

Agenda Item	7
Report No	SR/22/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Isle of Skye and Raasay Area Committee

Date: 29th November 2021

Report Title: 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 four harms of Covid which are identified as direct health harms; health impacts not directly related to Covid; societal impacts and economic impacts.
- 1.2 At Area Committee on 30th August 2021, an allocation of £14,000 was agreed to retain amenities seasonal staff for an additional 2 months. The Meeting also noted that discussions were under way between Local Members, community representatives and officers to develop projects for spend against the remainder of the Place Based Investment Fund for the Ward. This report asks the Committee to agree a budget allocation and remaining Place Based Investment Fund monies of £86,000 as outlined in the report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider and agree the proposed allocation of Place Based Investment Funds as follows:
- Investment in site management and income generation at the Old Man of Storr - £57,000
 - Investment in Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations, Befriender Scheme to help address social isolation and loneliness - £20,000
 - Investment in Braes Village Hall - £2,000
 - Community Resilience & Support - £7000

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications – as set out in the report.
- 3.2 Legal implications – work within procurement frameworks will meet all legal requirements. Subject to Member approval, the Storr project will consider all legal implications related to the options to be progressed and will be managed as part of a Project Management framework.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The allocation of funds to support local communities will enable activities to be directed in ways that promote equality and tackle poverty. There is a specific allocation to SLCVO to address social isolation and loneliness.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications.
- 3.5 Risk implications – there are no identified risks as projects will either be delivered in-house within the known budget or will be provided as grants to established organisations using the standard grants criteria / process. Subject to Member approval, the work for the Storr Project will be delivered and conducted within a Project Management framework, this will include ongoing risk management to identify and manage risk.
- 3.6 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications. However, where there is an opportunity the Gaelic language will be promoted.

4. Project Proposals

- 4.1 **Investment in site management and income generation at the Old Man of Storr - £57,000** - Through the Transformation Service and a formal procurement procedure, a detailed business case was developed for the Old Man of Storr site. Enhancing the site and visitor experience through a sustainable business model was a key driver for this process. The business case has evidenced that there is a viable business opportunity to develop the site. This proposed commercial development is seen as an important addition to an increased suite of services at the site, enhancing customer experience, supporting economic development and employment, and importantly as part of a sustainable business model for the facilities through providing additional income that would support site maintenance and reinvestment.

It is proposed to allocate £57,000 towards implementation of the business case, for site management and income generation at the Old Man of Storr. This would be delegated to the Executive Chief Officer, Transformation, for implementation.

- 4.2 **Investment in Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations, Befriender Scheme to help address social isolation and loneliness - £20,000** – The Skye and Lochalsh Befriending scheme was set-up initially to provide a befriending service to those receiving palliative care. During the last 4 years the service has expanded to include anyone affected by social isolation and loneliness; and the covid pandemic saw the services expand further to provide emergency response social support. The service is open to anyone over 18 in Skye and Lochalsh who is affected by social isolation or

loneliness. Referrals can be made by individuals, families, GPs, social work, third sector groups and other NHS services.

The plan for the next 3 years is to extend the service and the co-ordinator's hours which will enable the scheme to:

- Support more clients and recruit more volunteers
- Develop a new Hospital to Home befriending service
- Provide regular group befriending activities including green space befriending activities
- Pilot initiatives that meet the needs of those in our communities who have become or are at risk of becoming socially isolated

It is proposed to allocate £20,000 towards this project. This is part of a wider funding package, with £90,000 secured to date. To run the project on full-time hours will cost £150,000, additional sources of grant funding have been identified and are being applied to. Should not all the funding required be secured, the project delivery hours will be reduced accordingly.

- 4.3 **Investment in Braes Village Hall - £2,000** – This project will undertake urgent repairs to the village hall roof. The hall is a vital facility for the residents of Braes and is run by a volunteer committee who have raised almost half the repair costs through local community events. The Committee was formed in 1978 and hold a long lease for the building, which is owned by Highland Council, being a former Primary School. To date they have secured funding of £25,750 and from the quotes received it is expected that £2000 from the PBIF would complete the funding required to undertake the works.

It is proposed to allocate £2,000 towards the repairs of Braes Village Hall.

- 4.4 **Community Resilience & Support - £7000** – Members have indicated that a reserve should be retained to support any Covid related response required, due to the uncertainty of any impact over the winter months. This would operate within the existing terms of the Ward Covid Resilience grant fund and be managed by the Ward Manager.

It is proposed to allocate £7,000 for ongoing community resilience and support.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 15th November 2021

Author: Willie MacKinnon, Ward Manager, Eilean a' Cheo

Background Papers: