

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	SCC/19/24

The Highland Council

Committee: Sutherland County Committee

Date: 12 November 2024

Report Title: Dornoch Common Good Q2 Monitoring

Report By: Chief Officer Community and Housing
Chief Officer Corporate Finance

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents the Quarter 2 2024/25 monitoring statement for the Dornoch Common Good Fund. Income and expenditure are as agreed as part of the budget setting process.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- Scrutinise and note the Quarter 2 monitoring statement for the Dornoch Common Good Fund

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – The Q2 monitoring statement highlights predicted income and expenditure against the budget.

3.2 **Legal** – The application of funds will fall within the competency guidelines set out both in statute and in common law in relation to Common Good Funds. Additionally, through the governance being applied by the Finance Service, funds will remain compliant with all financial regulations.

3.3 **Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)** – All future potential disposals or other relevant dealings involving Common Good land will be carried out in line with Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, including appropriate community consultation.

3.4 **Climate Change / Carbon Clever** – None

3.5 **Risk** – None

3.6 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – None

3.7 **Gaelic** – None

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 This is a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5 **Quarter 2 Monitoring Statement**

5.1 A monitoring statement showing transactions to the end of September 2024 against budget and the estimated year end position is attached at Appendix 1.

5.2 Income

- Rental income from Dornoch Caravan Park (first of two annual payments) was received in Q1.
- The remainder of the rental income is made up of part payments (direct debits).
- Remaining rents will be invoiced later in the year when they become due.
- Invitation to pay income is from Dornoch Beach Car Park.

5.3 Expenditure

5.3.1 Grants and Contributions

- Grants and Contributions totalling £23,603 were paid to end of Q2, see table in Appendix 1 for further details
- £1,397 remains available for community grants for the remainder of the financial year.
- £8,305 was committed in FY 2023/24 for Allsorts After School and Holiday Club towards its running costs. This grant was not claimed in FY 2023/24 contributing to a £9,763 underspend in the Grants and Contribution budget line in 2023/24. If the grant is claimed in the current year, it will lead to an overspend against the Grants and Contributions budget line but will be affordable within the whole budget.

5.3.2 Other Costs

- Staff costs comprise the Common Good Officer and Senior Flood Engineer who advised on the Dornoch Burn project
- Miscellaneous Other Costs and Third-Party Costs comprise legal fees and title search fees.

6 Common Good Update

6.1 Dornoch Burn

- 6.1.1 Work has been ongoing for two years to address flooding on the Struie Golf Course and in Dornoch Caravan and Camping Park. The flooding was caused by the Dornoch Burn overtopping due to the burn backing up because of the build-up of sand at the mouth of the burn. Members will recall that the River Restoration Centre (RRC) conducted a high-level study which made recommendations to control the flooding.
- 6.1.2 In January 2024 the Dornoch and Black Burn Partnership was formed comprising a local Member (Cllr McGillivray), Highland Council (on behalf of Dornoch Common Good Fund), Dornoch Area Community Council, Royal Dornoch Golf Club, Dornoch Distillery, Dornoch Area Community Interest Company and the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust. Dornoch Caravan and Camping Park did not formally join the Partnership but have remained engaged throughout.
- 6.1.3 The Partnership applied to the Nature Restoration Fund for a project to engage a consultant to assess options, including those outlined in the RRC study, which:
- address flooding caused by Dornoch Burn
 - protect and enhance the dune slack (fed by Dornoch Burn) and
 - create additional habitat on the Black Burn, facilitated by diverting a portion of the flow from Dornoch burn (when in spate) into the Black Burn, which would also help to control downstream flooding on Dornoch Burn
- 6.1.4 In March 2024 an unauthorised channel was dug, clearing the mouth of the Dornoch Burn, which quickly drained the standing water on the golf course and the caravan park. There was an expectation that the channel would soon be blocked with sand washed along the beach, causing Dornoch Burn to back up and cause a repeat of the flooding. However, that has not happened – the channel has stabilised and remained clear. This has led partners to conclude that keeping the burn clear is the solution, alongside an expectation that the Council and/or other partners will monitor the burn and ensure it is kept clear.
- 6.1.5 The Dornoch and Black Burn Partnership met on 1 October 2024 and it was clear that the project no longer enjoyed the support of the partnership. Furthermore, keeping the burn mouth clear is not compatible with the nature restoration objectives of the project. The meeting concluded that the project should be withdrawn. The Council and other partners will continue to monitor the Burn so that remedial action can be taken if required. Consideration will be given to a future project to enhance the biodiversity of the Black Burn.

Designation: Chief Officer Community and Housing
Chief Officer Corporate Finance

Date: 10 October 2024

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Background Papers:

Appendices:

Appendix 1
Dornoch Common Good - Quarterly Monitoring
Period to Sept 24

	Actual to date	Budget	Estimated Outturn	Variance
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Rents	35,188	100,757	100,757	0
Invitation to pay income	1,951	4,500	4,500	0
Interest and investment income		4,800	4,800	0
TOTAL INCOME	37,139	110,057	110,057	0
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs	1,040	3,000	3,000	0
Grants & contributions	23,603	25,000	25,000	0
Miscellaneous Property costs		15,000	15,000	0
Miscellaneous Other costs	450			
Third Party Costs	3			
Dornoch Beach Car Parks		25,000	25,000	0
Contribution to works at Dornoch Burn		10,000	10,000	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	25,096	78,000	78,000	0
Income less Expenditure	12,043	32,057	32,057	0

Estimated Usable Reserves 2023/24	217,034
Budget surplus/(deficit) for 24/25	32,057
Forecast year end reserves 24/25	249,091

Grants and Contributions paid to end September 2024

The Dornoch Trust – Operation of Dornoch Beach Toilets	£2,488.00
Dornoch Cathedral – Cathedral Tower	£5,201.12
Dornoch Cricket Club – Cricket Wicket and Practice Nets Extension	£4,500.00
Dornoch Bowling Club – Bowling Green Recovery	£1,190.00
The Dornoch Trust – Woodland Maintenance and Accessibility	£3,150.00
Dornoch Business Improvement District – Website Development	£7,074.00
Total	£23,603.12