

Agenda Item	13
Report No	ERA-28-23

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee:	Easter Ross Area Committee
Date:	30 October 2023
Report Title:	Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Reallocation of 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. In February 2022 the Easter Ross Committee agreed the allocation of these funds, including an allocation of £20,000 to the Invergordon Social Club to support a Feasibility Study to consider their future development to ensure sustainability. To date £ 8,000 of these funds has been spent and no further feasibility work is planned. This report seeks Member approval to reallocate the remaining £12,000 to the Community Grants stream also set up in February 2022 for community groups to apply for grants of up to £5,000 for projects to address one or more of the four harms of Covid.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members are asked to agree:

To repurpose the remaining £12,000 from the £20,000 allocated to the Invergordon Social Club for its Feasibility Study, to a Ward 6 Community Grants stream set up to address one or more of the four harms of Covid.

3. **Implications**

- 3.1 Resource – as set out in the report.
- 3.2 Legal – Projects being delivered by communities will make use of the existing Ward Discretionary application forms and process to ensure good governance and oversight.

- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The proposed community grant schemes will support local communities to meet the needs in their communities and address the harms of Covid. This will also strengthen local communities.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – There are no specific climate change implications.
- 3.5 Risk – there are no identified risks grants will be provided to established organisations using the standard grants criteria / process.
- 3.6 Gaelic – There are no specific Gaelic implications.

4 **Background**

- 4.1 The Place Based Investment fund was discussed at Easter Ross Area Committee in February 2022 and a range of allocations were agreed, including significant investment into local play areas as well as the establishment of a Community Grants stream and a £20,000 allocation to the Invergordon Social Club (ISC) for a feasibility study.

5 **Background and Proposed Grant Reallocation**

- 5.1 Following on from the allocation of grant to the ISC, officers worked with the Club to support the commissioning of the feasibility study. This included support from the Senior Ward Manager and the Community Support Co-ordinator. Support was also brought in from Highlands & Islands Enterprise in relation to the process of appointing a consultant and there was also support from the Highland Third Sector Interface.
- 5.2 The ISC commissioned a consultant to take on the work. The consultant undertaking the work has provided a report outlining background research and local context and feedback and analysis from a community survey undertaken followed by recommendations.
- 5.3 The ISC is now able to consider the report and consider potential options for their future development. However, £12,000 remains of the funding originally allocated. The Community Grants Scheme set up in 2022 using PBI funds and was fully spent supporting a range of very positive projects across the Ward such as: a contribution to the Evanton 'Warm Welcome' project; the upgrade of a recreational area by the Evanton Social & Events group; support to local foodbanks in Alness; social inclusion events in the Westend, Alness and also the upgrading and refurbishment of benches and work to the Natal Garden in Invergordon. This report seeks Members agreement to transfer the remaining £12,000 allocated for the ISC Feasibility Study to the community grants scheme which will allow more groups across the Cromarty Firth Ward to benefit.

Designation: Allan Gunn, Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 18 October 2023

Author: Helen Ross, Senior Ward Manager (CSER)