the proposed allocations against Ward 12.
- 3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be made internally to Council Services so will be compliant with the Council’s own legal liabilities. A contract with a bus operator will be required.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funding proposed looks to specifically address inequality and access to public / retail services for residents in rural communities especially during the current cost of living crisis.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications.
- 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 12 – Aird & Loch Ness

- 4.1 At the City of Inverness Area Committee in August 2021, Place Based Investment Funds were committed for a number of priorities across the ward. To date, spend against these priorities is as follows:

| Investment Priority | Total Committed | Spend to Date /Committed for Projects | Remaining |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------|
| Play Parks | £20,000 | £15,575 | £4,425 |
| Paths and Trails | £30,000 | £21,000 | £9,000 |
| Cycle Networks | £15,000 | £10,000 | £5,000 |
| Community Led Proposals | £35,000 | £0 | £35,000 |
| | £100,000 | £46,575 | £53,425 |

- 4.2 Given the underspends across the range of investment priorities, it is proposed to repurpose the funding as follows:

- £46,800 to re-instate the Kiltarlity - Inverness / Inverness - Kiltarlity bus service for 12 months as outlined at paragraphs 4.3-4.6
- The remaining £6,625 to be allocated for play parks across the ward.

4.3 ***Kiltarlity to Inverness / Inverness to Kiltarlity Bus Service Proposal***

The loss of the bus services in question has arisen because the previous operators have withdrawn their commercial services in this area following their loss of the subsidised element in the recent re-tendering of contracts.

- 4.4 There is the potential to contract with another operator (without need to retender) to resolve this issue for an additional cost (£46,800 per year). The Development & Infrastructure Service's budget for bus services is fully committed therefore cannot fund this additional cost with allocation of ward budgets an option to accommodate a trial to re-introduce the service.

- 4.5 Ward Members have received numerous representations from local residents regarding the loss of the service and therefore propose to re-purposing funding from Place Based Investment Funds to support the re-instatement of the Monday to Saturday - Inverness to Kiltarlity (0545, 1915, 2125 hours) and Kiltarlity to Inverness (0620,1955,2155 hours) early morning and evening public bus services.
- 4.6 This is considered essential in the current cost of living crisis especially for those residents who do not own or have access to a private vehicle and are solely reliant on public transport.
- 4.7 This funding would be to re-introduce the bus service as soon as possible for a period of 12 months. During this time, it is anticipated that work would be progressed to identify a more permanent, sustainable, and cost-effective solution for the bus service.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Communities & Place

Date: 26 January 2023

Author: M. Mackay, Ward Manager