

Agenda Item	18
Report No	HC/44/20

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Highland Council

Date: 17th December 2020

Report Title: Proposals for Covid Ward Funds and Investing in Play Areas

Report By: ECO Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report includes proposals for implementing the Council decision on 1.10.20 to invest in play areas, including through Covid Ward Funds. The proposals were considered at the Communities and Place Committee on 25th November and the Committee's views and decisions are included.
- 1.2 The report includes proposals for equalising up the enhanced award of Covid Ward Discretionary Funding to support more communities affected by Covid impacts and to introduce more flexibility in how that funding is allocated. These proposals would need Council agreement to divert £240k of hardship funding for this purpose and for Wards to agree through Area Committees how much of their unspent grant is set aside for non-welfare/humanitarian assistance, including play park use.
- 1.3 The report also highlights that the current repairs and maintenance/replacement backlog is estimated to be £3.436m across our estate of 339 play parks. Options are presented for discussion; but given the scale of the backlog it is not clear how best to allocate the additional £100k investment agreed. It is proposed that Member views are gathered initially from Ward / Area Meetings where local data and ideas can be discussed more fully. It is also proposed that the play park budget is devolved to Area Committees for decision and local prioritisation. These proposals provide a place-based approach that involves Members, staff and community bodies working together to solve problems, prioritise action and identify other resource possibilities. These local views can inform the budget process for 2021/22 onwards.

2.

Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to **NOTE**:

- i. the decision made at Council on 1.10.20 sought the view of the strategic Committee in the first instance on investing in play parks for conclusion by the December Council meeting. The Communities and Place Committee considered options at its meeting on 25th November 2020 and this has informed the recommendations in this report.
- ii. that for Covid Ward Funds:
 - a. the initial enhanced allocation to Covid Ward Funds was distributed based on vulnerability to Covid, which took into account ill health and old age indicators, and that this needs to be re-visited given the Council decision on 1.10.20 and the socio-economic impacts now affecting more communities;
 - b. that a review of the Covid Ward Funds was already planned to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to learning from the process;
 - c. that Ward Members need to identify and agree through Area Committees what proportion of their fund, if any, they want to set aside for projects to assist children and adults post Covid, such as contributing to Play Park equipment alongside funding for food and humanitarian assistance so that Ward Managers can administer the fund, with decisions on awards of £10k and over made at Area Committees in keeping with the Scheme of Delegation;
- iii. that for the management of the play areas estate that:
 - a. the Council has a large play estate, with 339 play areas with 2043 individual units of play equipment;
 - b. that the annual budget for play areas is £187,600 and the estimated backlog of repairs and maintenance amounts to £3.436m;
 - c. the options for investing £100k of additional investment and that given the scale of the backlog this investment alone will not make a significant impact on the estate;

2.2 Members are asked to **AGREE** for the Covid Ward Fund that:

- i. some level of Covid Ward resource is retained for welfare and humanitarian needs and supporting our joint working with community bodies in recognition that the needs of individuals as a result of the impact of covid persist;
- ii. the enhanced award is equalized up as set out in Appendix 2 costing £240k to be funded from the hardship fund, which means it would add to the current budget gap in 2020/21;
- iii. increased flexibility in the fund is permitted by raising the maximum award for community groups from £500 to £1500, removing the restrictions on spend per month and for any unspent fund to be carried forward into 2020/21;
- iv. that the criteria and arrangements for the grant fund are amended to reflect the learning and feedback with the revised criteria set out at appendix 3;
- v. where awards are declined that an appeals process is put in place which is set out in the grant guidance and criteria found at appendix 3.

2.3 Members are asked to **AGREE** that:

- i. Member views on the options for £100k additional investment are gathered initially in Ward /Area meetings, supported by relevant staff, to enable debate at Area Committees and to inform the budget setting process for 2021/22 onwards; and

- ii. budget and decision-making are devolved to Area Committees to enable a place-based approach that uses local knowledge, community effort and resources alongside Member views and staff advice to solve problems together and to identify possibilities for a more sustainable approach to the play estate.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

This report sets out the resource implications associated with the recent Council decision on investing in play parks. Ward funds can be equalized up to enable more support locally to deal with Covid impacts because the initial allocation of the enhanced award was influenced more by health vulnerability to Covid whereas now socio-economic impacts are being experienced. This would require £240k of funding diverted from hardship funding currently set aside to reduce the budget gap. It would mean the budget gap would increase by £240k in 2020/21.

- 3.2 The report also explores the potential for capitalising the £100k identified for additional investment this year, but this would not provide value for money and increase pressure even further in both the revenue and capital budgets. Members will be able to consider any future capital allocation for play areas as part of the corporate asset review and capital programme going forward.

- 3.3 Other potential funding and human resources are identified as ways of helping to manage the play park estate in a sustainable way which would align with the Council's place-based approach.

- 3.4 Further work is required to disaggregate the budget for play areas to the new structure of 10 Area Committees. The budget pays for staff, fleet, plant and contracts. Some resources (e.g. staffing) will be shared over more than one Area Committee.

3.5 Legal

Play areas are not a statutory service; however, where they are provided, we must comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability (Scotland) Act 1960 for employees and members of the public attending play areas. We must also comply with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Fairer Scotland Duty.

- 3.6 Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children have the right to relax and play, and participate in a wide range of cultural, artistic and cultural activities. The Council's approach to support these rights is set out in the report on the [Play Strategy 2016-20](#).

3.7 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

The Council needs to ensure its approach to operating and maintaining play parks does not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Equality Act and this would include children and families affected by disability. Proposals for play parks should identify, through screening for impact, if there are any impacts from our proposals and if these are negative, how they can be mitigated. The Fairer Scotland Duty means we should consider potential impacts that can affect, and approaches that can support, people experiencing low income and other disadvantage. The Council is also committed to considering rural impact of any policy or decision. The local discussions proposed should include all of these considerations.

- 3.8 The Council has duties under the Civil Contingencies act to provide humanitarian support throughout any crisis. As the nature of the pandemic has changed, so has the nature of

the support provided; moving from less focus on supporting people to shield or self-isolate to supporting welfare needs in response to the economic impacts of covid. The covid ward funds have been important to provide welfare support through local groups across Highland. It is likely that with the end of many national funding Schemes, the ward fund will be more significant in the months ahead.

3.9 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

Choices around play equipment installed could have impacts on carbon emissions depending on the materials used and distance travelled for installing and maintaining them. Some adventurous play equipment may be sourced from more natural materials and be easier to maintain.

3.10 Risk

There are risks associated with having an estate with such a large repair and maintenance backlog. These risks are currently mitigated by prioritising repairs required for health and safety reasons, removing items of play equipment that cannot be repaired and closing parks where they pose risks to the public and staff. Over 30 play parks remain closed for this reason. The annual play park inspection process underway ensures compliance with appropriate regulations and any item assessed as unsafe must put out of use or made safe again before the Senior Technician – Play Parks leaves the site. To deal with the backlog a different, devolved and place-based approach to making our estate sustainable is recommended in the report along with the scope for considering any future capital allowance for play parks.

3.11 Gaelic

The only implications for Gaelic relate to the need to comply with the Council's policy on new signage.

4. Background

4.1 At the Council meeting on 1.10.20 Members agreed that:

To allow Wards with unspent Covid-19 money, especially the deprived areas, to spend money on projects to assist children and adults post Covid-19, such as contributing to Playpark equipment.

Also, that early consideration should be given (in the first instance by the relevant Strategic Committee) to the proposal to retain the £100k Playpark Fund under Contingencies Item 10 to enable some playparks to restock by Spring 2021 with a view to coming to a conclusion on this by the December Council meeting.

4.2 This report makes recommendations to Council on implementing the Council decision and reflects the agreement of the Communities and Place Committee held on 25th November 2020.

5. Ward funding

5.1 During lockdown, Ward Discretionary Budgets were enhanced with £536k Covid resilience funds drawn from the Hardship Fund allocated to the Council from the Scottish Government. This fund enables Councils to respond flexibly to the Covid crisis to help people and communities but does not have restrictions on use and it was also noted that it could be used to mitigate wider Council budgets impacted by covid.

- 5.3 Every Ward had an allocation of £16k to support groups providing emergency food/supplies and support to vulnerable groups as part of their Covid resilience response. This was enhanced by £10k for each the 20 most Covid vulnerable communities (using the [index](#) developed by the Scottish Public Health Observatory). This vulnerability index combines social, demographic and clinical indicators, with 21 out of 28 indicators relating to old age, health conditions and hospital admissions. This led to enhancements of up to £20k in 14 out of 21 Wards. Six Wards received the maximum £20k¹. This was reported to Members in a Member briefing on 6 April 2020 with the documentation circulated the following day.
- 5.4 The up-dated spend position by Ward (as at 2-12.20) is attached at Appendix 1. This shows 33% (£174,649) is spent. This means £361,531 is available from the Covid ward allocation, ranging from £1,017 to £31,057 across Wards. Only seven Wards have over £20k remaining. This is shown on Appendix 2.
- 5.5 Over the early covid period, groups across Highland accessed more than £2.2m of external funding. This explains why, in many communities, there was not such a high demand for the Council's covid fund. The main strands of community support – Supporting Communities Fund (HIE) and Wellbeing Fund (SCVO) – came to the end at the end of September and whilst two new funds now exist, their focus is more on recovery within communities and third sector organisations to adapt to the new ways of working than continuing with existing humanitarian support. It is therefore anticipated that there may be a greater call on the covid ward discretionary budget in the months ahead. Feedback from local community groups (through community conversations) supports this understanding and indicates that groups intend to continue operating throughout the winter months ahead, in response to the needs which they see within their communities.
- 5.6 The enhanced allocation originally made does not align with the Council's subsequent decision to support areas of deprivation or play park use. This is because the Covid vulnerability index:
- includes old age and certain health conditions and is more aligned to shielding requirements than play park use; and
 - does not include all of the indicators we normally use to identify deprived rural and urban areas and if those indicators² had been used a further ten deprived communities would have been included, namely: Castletown; Lybster and Dunbeath; Kyle of Lochalsh; Milton, Kildary and Balintore; Conon; Muir of Ord; Ardersier; Fort William and Kinlochleven.
- 5.7 Also, from Member briefings and a [separate report](#) to the Communities and Place Committee on ongoing welfare needs, Members will be aware that living with Covid is affecting a wide range of households and communities and these extend beyond those originally identified for this funding as more vulnerable to Covid. Whilst the original focus of community based support was on enabling individuals to shield or self-isolate, as the pandemic has progressed, the focus of support has changed. With the numbers experiencing the virus in Highland being lower than many other places in Scotland, the

¹ Three Wards also share £20k because vulnerable communities identified cross Ward boundaries.

² The Socio-Economic Performance (SEP) index is combined with the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to better reflect rural as well as urban circumstances. It is used by the Highland CPP to identify the areas we have a legal duty to work together on to reduce inequality.

wider socio-economic/wellbeing impacts of the measures designed to control the virus are having a greater impact in many of our communities than the virus itself. Support therefore continues to be provided – both by the Council and across the community support group network – but with a greater focus on those facing financial/food and fuel insecurity.

- 5.8 Members will also be aware from questions raised at the Council meeting in July that a commitment was given to review the use of the Covid ward funds after the end of September; mid-way through the year and when there may be further clarity on Government funding and the Council's budget position. This was with a view to considering whether criteria should be amended based on the learning to date. Key areas for consideration based on feedback and learning to date are:
- the maximum grant amount that can be applied for;
 - the restrictions initially placed on wards to avoid early spend of all funds available;
 - the ringfencing on certain sums to covid vulnerable areas only; and
 - whether the fund should be refocused onto recovery related priorities.
- 5.9 At the Communities and Place Committee meeting on 25th November 2020, Members agreed that officers draw up new criteria for Covid Hardship grants to ensure community groups are encouraged to support community resilience activities including provision of clear communication and defined rationale of reasons for declining applications, and a timely appeals process. This was in response to concerns that a number of applications were rejected without clear reasons being considered. In total to date, 39 (8%) of the 459 applications received have been rejected (376 approved, 16 pending and 28 withdrawn). 17 of the 39 rejected were from one organisation applying to most Council wards.
- 5.10 Changes to Covid Ward Funds
Given the wider harms of Covid and the changes requested by Members for reviewing Covid Ward Funds, the following recommendations are made:
1. some level of resource should be retained to support humanitarian and welfare assistance as more people are moving into income insecurity, to support any households required to self-isolate through Test and Protect and in case any local lockdowns may occur. This also reflects the reduced external funding now available from other sources and the indication from groups of the intention to continue to respond to community needs in the months ahead;
 2. an additional allocation is made to Covid Ward Funds, equalizing up the £20k award so that all Wards (and not only six Wards) receive the higher amount. The additional allocation is shown in Appendix 2 and would affect 15 Wards. This would help meet the expected increase in need across all Wards, requiring £240K of funding (see paragraph 5.10 below for a potential source of funding). This would remove the requirement to limit the original covid vulnerable community funding to the specific named geographical community;
 3. by topping up Ward funds we would be more able to sustain our new connections with local community groups and to help us move to the model of community support coordination which means we support communities to do more locally. This would also help address the concerns expressed by community bodies about funding going forward in the recent community conversations (x14);

4. several changes are made to the operation and criteria of the Covid Ward Fund as detailed below and outlined at Appendix 3:
 - i. the maximum award for community groups is increased from £500 to £1500 to allow greater flexibility and avoid groups having to make multiple repeat applications. This would also enable larger projects e.g. development of a community fridge, to be progressed;
 - ii. the restrictions on spend per month are removed;
 - iii. that the total funds allocated to a ward can be used across any part of that ward (as per item 2 and equalising of funds)
 - iv. an updated process is in place for agreeing any award which is aligned across Highland to ensure timely communication and awards are made;
 - v. an appeals process is in place for any organisation or Member to use should there be any concern regarding the rejection of an application. This is outlined in Appendix 3.
 - vi. Wards can carry forward any unspent Covid Ward Funds into 2021/22. While this is not our usual approach, given that we should plan for living with Covid beyond March 2021 this is acceptable to the ECO Resources and Finance but only for this grant stream.
 - vii. Wards need to identify and agree through Area Committees, what proportion of their fund they want to set aside to spend on projects to assist children and adults post Covid, if any, such as contributing to Play Park equipment. This would also enable wards who wish to dedicate any resources to recovery activity. There are governance reasons for this as outlined below (paragraphs 5.11 to 5.13).

5.10 From the Hardship Fund allocated to the Council back in April 2020, £300k was originally set aside for fuel poverty but not required over the summer. In late October the Scottish Government announced supplementary funding for the Scottish Welfare Fund (the Tackling Financial Insecurity Fund) and for this to include new support for fuel poverty. Details of this and other supports for fuel poverty were reported to the Communities and Place Committee on 25th November 2020 (linked above). The funding originally set aside could instead be distributed to Wards to support Covid hardship in local communities. This would be a potential source of funding for the 2nd proposal above; although it means this funding would not be available to help reduce the budget gap and the budget gap would grow by £240k.

5.11 A further consideration for Members is how the Ward funds are administered. Members will be aware that the process for agreeing awards from the Discretionary Ward Budget is as follows:

- Under £10,000, the Ward Manager has delegated authority for making any decision on award and determines whether the project is eligible or not. Ward Managers consult with Members in their decisions and would not normally proceed if most Members have concerns;
- Over £10,000: any applications for awards of over £10,000 must be considered by the local committee.

5.12 The governance around decision-making for awards of over £10k is clear in that Area Committees make that decision; however, decisions on apportioning resource between welfare support and other assistance, including play areas are for Members, and not officers, to make. This means delegated authority to Ward Managers has to define the amount of grant available for different types of expenditure.

- 5.13 For transparency in decision-making on public resources, if any Wards want to set aside some of their Covid ward funding for projects to assist children and adults post Covid, such as contributing to Play Park equipment, this requires to be:
1. discussed in Ward /Area Meetings to gather a Ward Member view; and
 2. for the Ward Member position to be proposed at Area Committees for approval.

With this clarity and accountability on deploying the Covid Ward fund, Ward Mangers will be able to administer the funds through the normal Ward Discretionary Budget process.

6. Additional play park funding

- 6.1 The Council agreed for there to be early consideration (at Committee) to retain £100k to enable some playparks to re-stock by Spring 2021 with a view to coming to a conclusion by the December Council meeting.
- 6.2 Information has been gathered at Ward and Area Committee geographies on the play park estate to help consider the options for deploying the £100k.
- 6.3 The Council has 339 play areas with 2043 individual units of play equipment. Data on condition shows that estimated total repairs/replacement backlog amounts to £3.436m³. Over 30 play parks across the region remain closed since lockdown because of poor condition and mostly in relation to surfacing.
- 6.4 The table at Appendix 4 shows the data above by Ward and Area Committee.
- 6.5 The 2020/21 budget for play areas is £187,600. The budget includes staff costs, transport, contractor payments and materials. The budget was reduced by over half (£212k) in 2018 as an agreed saving given the Council's challenging financial position. This year we have in-sourced the contract for play equipment inspections. This will reduce costs by £36k but this was included in the savings target for amenity services this year (from a £200k savings target agreed as part of the budget set in March 2020) and is not available for re-investment in play parks.
- 6.6 Options for investing £100k this year include:
1. allocation based on the % share of backlog repairs, but this is unlikely to make a significant impact given the scale of the backlog. Also, some consideration is needed for maintaining destination parks and that these attract people from outwith the ward and are in higher use. A further consideration is the socio-economic or rural nature of the area concerned and the lack of access to alternative provision either as a result of distance or lack of transport/individual socio-economic circumstances;
 2. allocation to re-open the parks currently closed, such as the purchase of bark which is one of the reason some of the sites remain closed, but these may not be play parks that Members want to prioritise;
 3. using the funding for community bodies to bid into to lead improvements, possibly linked to community asset transfers, but this may favour more affluent areas where community capacity tends to be greater. A one-off investment would also

³ Please note the estimates are provided by Amenity Officers. They are not subject to commercial quotes or potential cost reductions for bulk purchases. They do include all known repairs/defects and standard compliance work, but exclude accessibility and inclusivity works. Information will be updated during the 2020/21 outdoor annual inspections commencing.

not address the backlog significantly. The question of ongoing maintenance and inspection would also be required to be factored into this option.

6.7 Capitalising the £100k has been considered. However, it is not permitted to capitalise maintenance costs or to use capital for items that are not likely to last any length of time. Given the backlog relates mainly to repairs and maintenance, capitalising £100k will therefore not help reduce the backlog. Also, capitalising the funding to purchase new play equipment with a reasonable life expectancy could add to the maintenance burden as it may mean additional equipment to maintain. In summary the value for money considerations are:

- using the £100k to borrow provides only £100k of capital unless the decision is to invest £100k every year;
- if the asset life is 10 years then borrowing could enable spend of about £800k, paying back £1m over 10 years. Maintenance costs would need to be included in this calculation and this will therefore reduce the amount that can be spent on the capital element; and
- if we capitalise then the commitment is not a one off and we will incur costs over the life of the asset.

Capitalising £100k will not reduce the repairs backlog, and an on-going commitment would have to be considered alongside all other competing requests for capital funding in a capital programme already under considerable pressure. Members will be able to consider any future capital allocation for play areas as part of the corporate asset review and capital programme going forward.

6.8 Clearly a different approach to managing the play park estate is required. Allocating an additional £100k this year is unlikely to have a significant impact on the estate overall. The Council's financial position is not expected to improve for either capital or revenue resources going forward.

6.9 The Communities and Place Committee agreed that play parks seem ideal for a place-based approach because that is where there is:

- local knowledge of their use;
- local knowledge of their condition and any local issues e.g. vandalism;
- local connections with families using play parks;
- local connections with community bodies interested in and able to support play area provision;
- local knowledge of other funding sources; and
- more recently more funding devolved to Area Committees which Members may choose to support play park improvements.

6.10 The Committee agreed that devolving the budget and decision-making on play park priorities to Area Committees, informed by discussions at Ward level would help to demonstrate the Council's commitment to its place-based approach. It would also help to build the relationships across Members, officers, community groups and volunteers to problem solve together. This approach to joint problem solving and local conversations is the model used effectively in Caithness to deal with grounds maintenance.

6.11 Local discussions should also consider views gathered and work done previously on the [Council's Play Strategy 2016-20](#) . This highlights the importance of varying options for play including formal and informal play areas.

- 6.12 Members will know of local examples of community action to support play park provision. There are examples of this even at significant scale; for example recently in Nairn where local fundraising (Team Hamish) and the Common Good Fund worked together to replace the former paddling pool with an innovative and exciting Splash Pad which will significantly improve use and accessibility. Another current example is the existing bid from Lochbroom Community Council (CC) to the Scottish Government's Scotland Loves Local Fund. The Community Council is applying for £4.5k to improve a derelict play park. It has agreed the approach to the works with Council staff and is gathering match funding of £5.5k from a combination of its own funds, wind farm funding and other local charity funding. In this example local residents would be involved in maintenance and painting at the park. This Community Council has similar ambitions for two other play parks in the area.
- 6.13 Officers can support Members locally with local choices by providing not only condition information but also information about a range of potential funding sources and other resources. These will vary by area but could include:
- discussion on prioritising the Council's play areas budget locally covering local staff, materials and supplier spend;
 - any links with the general grounds maintenance of play areas;
 - the devolved Crown Estate funds;
 - any Common Good Funds;
 - any external funding including from Development Trusts, wind farms, local business, philanthropic organisations and national funding streams. Local Third Sector Interface (TSI) staff can help community bodies and Members with this information;
 - potentially now any unspent Covid ward funds;
 - any links with the HRA environmental Improvements fund already devolved (NB in line with HRA Guidance, play parks are not funded from the HRA so it cannot be used for the supply, inspection or maintenance of play equipment, but it could be used for related, complementary investment in common areas held on the HRA); and
 - any appropriate developer contributions (NB generally these are sought where new or improved facilities cannot be secured through the planning process or through the use of planning conditions. Our preference is for developers to deliver play parks as a standard and integral part of open space provided across a well-designed development. Only in exceptional circumstances would we seek a financial contribution in lieu of direct provision of neighbourhood scale play areas, as the onus for delivery is then passed to the Council. Some exceptions do exist).
 - also consider whether the play park itself is still needed within the local community or whether the land and area it is sited on could be used for alternative community use such as the increase in community food growing projects currently being seen linked to food insecurity projects or open free play for children.
- 6.14 This approach enables more honest conversations with local communities about Council resources and working together to problem solve and prioritise resources. If Members were minded, there may be scope too for the use of participatory budgeting techniques to agree local priorities with communities. This approach may also support options 2 and 3 in paragraph 6.6 and bring in the views of interested groups.

- 6.15 These discussions can be supported by Ward Managers and our two Amenity Managers (along with and local amenities staff) and with input from Children's Services on the Play Strategy.
- 6.16 Given the scale of the backlog and the limited current budget provision, it is not clear how best to allocate the additional £100k agreed at Council. The Communities and Place Committee agreed that Members consider all of the options outlined in this report and the local possibilities in Ward /Area Meetings where further information on the play parks in their Ward can be discussed. The Committee also agreed to recommend to Council that the budget and decision-making for play areas should be devolved to Area Committees in consultation with Wards.
- 6.17 The information gathered through Ward discussions can be:
- debated at Area Committees; and
 - fed into the budget setting process for 2021/22 onwards.

Designation: ECO Communities and Place

Date: 3.12.20

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Covid Ward Discretionary Spend at 2 December 2020

Ward	Covid Award	Additional £10k for Covid Vulnerable Communities (x 20 communities)	Spend to 9-11-20	% of Spend	Number of awards
01 North West Central Sutherland	£16,000	£5,000	£7,491	35.7%	20
02 Thurso and Northwest Caithness	£16,000	£20,000	£8,051	22.4%	21
03 Wick and East Caithness	£16,000	£20,000	£7,061	19.6%	20
04 East Sutherland and Edderton	£16,000	£15,000	£6,075	19.6%	13
05 Wester Ross Strathpeffer and Lochalsh	£16,000		£13,534	84.6%	27
06 Cromarty Firth	£16,000	£20,000	£9,230	25.6%	20
07 Tain and Easter Ross	£16,000	£10,000	£12,601	48.5%	27
08 Dingwall and Seaforth	£16,000	£10,000	£6,876	26.4%	15
09 Black Isle	£16,000	0	£14,983	93.6%	18
10 Eilean a' Cheo	£16,000	£10,000	£22,950	88.3%	39
11 Caol and Mallaig	£16,000	£10,000	£10,809	41.6%	15
12 Aird and Loch Ness	£16,000	0	£7,453	46.6%	15
13 Inverness West	£16,000	£20,000	£4,943	13.7%	16
14 Inverness Central	£16,000	£20,000	£8,210	22.8%	25
15 Inverness Ness-side	£16,000	0	£4,963	31.0%	13
16 Inverness Millburn	£16,000	0	£3,905	24.4%	10
17 Culloden and Ardersier	£16,000	0	£3,172	19.8%	9
18 Nairn	£16,000	£20,000	£10,381	28.8%	21
19 Inverness South	£16,000	0	£3,121	19.5%	8
20 Badenoch and Strathspey	£16,000	0	£2,908	18.2%	8
21 Fort William and Ardnamurchan	£16,000	0	£5,750	35.9%	12
Hilton*		£10,000			
Crown and Haugh*		£10,000			
Total	£336,000	£200,000	£174,469	32.6%	372

*£10,000 awarded for each of these covid vulnerable communities that crosscuts three separate wards – Inverness Milburn, Ness Side and Central

Equalising up Covid ward Discretionary Funds

Ward	Covid Award	Enhanced award Covid Vulnerable Communities (x 20)	Spend to 2-12-20	% of Spend	Balance remaining	Award to equalize up
01 North West Central Sutherland	£16,000	£5,000	£7,491	35.7%	£13,509	£15,000
02 Thurso and Northwest Caithness	£16,000	£20,000	£8,051	22.4%	£27,949	
03 Wick and East Caithness	£16,000	£20,000	£7,061	19.6%	£28,939	
04 East Sutherland and Edderton	£16,000	£15,000	£6,075	19.6%	£24,925	£5,000
05 Wester Ross Strathpeffer and Lochalsh	£16,000		£13,534	84.6%	£2,466	£20,000
06 Cromarty Firth	£16,000	£20,000	£9,230	25.6%	£26,770	
07 Tain and Easter Ross	£16,000	£10,000	£12,601	48.5%	£13,399	£10,000
08 Dingwall and Seaforth	£16,000	£10,000	£6,876	26.4%	£19,124	£10,000
09 Black Isle	£16,000	0	£14,983	93.6%	£1,017	£20,000
10 Eilean a' Cheo	£16,000	£10,000	£22,950	88.3%	£3,050	£10,000
11 Caol and Mallaig	£16,000	£10,000	£10,809	41.6%	£15,191	£10,000
12 Aird and Loch Ness	£16,000	0	£7,453	46.6%	£8,547	£20,000
13 Inverness West	£16,000	£20,000	£4,943	13.7%	£31,057	
14 Inverness Central	£16,000	£20,000	£8,210	22.8%	£27,790	
15 Inverness Ness-side	£16,000	0	£4,963	31.0%	£11,037	£20,000
16 Inverness Millburn	£16,000	0	£3,905	24.4%	£12,095	£20,000
17 Culloden and Ardersier	£16,000	0	£3,172	19.8%	£12,828	£20,000
18 Nairn	£16,000	£20,000	£10,381	28.8%	£25,619	
19 Inverness South	£16,000	0	£3,121	19.5%	£12,879	£20,000
20 Badenoch and Strathspey	£16,000	0	£2,908	18.2%	£13,092	£20,000
21 Fort William and Ardnamurchan	£16,000	0	£5,750	35.9%	£10,250	£20,000
Hilton*		£10,000			£10,000	
Crown and Haugh*		£10,000			£10,000	
Total	£336,000	£200,000	£174,469	32.6%	£361,531	£240,000

**Supporting Community Resilience
Ward Discretionary Budget**

**Revised Criteria, Process and Appeal Process for Members
December 2020**

Members please note, additions to the process *in italics*.

Who can apply?

The fund is open to all groups within a local area – both constituted and non-constituted. This recognises that we have a number of new groups who have emerged to support covid-19 related resilience efforts. Groups are encouraged to register with the Council and Highland Third Sector Interface if they have not already done so.

What is the fund for?

To support covid-19 related community resilience efforts where a group has identified an ability to provide an essential service to vulnerable people locally.

The focus is on covid-19 related community activity and must be on supporting emergency food, supplies and vulnerable individuals. Examples of support could include:

- supporting local volunteer efforts and expenses
 - developing promotional materials
 - support for local volunteer telephone systems
- making up food packs for vulnerable households
- developing measures to address social isolation
- providing a source of funding to enable groups to shop for individuals in the community where households no longer have cash available and they cannot source local deliveries

Should Members wish to allocate funds from this budget for other purposes e.g. play parks, recovery projects, this should first be discussed in a Ward Business Meeting and then be considered and approved at the Area Committee. That proportion of the fund could then be managed in the normal Ward Discretionary Budget process.

How much can be applied for:

Groups can apply for up to £1,500 at any one time. Groups can reapply once initial funding is spent.

There are no restrictions on how much wards can allocate on a monthly basis.

There are no restrictions on geographical allocations – all funds allocated to a ward can be deployed through the ward.

Evidence of spend:

Groups are asked to provide a short summary of how the funding has been used. An application for further funding cannot be made until this is provided. Groups do not

have to provide receipts/evidence of spend but are asked to retain these for submission if requested.

How to apply:

Applications are through the normal ward discretionary grant process. A shortened form has been developed which can be accessed here.

All completed forms should be sent to: policy6@highland.gov.uk or
The Highland Council Grant and Discretionary Funding Applications
Highland Council Headquarters,
Glenurquhart Road,
Inverness IV3 5NX

Decision Making

The Ward Manager will assess whether the application meets the criteria for the fund. If it does not the application will be refused.

All validated applications will be emailed to all Members within a Ward.

Ward Members will be asked to respond within 7 days. Should no response be received, this will be taken as support for the application.

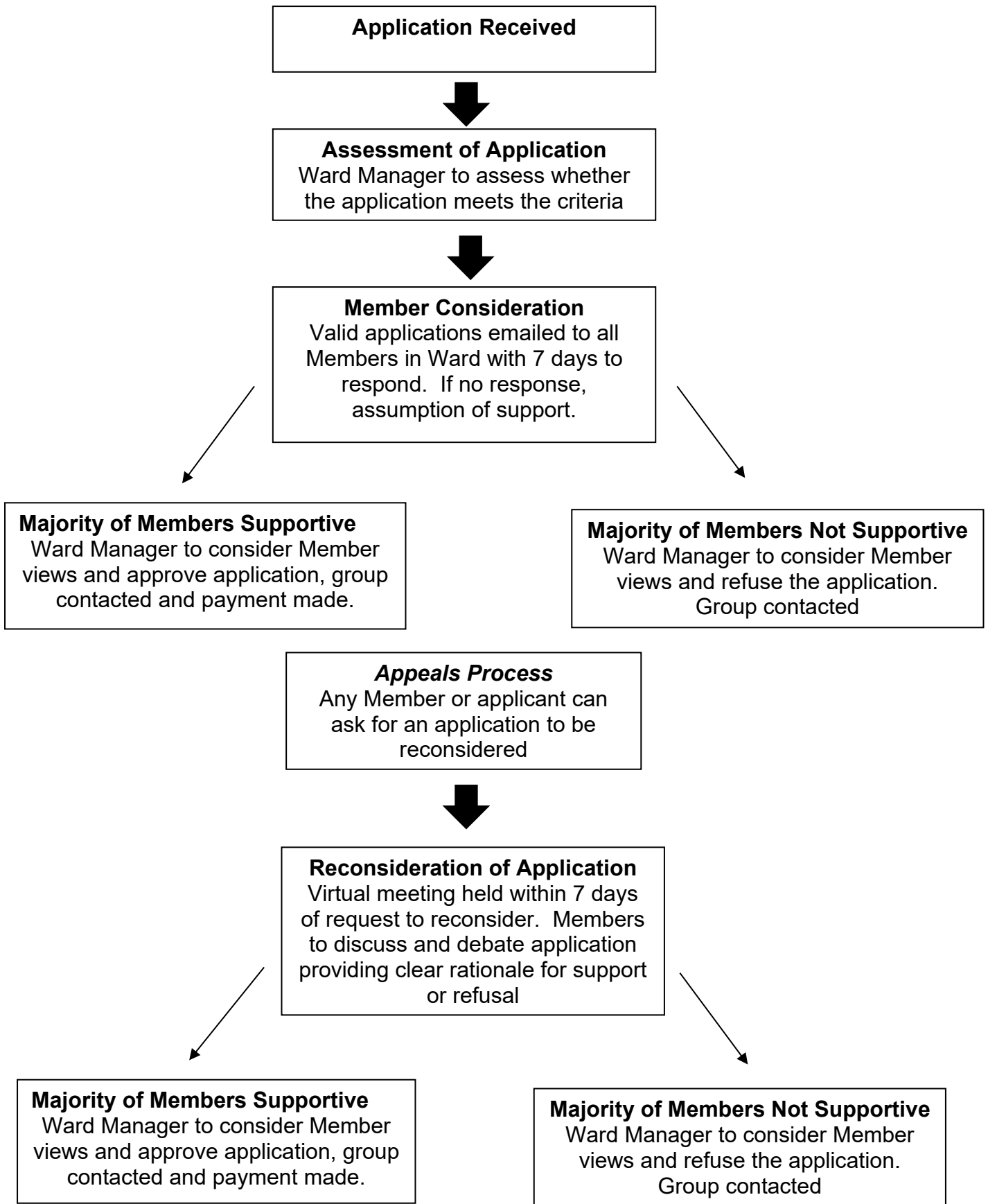
If the majority of Members agree and the group meets the criteria for award, then the Ward Manager will approve the application, the group will be informed and payment made in a timely manner.

Appeal Process

Should any application not seek the majority support of Members, the application will be refused. Any group or individual Member can ask for this to be reconsidered through an appeals process. This should be done within 7 days of receiving notification of the refusal.

If there is a request for an application to be reconsidered, a virtual Ward Meeting will be held within 7 days. The application will be reconsidered and debated by Ward Members, including clear reasons for supporting or not supporting an application. The majority view of Members will continue to apply and an application only approved if the majority of Members are supportive.

COVID Ward Discretionary Fund – Decision Making and Appeal Process



Play areas, equipment and repair costs by Ward and Area Committee Nov 2020 (excludes data for 35 play parks) Appendix 4

Committee Area	Ward Number	Ward	Number of play areas	Individual units	Refurbishment Costs est.	Surfacing Costs est.	Total Estimated Repair/Replacement Backlog Costs £	% Share backlog	% Share of Equipped Play Parks
Sutherland County	1	North West & Central Sutherland	23	129	£ 130,400	£ 5,750	£ 136,150.00	4.0%	6.8%
	4	East Sutherland & Edderton	17	91	£ 95,300	£ 4,250	£ 99,550.00	2.9%	5.0%
Caithness	2	Thurso & Northwest Caithness	16	93	£ 74,350	£ 3,692	£ 78,042.32	2.3%	4.7%
	3	Wick & East Caithness	36	232	£ 264,400	£ 8,308	£ 272,707.72	7.9%	10.6%
Isle of Skye & Rassay	10	Eilean a' Cheò	9	63	£ 80,450	£ 5,460	85,910	2.5%	2.7%
Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh	5	Wester Ross, Strathpeffer & Lochalsh	21	119	£ 250,999	£ 12,740	263,739	7.7%	6.2%
Easter Ross	6	Cromarty Firth	17	76	£ 180,342	£ 12,193	192,535	5.6%	5.0%
	7	Tain & Easter Ross	16	58	£ 149,281	£ 11,476	160,757	4.7%	4.7%
Black Isle, Dingwall & Seaforth	8	Dingwall & Seaforth	14	73	£ 130,216	£ 10,041	140,257	4.1%	4.1%
	9	Black Isle	11	100	£ 88,198	£ 7,890	96,088	2.8%	3.2%
Lochaber	11	Caol & Mallaig	13	80	£ 391,101	£ 1,931	393,032	11.4%	3.8%
	21	Fort William & Ardnamurchan	22	126	£ 545,002	£ 3,269	548,271	16.0%	6.5%
City of Inverness	12	Aird & Loch Ness	21	151	£ 113,700	£ 2,400	116,100	3.4%	6.2%
	13	Inverness West	10	64	£ 100,300	£ 1,143	101,443	3.0%	2.9%
	14	Inverness Central	13	64	£ 99,000	£ 1,486	100,486	2.9%	3.8%
	15	Inverness Ness	11	65	£ 47,500	£ 1,257	48,757	1.4%	3.2%
	16	Inverness Millburn	13	117	£ 160,650	£ 1,486	162,136	4.7%	3.8%
	17	Culloden & Ardersier	15	99	£ 169,600	£ 1,714	171,314	5.0%	4.4%
	19	Inverness South	9	55	£ 93,000	£ 1,029	94,029	2.7%	2.7%
Nairnshire	18	Nairn & Cawdor	9	63	£ 66,500	£ 3,900	70,400	2.0%	2.7%
Badenoch & Strathspey	20	Badenoch & Strathspey	23	125	£ 99,050	£ 5,200	104,250	3.0%	6.8%

339 **2043** **£ 3,329,339** **£ 106,615** **£ 3,435,954** **100%** **100%**

	% Backlog refurbishment costs greater than % Equipped Play Areas
	% Backlog refurbishment costs are less than or equal to the % Equipped Play Areas