

Agenda Item	9.
Report No	BSAC/16/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee

Date: 9 August 2021

Report Title: Use of Ward Covid Response Funds

Report By: Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 Following on from the decisions made at Highland Council on 7 January 2021, Ward 20 Members have requested that a portion of the Ward's remaining Covid-19 Ward Discretionary fund be used to aid a unique Police Scotland led project for additional visitor management support in the Glenmore Area. In keeping with governance requirements, allocation of ward funding in this way requires approval by the Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Agree to allocate up to £3,000 of funding from Covid-19 Ward Discretionary funds to support the partnership approach to additional policing for the Glenmore Area as outlined at paragraph 6.1.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – The resource implications are set out in the report. Also, in general, the report asks Members to agree the decision to allocate a portion of the remaining Covid-19 Ward Discretionary Budget towards supporting joint working to improve the viability and amenity of the Glenmore area for visitors and the local community. This is in line with the Council decision on 7 January 2021, enabling Members to decide to set aside existing covid monies for spend on projects to assist communities, post covid, such as contributing to the wellbeing and vibrancy of local communities. In these particular circumstances, responding to the urgency to retain public confidence in using the countryside with the belief that everyone will share the space and be treated with fairness

and respect, the advance approval of funding by officers was required in order to avoid delaying the start of this significant partnership project.

- 3.2 Legal – No legal implications.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – The allocation of funds to support the provision of additional Police support will alleviate pressure on the local community and address local concerns.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – There are no specific climate change implications.
- 3.5 Risk – The risk in allocating Covid-19 funds at this point for other purposes may result in the ward running out of budget to support other local resilience measures if these are required.
- 3.6 Gaelic – There are no specific Gaelic implications.

4. Background

- 4.1 A multi-agency visitor management group, led by the Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA), meets fortnightly to monitor the impacts on the local countryside and in particular, the Glenmore area. The visitor management issues in the Glenmore area are well documented with a number of key measures already having been taken to improve the visitor experience, including strengthening the CNPA Ranger team. However, with the need for additional Policing being identified due to complaints from both the local community and from visitors, Police Scotland put forward a proposal for a seasonal programme of additional Policing in support of the CNPA Ranger team and local business providers.
- 4.2 Following discussion with Members on the proposed initiative, this report seeks agreement to allocate a proportion of the Ward Covid funds to support a unique partnership approach led by Police Scotland and supported by the Highland Council, the Cairngorm National Park Authority and Forestry and Land Scotland.

5. Current Covid-19 Ward Discretionary Fund Budget Position

- 5.1 All wards across Highland were awarded a sum of £16,000 in April 2020 to support covid resilience activity. In January 2021, it was agreed by Council to equalise these funds across all wards in highland, therefore resulting in a total covid allocation of £36,000 per ward. It was also agreed at Council on 7 January 2021 that wards with remaining covid funds could seek to apportion this to other activities or projects to address the impacts of covid.
- 5.2 As at 31 July 2021 there was £32,438.54 in funds remaining for Badenoch and Strathspey.

6. Police Scotland Partnership Proposal

- 6.1 In response to increased calls for Police attendance to deal with issues at Glenmore, Police Scotland have put together a proposal to provide additional patrols over 6 weekends during the peak summer period.
- 6.2 There is an opportunity to provide funding for a partnership approach to support the Police Scotland led Visitor Management project connected with increased 'Staycationing'

as a result of the Covid Pandemic. The CNPA Visitor Management Group have identified this risk and the plan is to support the Rangers who are working hard to ensure a safe environment for the large proportion of law-abiding visitors. Additional Police patrols will enhance the reputation of the area and show that we take lawbreaking very seriously, especially when it impacts on public space. The Partners involved will assess the impact and general reaction to the additional Police patrols and provide a review in due course.

Designation: Carron McDiarmid, ECO, Communities & Place

Date: 19 July 2021

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