

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CIA/26/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: City of Inverness Area Committee

Date: 26th August 2021

Report Title: Inverness Wards Place Based Investment Funds – Proposed Funding Allocations

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 for the 2021/22 financial year. This fund is intended to enable a flexible local response to address the 4 harms of Covid which are identified as direct health harms; health impacts not directly related to Covid; societal impacts and economic impacts.
- 1.2 Early discussions with Members at Ward level have identified a range of opportunities for spend against the Place Based Investment Fund for the Wards. Governance for spend of this funding is through the Area Committee therefore this report asks the Committee to agree the budget allocations outlined in the report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed allocations of Place Based Investment Funds as follows:
- i. **Ward 12**
 - a. Investment in Play Parks - £20,000
 - b. Investment in paths/trails - £30,000
 - c. Investment in cycle networks - £15,000
 - d. Community led proposals - £35,000
 - e. Total = £100,000
 - ii. **Ward 13**
 - a. Investment in Play Parks - £50,000
 - b. Investment in residential path improvement - £20,000
 - c. Investment in secondary school growing projects - £20,000
 - d. Investment in primary school well-being projects - £10,000

e. Total = £100,000

iii. **Ward 15**

- a. Investment in Befriending Scheme (jointly with Ward 16) - £30,000
- b. Castle Heather Park improvements - £22,000
- c. MacDonald Park improvements - £20,000
- d. Culduthel Woods improvements - £5,000
- e. Promotion of environmental awareness in 4 Primary Schools - £8,000
- f. Holm Path improvements - £10,000
- g. Holm Grown grant support - £5,000
- h. Total = £100,000

iv. **Ward 16**

- a. Investment in Play Parks - £55,000
- b. Investment in Befriending Scheme (jointly with Ward 15) - £15,000
- c. Fitness & Well-being initiative - £30,000
- d. Total = £100,000

v. **Ward 17**

- a. Housing Need Assessment – Amount to be confirmed
- b. Community Growing projects – Amount to be confirmed
- c. Reports will be brought back to future CIAC

vi. **Ward 19**

- a. Inshes Community Park - £50,000
- b. Inverness College UHI ABC Garden Project - £50,000
- c. Total = £100,000

2.2 Members are asked to note the identified priority areas for the following two wards and that reports detailing funding allocation proposals will be brought to a future meeting of this committee:

vii. **Ward 14**

- a. Mental health and wellbeing of communities with a specific focus on developing community spaces including play areas.

viii. **Ward 17**

- a. Housing needs assessment
- b. Community growing projects

3. Implications

3.1 Resource implications – The resource implications are set out in the report and set out the proposed allocations against each of the City Wards.

3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be made to external groups and/or other Council services in line with the details agreed in the report and the Scheme of Delegation. This means that grants of up to £10,000 can be administered locally by the Ward Manager in consultation with Members, and grants larger than £10,000 will require further approval through CIAC.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funding proposed targets a range of projects and activities, a number of which specifically address access,

inequality and improved outdoor space in order to encourage greater use and promote mental wellbeing.

- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications, but some projects provide opportunities for carbon clever solutions.
- 3.5 Risk implications – Some funding allocations are dependent upon additional external funding being identified in order to complete the funding package and enable the project to progress. Placed Based funding will only be allocated once the complete funding package is in place. Grants will be made following established grant making procedures to minimise risk of project failure.
- 3.6 In relation to play areas. here is a risk that without investment more playparks/sports fields may become unusable and prevent the local communities from accessing safe outdoor spaces to exercise. However, new play equipment will also, in time, require maintenance and repairs and at present resources are extremely limited for this. The future maintenance burden can be mitigated, if not entirely eliminated, by Amenities staff working with communities to help ensure that any new equipment is low maintenance and uses standard parts. Additionally, a broader approach to play could potentially be promoted, including regarding play areas as social spaces for all age groups with less play equipment, and promoting natural play around existing features or features constructed out of standard materials (timber etc in order to minimise the ongoing maintenance costs.
- 3.7 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications. However, where there is an opportunity the Gaelic language will be promoted.

4. Aird & Loch Ness Ward (Ward 12)

- 4.1 **Play Parks** - Members are aware of the importance of play in the lives of children and their families and the benefits to their well-being of having quality accessible equipment. The impacts of Covid have been felt across the age ranges so this important investment will provide opportunities for active recreation. The focus will be on replacing equipment that has been removed or has a life span of less than 3 years. Funding should be prioritised in line with discussions with amenities officers, in this main this will be targeted at replacement equipment and implemented by Council staff however Members are eager to encourage community involvement in the improvements and opportunities for community funding where possible to further enhance the investment and create sustainable play provision.

It is proposed to allocate £20,000 towards play park investment.

- 4.2 **Paths/trails** – Members wish to work with their communities to develop community participation in their investment in paths and trails to ensure what is provided is compatible with local needs and aspirations. Walking, cycling, and horse riding are recognised as valuable contributors to improved mental and physical health. This funding will be delivered through a grant stream where there is the opportunity for up to 5 community led bids, up to £6k per bid, for 50% funding to develop further paths or trails in the Ward. Organisations and groups will be asked to apply by 31 December 2021. All projects must be completed by December 2022. Applications will be made via the established process for Ward Discretionary Grants.

It is proposed to allocate £30,000 towards path/trail improvements.

- 4.3 **Cycle networks** – The Ward already benefits from well-developed cycle networks such as the Great Glen Way and Loch Ness 360°. However, there is demand for further connections. It is anticipated this funding will be available for feasibility studies into further development of cycle networks such as Inchmore to Inverness and Balnain, Glen Urquhart forest link. This will be delivered through a grant stream and organisations and groups will be asked to apply by 31 December 2021. All projects must be completed by December 2022. Applications will be made via the established process for Ward Discretionary Grants.

It is proposed to allocate £15,000 towards cycle network improvements.

- 4.4 **Community led proposals** – Members recognise the importance of engaging with their local communities to provide opportunities for them to develop their own priority projects. Participatory Budgeting has previously proven to be a well-supported method of achieving this. This funding will offer opportunities for projects of up to £5,000 with preferential weighting provided to those communities currently not receiving community benefit from renewable energy developments. Groups will be asked to identify which of the four harms of covid their project aims to address. The timescales for applications remain to be agreed and applications will be made via the established process for Ward Discretionary Grants.

It is proposed to allocate £35,000 to support community led projects.

5. **Inverness West Ward (Ward 13)**

- 5.1 **Play provision** – As part of the strategic review of play parks Members have engaged with the local amenities team and visited various play parks in the ward, noting that Whin Park is being treated as a destination park and therefore funded differently. It is understood the significant pressure on play park budgets and the need to develop a sustainable approach and plan for each park going forwards. It is agreed therefore that the funding should be prioritised in line with discussions with amenities officers, in this main this will be targeted at replacement equipment and implemented by Council staff. Members consider this will greatly improve both physical and mental well-being of young people in their ward.

It is proposed to allocate £50,000 to improving play provision.

- 5.2 **Residential Path Improvement** – work undertaken on residential path improvement earlier in the year in certain areas of the work has resulted in increased usage of paths and outdoor spaces. It is intended to continue clearance and improvement of these paths as well as installing signage which will improve linkages, encourage people to walk or cycle more, to improve the environment and reduce use of the car. This will have a positive impact on mental and physical well-being as well as increasing the community sense of well-being, arising from the improved environment. Discussions and site visits have taken place with relevant officers who have confirmed this is achievable. This will be delivered by the Council's amenities team.

It is proposed to allocate £20,000 to residential path improvement.

- 5.3 **Secondary School Growing Projects - Inverness High School** - the school plans to expand the facilities on the school farm. Since returning from Covid an increasing number of classes are using the farm and are engaging in outdoor learning. The positive effects of being outdoors and engaging with nature on health and wellbeing (including mental

health) are well documented and particularly important at the present time. It is intended to install a Polycrub (<https://www.polycrub.co.uk/>) as an extension to the outdoor classroom and to equip it with facilities for growing vegetables and food preparation. This will be delivered directly by the High School.

It is proposed to allocate £10,000 to the Inverness High School Growing Project.

- 5.4 **Charleston Academy - Growing Project** – it is proposed to repair the existing polytunnel in order to produce crops like strawberries, potatoes, beans, herbs, berries, and lettuce which can then be used/cooked and eaten. The aim is to teach pupils not only how to grow crops but how to eat healthily. The funding will support the purchase of plants, pots and material to fill the pots, as well as appropriate PPE and tools. The funding will also support works to improve the pond, with pupils therefore able to be involved in working with wildlife etc. Overall, this project will allow more pupils to benefit through learning about growing food and the resulting health benefits; working outdoors; enhancing the school environment so everyone is happier at school. The project will be delivered directly by Charleston Academy.

It is proposed to allocate £10,000 to Charleston Academy Growing Project.

- 5.5 **Investment in primary school well-being projects** – grants of £2,500 will be made available to the primary schools within the ward - Kinmylies/Muirtown/Central/Dalneigh to deliver small projects which will improve the mental or physical well-being of the children. Schools will be asked to apply through the normal Ward Discretionary process.

It is proposed to allocate £10,000 for primary school well-being projects.

6. Inverness Central Ward (Ward 14)

- 6.1 Central Ward Councillors have identified mental health and wellbeing of communities within the Ward as the primary objective in terms of allocation of Place Based Investment Funding. This includes how best to develop community spaces – including play areas -in order to provide sustainable open spaces for all ages within the ward.

- 6.2 Further work is required to:

- Explore priority areas with community groups to understand use of space and opportunities for partnership development
- Explore with communities priority play spaces for improvement/refurbishment including the potential of sustainable play provision
- Explore alternative uses of end of life play spaces including repurposing for other community uses such as food growing.

- 6.3 It is anticipated that full proposals will be provided to the City of Inverness Area Committee set for November 2021.

7. Inverness Ness-side Ward (Ward 15)

- 7.1 **Befriender Scheme** – a jointly funded project with Inverness Millburn Ward, the proposed funding will support a project in the Hilton area of Inverness. The project aim is to provide a network of support for older more vulnerable people and contribute to community cohesion and awareness of the various supports in place in the community.

The project could be delivered through a partnership of groups or through one organisation. It will be delivered through a grant scheme. Applications will be through the normal Ward Discretionary Budget process with successful applications under £10,000 administered by the Ward Manager or should any proposal come forward over £10,000, this would be approved through a future meeting of the CIAC.

The total project funding between the two wards will be £45,000 and it is proposed to allocate £30,000 from the Ness Side Ward funding allocation.

- 7.2 **Castle Heather Park** – the funding aims to provide improved outdoor areas with space for people to reconnect and improve physical and mental wellbeing. Better facilities particularly for children to explore outdoor spaces. This will enhance the space and the place to provide improved recreational opportunities for local residents. The rewilding of open spaces can potentially create mini nature reserves. This will be delivered by the Council's Amenities Team.

It is proposed to allocate £22,000 for improvements to Castle Heather Park.

- 7.3 **MacDonald Park** – Provide improved outdoor areas with space for people to reconnect and improve physical and mental wellbeing. Better facilities particularly for children to explore outdoor spaces. This will enhance the space and the place to provide improved recreational opportunities for local residents. The rewilding of open spaces can potentially create mini nature reserves. Further engagement with the local community will determine how to take forward these improvements and this will be delivered through the normal ward discretionary budget approach, with any awards over £10,000 being considered by a future CIAC.

It is proposed to allocate £20,000 for improvements to MacDonald Park.

- 7.4 **Culduthel Woods** - By contributing grant funding to support the activities of the community group to improve the woodland will further enhance its amenity as they work to develop this woodland resource for local recreation. Monitoring of grant spend will be in line with the Council's Grant Funding Conditions.

It is proposed to allocate £5,000 for Culduthel Woods improvements.

- 7.5 **Primary Schools** – The provision of grant funding for schools to create wildlife havens in local schools, which can include bug hotels and bird boxes. This will give the children a living connection with nature and hopefully provide them with the stimulus to go out and explore further their natural environment. It is anticipated this activity will help children to influence their parents to similarly get involved. Schools will be asked to apply by 31 December 2021. All projects must be completed by December 2022. Applications will be made via the established process for Ward Discretionary Grants.

It is proposed to allocate £8,000 for primary school wildlife haven projects.

- 7.6 **Holm Path** – Funding to improve the path to the rear of Holm Primary, from Lower Holm up to the School, will provide a safer and more accessible route for children and adults. This will be delivered through the Council's Amenities Team.

It is proposed to allocate £10,000 for Holm Path

- 7.7 **Holm Grown** – this is a direct award to Holm Grown to support this community-led initiative develop its communal vegetable growing space making it more accessible to users of all abilities and create an important gathering place for people from this locality. Monitoring of grant spend will be in line with the Council's Grant Funding Conditions.

It is proposed to allocate £5,000 to Holm Grown for community growing.

8. **Inverness Millburn Ward (Ward 16)**

- 8.1 **Play Parks** - Members are aware of the importance of play in the lives of children and their families and the benefits to their well-being of having quality accessible equipment. The impacts of Covid have been felt across the age ranges so this important investment will provide opportunities for active recreation. Improving facilities for children and young people to be more active will enhance their physical and mental wellbeing. This will also enhance the space and the place to provide improved recreational opportunities for local residents. Funding should be prioritised in line with discussions with amenities officers, in this main this will be targeted at replacement equipment and implemented by Council staff however Members are eager to encourage community involvement in the improvements and opportunities for community funding where possible to further enhance the investment and create sustainable play provision.

It is proposed to allocate £55,000 for play park improvements.

- 8.2 **Befriender Scheme** – a jointly funded project with Inverness Ness-side Ward, the proposed funding will support a project in the Hilton area of Inverness. This scheme will provide a network of support for older more vulnerable people and contribute to community cohesion and awareness of the various supports in place in the community. The project could be delivered through a partnership of groups or through one organisation. It will be delivered through a grant scheme. Applications will be through the normal Ward Discretionary Budget process with successful applications under £10,000 administered by the Ward Manager or should any proposal come forward over £10,000, this would be approved through a future meeting of the CIAC.

The total project funding between the two wards will be £45,000 and it is proposed to allocate £15,000 from Inverness Millburn funding allocation.

- 8.3 **Fitness and Wellbeing initiative** – This initiative will be to engage with people of all age ranges to help improve their physical and mental wellbeing and encourage them to spend more time outdoors. Working in partnership with HighLife Highland and local sports clubs, activities will be developed that are relevant and accessible to those in the community not currently engaged in outdoor activity. The project could be delivered through a partnership of groups or through one organisation. It will be delivered through a grant scheme. Applications will be through the normal Ward Discretionary Budget process with successful applications under £10,000 administered by the Ward Manager or should any proposal come forward over £10,000, this would be approved through a future meeting of the CIAC.

It is proposed to allocate £30,000 to the fitness and wellbeing initiative.

9. Culloden & Ardersier Ward (Ward 17)

9.1 Initial discussions with local Members using community intelligence have identified two key priority areas for investment:

- **Housing Needs Assessment** – further discussion is required with officers on the wider societal impacts on housing provision within the ward. Members wish to explore assessment of need, and potential land uses, for Ward 17 communities and for proposals to be brought forward for potential and innovative solutions to a future meeting of the CIAC. The funding for this is to be confirmed
- **Community Growing Projects** – there is strong interest in community growing schemes from communities within the Ward. Further work is required to determine where and how funding can best be targeted to enable sustainable projects to progress. Proposals for how to target funding will be brought to a future meeting of CIAC . The funding for this is to be confirmed

10. Inverness South Ward (Ward 19)

10.1 **Inshes Park Wheeled Sports Project** – The Inshes Park Wheeled Sports project aims to provide the first facility for all wheeled sports including skateboards, scooters, and bikes on the East side of the City. The project is well advanced in both the planning stages and consultation with letters of support from local community councils, primary schools, Highland Disability Sport and Highlife Highland. The total project value is £225k, with £145,000 already secured. This will be delivered by the Inshes Park Community Association and a direct funding award would be made to them to progress. Monitoring of grant spend will be in line with the Council's Grant Funding Conditions.

It is proposed to allocate £50,000 for this project.

10.2 **Inverness College UHI ABC Garden Project** – The ABC Garden is an ambitious project that aims to deliver a productive community garden for local schools and communities. Already a well-used space for walking, cycling and leisure, the ABC project aims to bring another inclusive dimension to the campus with the central value of accessibility for all. College staff and students have been involved in developing the project concepts and designs ideas and these include an all-ability path through the garden and fully accessible garden 'rooms'. This funding allocation is to support phase 1 of the development which will deliver fully accessible paths and growing areas. This will be delivered by Inverness College UHI and a direct award would be made to them to progress. Monitoring of grant spend will be in line with the Council's Grant Funding Conditions.

It is proposed to allocate £50,000 towards this project.

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Date: 26 July 2021

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