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| Agenda Item | <b>8</b>          |
| Report No   | <b>BSAC/04/23</b> |

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** **Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee**

**Date:** **6 February 2023**

**Report Title:** **Badenoch & Strathspey Repurposing COVID-19 Fund and Place Based Investment Fund Proposals**

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

### 1. **Purpose/Executive Summary**

- 1.1** 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 funds should be agreed at the local committee.
- 1.2** Members are also asked to allocate previously approved Ward 20 Place Based Investment Funds from an identified project underspend as outlined in this report.

### 2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1** Members are asked to agree the repurposing of the following COVID-19 funds:
- i. Cairngorm Mountain Trust - Badenoch & Strathspey School Skiing 2023 - £4,068
  - ii. Laggan Forest Trust - Cycling Participation Programme Newtonmore, Kingussie & Alvie Primary School Children - £5,000
  - iii. Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS) – Volunteering Fayre - £2,790
  - iv. Cairngorms Orchestra – COVID resilience - £1,956
- 2.2** Members are also asked to agree allocation of Ward 20 Place Based Investment Funds towards the following projects:
- i. Kingussie Camanachd Club - Market Stance Playing Field Upgrade Phase 2 - £10,000

- ii. Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company (ARC) - Indian Contingent Force K6 Memorial Phase 2 - £14,200
- iii. Aviemore & Glenmore Community Trust (AGCT) – Aviemore Ice rink Development £4,968
- iv. Abernethy Bowling Club - Nethy Bridge Bowling Green £6,000

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource implications – The resource implications are set out in this report.
- 3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be made to external groups and/or other Council services in line with the Scheme of Delegation and grant guidance.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funding proposed targets a range of projects which specifically address improved access of outdoor spaces and pursuits to encourage greater use and promote mental wellbeing.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications.
- 3.5 Risk implications – There are no specific risk implications, and grants will be made following established grant making procedures to minimise risk of project failure.
- 3.6 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications.

### **4. COVID Funds Repurposing**

- 4.1 Members are aware of the importance of outdoor activities in the lives of young people and the benefits to their well-being of having quality accessible outdoor sports. The impacts of Covid have been felt across the age ranges, the allocations proposed below at 4.2 and 4.3 will provide opportunities to develop active recreation for young people in the Ward.
- 4.2 Cairngorm Mountain Trust, Badenoch & Strathspey School Skiing

This project will support P7 school children from all primary schools in Badenoch & Strathspey to Cairngorm Mountain with the opportunity to learn to ski.

Badenoch & Strathspey School Skiing Association (BSSSA) is a volunteer organisation working with schools to co-ordinate an opportunity for primary aged children in Badenoch & Strathspey to ski or snowboard.

Cairngorm Mountain Scotland Ltd (CMSL) wish to support BSSSA to provide a means for all local children to experience Snowsports on the mountain and have offered to cover the costs of ski passes and equipment hire for school children participating in the project who require it.

The ski tuition costs for the project are being covered by BSSSA. The tuition provided is fully inclusive recognising that the needs of pupils can vary, the tuition programme will cater for all pupils offering bespoke support dependant on need including those with learning or physical disabilities. BSSSA will meet any additional expense in staffing or equipment required for participants with additional needs.

Members are asked to agree to repurposing £4,068 from the Ward's COVID-19 budget and to award it to the Cairngorm Mountain Trust to cover the transport costs associated with Badenoch & Strathspey School Skiing for 2023.

Members are also asked to note that the project provides a positive contribution to mitigating the 4 harms of COVID through the delivery of healthy pursuits and outdoor sports.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

4.3 Laggan Forest Trust – MTB Cycling Participation Programme Newtonmore, Kingussie & Alvie Primary Schools

This proposed funding allocation will support a mountain bike cycling participation and award programme for 3 local primary schools at Wolftrax's soon to be completed 3.6km Blue Grade trail in Laggan. This project is intended to be a pilot project following on from the success of a visit to Wolftrax by Alvie primary 5 children in Autumn 2022.

The overall project aim is the delivery of comprehensive cycling participation programme for the primary schools including professional coaching, bike provision and the transport needed to and from schools.

The participation programme will be based on the Go Mountain Biking Scheme from Cycling Scotland and is designed to develop skills and experience in off-road riding, from those learning basic bike handling skills to those riding long technical routes with advanced features. The programme will be an introduction to off-road cycling using the Green Trail initially at Wolftrax and progressing later in 2023 to the Blue trail once complete.

The cycling participation programme is expected to cost £30k to deliver a 4-day skills course to around 250 children from the 3 schools including transport costs to Wolftrax from the schools.

Members are asked to agree to repurposing £5,000 from the Ward's COVID-19 budget for the Ward to be made available to these primary schools to take part in this project. The funding will be delegated to the 3 schools for implementation.

It is proposed to allocate £5,000 for the MTB Cycling Participation Programme.

Members are also asked to note that the project provides a positive contribution to mitigating the 4 harms of COVID through the delivery of healthy pursuits and outdoor sports.

Wolftrax have confirmed that they will explore the development of a programme following the pilot involving all schools in the Ward subject to future funding.

4.4 Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS) Volunteering Fayre

Since the Covid pandemic, the numbers of people who are involved in volunteering in Badenoch & Strathspey have fallen significantly, to the point where some volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) are struggling to deliver activities, events and services that are run by volunteers, or keep strong governance in place with adequate board/committee members.

In recognition of this, and to develop community resilience, VABS proposes to run a Volunteering Fayre in April 2023 which will allow VIOs in Badenoch & Strathspey to

showcase what they do and the type of volunteering activities they would like to encourage and can offer within their organisations to encourage and develop volunteering participation.

The event will invite local groups to host a table at the Fayre to help inform and encourage volunteers to try them out. Marketing and awareness raising activity will also be carried out by VABS to promote the event widely in the area, to encourage people to come along and see what volunteering is about and whether it could be for them.

In terms of added value, there is to be a national Volunteering Day promoted for the Coronation Bank Holiday on May 8th and the B&S Volunteering Fayre will lead into that well, to inspire people to have a local 'taster' day at a community organisation of their choice.

The following in kind commitments/contributions towards the running of the event are in place:

- VABS will contribute all required hours from its staff team to plan, organise and run the event.
- Partners in delivery will contribute in-kind costs through offering a volunteer time resource from a significant number of B&S third sector organisations eg community development trusts and social enterprises amongst others.
- Duke of Gordon Hotel will provide the main venue for free for the event.

The total unmet project costs for the event total £2,790 and are in respect of catering, marketing, equipment and travel expenses.

As well as providing improved community resilience, volunteering is widely recognised as having a positive post COVID impact in communities by reducing isolation brought on through COVID hesitance to take part and socialise. Combating isolation is proven to have significant benefits on positive mental health post COVID.

Members are asked to agree to repurposing £2,790 from the Ward's COVID-19 budget and to award it to Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey (VABS) to cover these costs associated with the Badenoch & Strathspey Volunteering Fayre.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

#### 4.5 Cairngorms Orchestra – COVID resilience

The Cairngorms Orchestra is local to Badenoch & Strathspey, with players coming from an area stretching from Laggan to Grantown. The orchestra was formed in 2018 by a group of enthusiastic local amateur musicians and players are aged from 14 years to late 70s, with a wide range of abilities and experience. Under the baton of a professional conductor, their aim as a community orchestra is to entertain local audiences with a wide variety of classical music.

The orchestra's regular outgoings relate to hall hire, conductor's fees, music hire, insurance, and concert set up costs. Those costs are normally met by weekly charges to orchestra players and through ticket revenue from 3 concerts per year at varying locations throughout Badenoch & Strathspey.

Since returning to practices the orchestra is struggling to meet their outgoing costs due to a lack of reserves as a result of having no concert revenue during the pandemic. The orchestra is seeking assistance with the costs to hold an initial concert that will restart

their revenue stream again. The funding assistance will also allow the orchestra to resume pre pandemic involvement with community projects and local schools.

The post COVID recovery benefits of music are widely recognised contributing to physical and psychological well-being. The pandemic has left many with emotional aftereffects as well as the more obvious physical ones. Music is recognised as having a positive impact on post COVID recovery through its ability to improve mental health and reducing stress.

Members are asked to agree to repurposing £1,956 from the Ward's COVID-19 budget and to award it to the Cairngorms Orchestra to cover the costs of an initial community post COVID concert allowing the orchestra to resume activities and for their revenue stream to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

## **5 Place Based Investment Fund Proposed Allocations**

5.1 Committee previously agreed Ward PBIF funding allocations on 15 February 2022, it has now been identified that there is a projected PBIF underspend of XXXXX across previously approved allocations. Committee are asked to approve the following and reallocate that underspend.

### **5.2 Kingussie Camanachd Club - Market Stance Playing Field Upgrade Phase 2**

The Market Stance Playing Fields will regenerate the sporting activities of groups in Kingussie, and the increased physical activity will have a clear positive improvement on people's "wellbeing" both physically and socially. This multipurpose Playing Field will be used for a wide range of sports and by people of all ages for walking, recreation and physical activity and therefore has a clear link to addressing the four harms of covid.

Phase 1 of the project at the Market Stance was to carry out substantial ground works and grass seeding and construct a rabbit proof fence. Phase 1 was completed in the summer of 2021.

This proposed funding allocation is for phase 2 of the Market Stance Playing Fields to erect high sports fencing around the boundary perimeter and install sports floodlighting. The purchase of a second-hand sit on mower is also part of this Phase 2 project.

The proposed £10,00 allocation towards this project from the Ward's PBIF monies contributes to a total Phase 2 project cost of £173,259. This Phase 2 project total has been raised from a range of sources including Sportscotland, Community Ownership Fund, Community and Club Fundraising and the Highland Council Place Based Investment Programme.

It is proposed to allocate £10,000 from the Wards PBIF monies to Kingussie Camanachd Club contributing towards Phase 2 of the works at the Market Stance Playing Field.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

### **5.3 Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company - Indian Contingent Force K6 Memorial Phase 2**

During 2022 Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company (ARC) provided a permanent memorial to the 60 soldiers and officer of Force K6, Royal Indian Army Service Corps, who died during WW2 across Scotland, England, Wales and Europe. The memorial is

located at the Gynack Gardens in Kingussie. That project benefitted from £20k of Place Based Investment Programme monies from Highland Council, approved at this Committee on 15 February 2022.

ARC are now keen to progress with a Phase 2 stage at the Memorial Gardens which will bring the Indian Memorial into alignment with the existing WW1/WW2 Memorial. Phase 2 will also upgrade the paths and area around both Memorials to tie them together and make them more accessible. It is felt these works will finish the Memorial garden area and bring both Memorials together.

The works will involve the removal of existing gravel and instatement of 26sqm of paving linking the Memorials together, this paved area will level off a slope in the ground improving accessibility as well as drawing the Memorials together. Feature lighting will also be installed at the K6 Memorial matching the lighting at the WW1/WW2 Memorial, the electrical works will also formalise the current PA power supply in the gardens at the same time. Phase 2 will also see the installation of a metal wreath hanger in keeping with the existing one at the WW1/WW2 Memorial as well as the installation of information boards at the Memorial giving information about the K6 Force and its significance to Badenoch & Strathspey.

The total project cost for Phase 2 is £17,200 and £3,000 of that amount has been secured through a grant award from the Kingussie Community Development Company (KCDC).

To complete the funding package it is proposed to allocate £14,200 from the Ward's PBIF monies to Am Fasgadh Regeneration Company (ARC) contributing towards Phase 2 of the works at the K6 Memorial.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

#### 5.4 Aviemore & Glenmore Community Trust (AGCT) – Aviemore Ice rink Development

The Aviemore Ice Rink is operated by AGCT and has been providing ice sports & leisure facilities to a range of groups and individuals of all ages and abilities in Aviemore since October 2021 supporting curling, ice hockey as well as general all abilities ice skating. The Ice Rink has also brought 8 local jobs into the community.

The major funders of the Ice Rink up until now have included:  
 Cairngorms National Park Authority (Green Recovery Fund) - £25,000  
 Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) - £25,000  
 Fat Face Foundation - £10,000  
 Witherby Trust - £5,000  
 Highland Council - £3,000

AGCT presently rent the chiller equipment required for the operation of the ice rink and are currently working with HIE to secure funding to purchase energy efficient chilling equipment that will reduce the ice rink's operating costs and so increase the resilience of the facility through resulting cost efficiencies. There are also significant energy efficiency benefits of the new proposed equipment.

The costs of the new equipment are £49,685 and 90% of that amount has been secured through grant support from HIE however this is dependent on a further 10% match funding of £4,968 being obtained to finalise the funding package and proceed with the project.

Members are also asked to note that the Aviemore ice rink provides a valuable community resource in terms of post covid recovery through the delivery of healthy pursuits and outdoor sports and as such contributes to addressing the 4 harms of COVID.

It is proposed to allocate £4,968 from the Wards PBIF monies to Aviemore & Glenmore Community Trust (AGCT) completing the funding package for the project.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

#### Abernethy Bowling Club - Nethy Bridge Bowling Green

The bowling green in Nethy Bridge is a village asset enjoyed by area residents and visitors each year, however significant repair works are required to allow the bowling green to continue.

The gutters around the edge of the bowling green are formed by treated timber boards secured to wooden stakes within the green, over time this wooden edging structure has rotted resulting in the boards collapsing into the gutter. Modern gutters are formed in concrete.

The club are raising funds to replace these wooden edges at a total project cost of £12,000 The club have so far secured approximately £4,000 as follows:

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| Coop Community Fund | £1,000 |
| Fund raising events | £500   |
| Club reserves       | £2,500 |

The club has also submitted an application for £2,000 towards the project to the Badenoch and Strathspey Sports Council. If that application is successful this will leave the club with a funding gap of £6,000

It is proposed to allocate £6,000 from the Wards PBIF monies to Abernethy Bowling Club completing the funding package for the project.

Members are also asked to note that the Bowling Club provides a valuable community resource in terms of post covid recovery through the delivery of healthy pursuits and out door sports and as such contributes to addressing the 4 harms of COVID.

This funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

## 5. **Background Papers**

Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee 15 February 2022 (Items 7 & 8)

[https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4580/badenoch\\_and\\_strathspey\\_area\\_committee](https://www.highland.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4580/badenoch_and_strathspey_area_committee)

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Communities & Place

Date: 30 January 2023

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