

Agenda Item	<b>6.</b>
Report No	<b>SCC/18/24</b>

# The Highland Council

**Committee:** Sutherland County Committee

**Date:** 12 November 2024

**Report Title:** Allocation of Invitation to Pay Income 2022/23 and 2023/24

**Report By:** Assistant Chief Executive - Place

## **1 Purpose/Executive Summary**

1.1 To agree a process for the allocation of Invitation to Pay income in Sutherland.

## **2 Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Consider the options for distributing the Invitation to Pay income which has been allocated to Sutherland County Committee
- ii. Approve the proposed process for the distribution of Invitation to Pay income in Sutherland for 2022/23 and 2023/24 funds
- iii. Note that the delegated powers for the authorisation of spend up to £10,000 would be assigned to the Community Development Manager in consultation with local Members while spend over £10,000 would be subject to Sutherland County Committee approval.
- iv. Note that the distribution process will be reviewed in a years' time.

## **3 Implications**

3.1 **Resource** - Invitation to Pay income supports the maintenance of infrastructure and releases funds to the Area Committee to allocate to local community priorities.

3.2 **Legal** - No implications

3.3 **Risk** – No implications

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No implications

3.5 **Gaelic** – No implications

## **4 Impacts**

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children’s Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment – Summary**

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 2 October 2024. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that the proposal has potential to have positive impact in some areas, for example income allocated to address community issues and priorities. The screening of the proposal identified no negative impacts. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision making process.

Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and Young People – <i>Positive / no impact</i></li> <li>• Children affected by disability – <i>Positive / no impact</i></li> <li>• Older adults – <i>Positive / no impact</i></li> </ul>
Socio-economic	<i>Positive / no impact</i>
Human Rights	<i>No impact</i>
Children’s Rights and Well-being	<i>No impact</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>Positive / No impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>No impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No impact</i>

**5 Background**

5.1 The Council approved a £1.5m Visitor Management Strategy at its meeting on 4 March 2021 in response to the increased numbers of tourists visiting the Highlands. The strategy recognised that there was a need to invest in infrastructure and Council services to improve the visitor experience, and to address some of the issues arising from over-crowding in popular hotspots, including insufficient parking areas, bad/inconsiderate parking and consequential damage to roadside verges.

5.2 £250,000 from the Visitor Management Fund was allocated for improvements to parking management across Highland comprising installing charging at tourist dominated sites, improved signage, lining, minor repairs and increasing staff resources.

- 5.3 The Sutherland County Committee agreed at its meeting on 22 November 2021 to introduce Invitation to Pay at the following locations: Achmelvich Beach Car Park, Golspie Shore Car Park, Golspie Fountain Road Car Park, Clachtoll Beach Car Park and Durness Village Car Park. Dornoch Beach Car Park was also agreed but is accounted for separately because it forms part of the Dornoch Common Good Fund.
- 5.4 As per Council policy, 50% of net income, after costs, are passed to the relevant Area Committee as earmarked funds from the previous financial year, with 2022/23 income earmarked for 2023/24 budget or available in future years.
- 5.6 The amount allocated for Sutherland County Committee (50% of net income, after costs) total **£18,447** as follows:

<b>Car park</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Achmelvich Beach	1	3,428	1,577
Golspie Shore	4	1,780	2,477
Golspie Fountain Road	4	1,286	885
Clachtoll Beach	1	1,566	2,060
Durness Village	1	602	2,786
<b>Total</b>		<b>8,662</b>	<b>9,785</b>

## **6 Proposal**

- 6.1 It is envisaged the funds would be open to communities and/or Council services to support community activity, minor infrastructure projects or service improvements. A range of options for the distribution of the funding is open to Committee including:

1. Fund for each of the Community Council areas where the ITP car parks are located.

While it is recognised that the ITP income represents a welcome opportunity for communities to directly benefit from the additional income, the use of Council income is not, in general, limited to the specific location of the income generating asset. Additionally, such an approach may limit the number and/or quality of applications received.

2. Funds for each Sutherland ward

This aligns with the Ward discretionary budget arrangements and would be proportionate given the amounts of funding that are available. If Members are so minded, they can prioritise projects from the communities where the income generating car parks are located, but this option also provides the opportunity for support for projects across the respective ward. This is the recommended option.

Single Sutherland fund.

A single Sutherland fund is not recommended as there are insufficient funds to support strategic, countywide projects.

6.2 Priority Areas for Support

Members have discussed the lack of support for sporting activities through organisations like the Sutherland Sports Council. It is recommended to prioritise projects that promote sporting activities although it is recognised that the funding can also be used for other priorities.

6.3 All applications for funding of under £10,000 would be delegated for officer approval via the Community Development Manager and any applications for over £10,000 would be subject to Committee approval, as per the Scheme of Delegation.

6.4 Recommendation

Members are recommended to agree an ITP fund for each ward as outlined in Option 2, using the Ward Discretionary Budget processes and decision making.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 1 October 2024

Author: Fiona Richardson, Community Development Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment Summary

## Appendix 1

The screening highlighted overall no negative impacts from the direction proposed in the report but notes a potential positive socio-economic impact as a consequence of the proposed funding model and opportunity to support community projects and activities.

### Equality, Poverty and Human Rights

The screening specifically notes the potential for positive impact on children and young people, older people and poverty, as a result of the approach to allocate funding to each Ward to address community needs and priorities.

### Island and Rural

The screening also noted potential positive impacts on rural and island communities. A core principle is to support and build resilient and sustainable communities, recognising the allocation of funding in each Ward is anticipated to have a positive impact across Sutherland communities.

### Climate Change

The screening highlighted no negative impacts as a result of the proposed approach.