

Agenda Item	5
Report No	NC/03/22

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Nairn and Nairnshire Area Committee

Date: 1 March 2022

Report Title: Nairnshire Repurposing COVID-19 Fund and Place Based Investment Fund Proposals

Report By: Interim Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines proposals for the allocation of local Ward based funds; both COVID19 funding and also Ward Place Based Investment Funding.
- 1.2 It was agreed at a meeting of the Highland Council on 7 January 2021 that Wards with unspent COVID19 funds could decide to spend this on projects to assist children and adults post covid. This report contains proposals to repurpose COVID19 funding to support Amenity Services with improvements to play parks.
- 1.3 Discussions by Members at Ward level with Amenity Services Officers have established the need for this support to ensure play parks are repaired and returned to a condition suitable for use.
- 1.4 Committee previously identified a range of opportunities for spend against the Place Based Investment Fund under the auspices of the Community Partnership on 15 September 2021. This report now asks the Committee to agree budget allocations outlined against the remaining Place Based Investment Fund budget for the Ward based on recommendations received from the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 1. agree the repurposing of £3,200 from the Ward COVID19 Fund to support Amenity Services with repairs and improvements to the Birch Road play area in Nairn;

2. consider and agree the proposed allocation of the Ward's remaining balance of £65,000 Place Based Investment Funds as follows in line with Community Partnership recommendations:

- Accessibility Projects
 - a) Nairn Access Panel, The Links Beach - £10,000
- Improving Health & Wellbeing Outcomes
 - a) Health & Wellbeing in Nairnshire Schools - £9,000
 - b) Listening Benches, Nairn Links - £2,000
 - c) Nairn Community Drop in Hub - £1,000
- Improving Local Infrastructure to Stimulate Economic Growth
 - a) Traffic Calming / Pedestrianisation – The Brae Feasibility study £3,000
 - b) Gathering places / Market Spaces Nairn High Street - £7,000
 - c) Nairnshire visitor & experience centre and Regeneration Hub Nairn Improvement Community Enterprise (NICE) - £5,000
 - d) Nairn High Street Vennels Refresh – Nairn BID £7,000
 - e) Nairnshire Farmers' Showfield – Nairn Bowling Club feasibility study £3,000
 - f) NCGF Harbour Street Public Toilets & Motorhome Provision £18,000

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource implications – it is proposed to allocate £65,000 Place Based Investment Fund and to repurpose £3,200 COVID19 funding for Nairn.
- 3.2 Legal implications – Funding will be made to external groups and/or other Council services in line with the Scheme of Delegation and grant guidance.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) impacts – The proposed allocations have been based on discussions with partners and specifically support a number of priorities identified by the Community Partnership. The proposals include an aim to promote health and wellbeing outcomes through improving outdoor space and the accessibility of outdoor space for all.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever implications – There are no specific climate change implications.
- 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. Place 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 Gaelic implications – There are no specific Gaelic implications.

4. Background

- 4.1 As part of the Health and Prosperity Strategy agreed through the 2021/22 budget process, £2.1m was approved for distribution through Area Committees to support local responses to address the four harms of COVID (direct harm caused by COVID; other health impacts; societal impacts and economic impacts) and consider local investments

to support recovery. £100,000 per ward was agreed, of which £35,000 was previously allocated at Committee on 15 September 2021.

4.2 Discussions with partners and the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership have highlighted two key strands for investment of the funding:

1. Well-being investments with a particular focus on addressing health and societal impacts of covid:

- Play areas
- Accessibility projects
- Initiatives to promote health and wellbeing outcomes

2. Investment in local infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and address economic impacts of the pandemic:

- Development of motorhome provision
- Projects supporting town centre development

4.3 At a meeting of the Nairn and Nairnshire Committee In September 2021, the committee agreed in principle to funding allocations to these strands of work, with proposals to come forward to this committee following further engagement and recommendations from the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership. This report outlines current proposed allocations.

4.4 The report also proposes to re-purpose £3,200 of ward COVID19 funding to improve play equipment in the ward.

5 COVID19 Fund – Repurposing

5.1 Play Areas

Members are aware of the importance of play in the lives of children and their families. The impacts of COVID19 have been felt across all age ranges meaning investment in play provision provides opportunities for young people to be more active enhancing their physical and mental wellbeing.

5.2 Members previously agreed to use £10,000 of the Ward's PBIF monies for play area provision across the Ward. The Scottish Government capital funding allocated to the Ward is £7,926 however there is a play provision funding shortfall across the Ward of £3,200. Following discussions with Amenity Services at their January Ward Business Meeting, Members indicated they wished to meet that funding shortfall by repurposing funding £3,200 from their COVID19 budget for play park provision.

It is proposed to repurpose £3,200 from the Ward's COVID19 budget.

6. Proposed Placed Based Investment Funding Allocations

6.1 Accessibility Projects

Members previously agreed to Ringfence funding for Accessibility Projects which is a key priority of the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership. Work has been ongoing led by the Nairn Access panel to develop wheelchair access to the Links beach, all funding is now in place and work is underway to take forward feasibility and design works using an allocation from the Nairn Ward Discretionary Budget.

It is proposed to allocate £10,000 of the area Place Based Investment Fund to contribute towards the realisation of this project at the Links this funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

6.2 *Improving Health & Wellbeing Outcomes*

6.2.1 Nairnshire Ward Councillors have identified improving health and wellbeing outcomes and improving local infrastructure to stimulate economic growth as primary objectives in terms of the allocation of Place Based Investment Funding. Work has been ongoing with the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership (NNCP) to identify priority projects which will deliver on these key objectives under the auspices of the Community Planning Partnership. A letter of recommendation from the Community Planning Partnership Chair is attached to this report at **Appendix 1** and sets out the recommendations of the NCPP for the allocation of the Ward's Place Based Investment Fund. Where feasibility studies are proposed, this will be reported back to the NNCP.

6.2.2 Health & Wellbeing in Nairnshire Schools - Grants of £1,500 will be made available to the schools within the ward – Nairn Academy/ Auldearn/ Cawdor/ Millbank/ Rosebank 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 £9,000 for school health & well-being projects

6.2.3 Listening Benches, Nairn Links – Mikeysline have offered to install 2 special benches at the Links in a bid to tackle loneliness and isolation and reduce the harming effects that this can have on mental health for people of all ages. Listening Benches are becoming a nationally recognised way to address the harmful effects of loneliness and isolation and projects for the installation of these benches are progressing across the country. The Links Listening benches will offer people somewhere to sit down and chat with strangers. The project will link in with Team Hamish and bench design will be developed in collaboration with NCPP and Team Hamish.

It is proposed to allocate a contribution of £2,000 to The Listening Benches Nairn Links, this funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

6.2.4 Nairn Community Drop in Hub - The Hub is a place for the public to meet Community groups and voluntary organisations enabling easier access to a wide range of health, care and support services available locally in Nairn town centre at The Hub. Funding is proposed to help the third & Voluntary sectors engage and connect with the community to strengthen their work as part of the Hub reaching out to disadvantaged or excluded groups and enabling them to access The Hub.

It is proposed to allocate £1,000 to the Nairn Community Drop in Hub, this funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

6.3 *Town Centre Development*

6.3.1 Traffic Calming / Pedestrianisation - the Brae, High St Nairn – Nairn BID are leading on a project to look at potential redesign options for a project which could deliver on traffic calming and occasional pedestrianisation of The Brae, utilising lowering bollards, street furniture and signage to permit continued access and deliveries for the residents and businesses.

The project will reduce through traffic, achieving better safety for pedestrians and non-motorised road users whilst developing more flexible open space in the town centre in what is viewed locally as one of Nairn's hidden gems. The reduction of traffic at the Brae will also help to reduce pollution in that area and help safeguard these buildings for the future.

The project is intended to develop the Brae as the 'East gateway' into Nairn and create versatile useable public space which could be used as a means to attract visitors and residents to gather in the Town Centre also enabling businesses to "spill out onto the street" if they wanted to with members of the community being able to more comfortably safely linger in 'The Brae' resulting in more usable community & business space. At this stage funding is recommended for a feasibility and design study incorporating a traffic survey which will identify potential design options and engage /consult with existing users residents and retail outlets in and around 'The Brae'.

It is proposed to allocate £7,000 to Nairn BID for 'The Brae', feasibility, design & engagement, this funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

- 6.3.2 Gathering places / Market Spaces Nairn High Street – Nairn Bid are leading on a project for the design & installation of trees and seating areas at Castle Square and Court House Square. The project will help revitalise the town centre and develop an environment where residents and visitors will want to linger and spend time helping to stimulate the economic growth of the town centre by drawing people into a more usable, flexible and desirable space.

This project is linked in with the NNCP's Places and Spaces Sub Group and is also linked with other BID projects in the town centre such as the Castle Square Sails which has been awarded funding from 'Scotland Loves Local'.

It is proposed to allocate £7,000 towards this proposal, this funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

- 6.3.3 Nairnshire visitor & experience centre and Regeneration Hub – Old Social Work Office – Nairn Improvement Community Enterprise (NICE) are proposing a project at the former Social Work Office 60 & 62 King Street, Nairn. Their proposal is to redevelop the existing building into a multipurpose facility which will house a Nairnshire visitor & experience centre and Regeneration Hub as well as a new public toilet for the town centre.

NICE's vision is that this new Hub building would provide a focus and facilities to accommodate enterprise support, training activity, and recruitment events and other support services for local jobseekers, workers and employers, including new start-up businesses.

The Hub would liaise with and work collaboratively with the other providers of space and services in Nairn to ensure that its provision is complementary rather than displacive. These other functions include the Community & Arts Centre, Nairn Museum, WASPS artists' studios, the Library in the High Street, the Courthouse, and the new CAB premises.

Another added benefit of the proposal is that once the proposed Nairn by-pass has been completed, the Hub, with advance signposting, would become an important gateway into central Nairn and help its businesses to adapt to reduced passing trade

as a result of the bypass, also providing a more attractive environment on both sides of the current A96.

NICE have carried out an initial public consultation on this proposal using an online Survey monkey consultation which received 168 responses and NICE have updated that the responses received provided strong support for bringing the building into use in the manner described. Comments received in the consultation included:

“Solid looking historic building worth keeping”;

“There would be advantages in having the courtyard extended as a covered but enclosed area”;

“Weekly market using enlarged courtyard space”;

“We must find some way of attracting more visitors to Nairn”;

“The provision of a history trail or art trail around Nairn with an augmented reality app would be amazing and attract many people”;

“Floral display at front to attract attention”;

“Tour guides for sightseeing and environmental walks”;

“Nairnshire must prioritise its economic recovery by us all working together and using our combined skills and knowledge”.

This proposal seeks a contribution towards costs for an engineer’s survey report on the condition building which if positive would be followed by a feasibility study into the proposal above for a Nairnshire visitor & experience centre and Regeneration Hub.

It is also proposed that previous surveys carried out on condition of the building by the Council in 2016 will be shared to inform this work.

It is proposed to allocate £5,000 towards the work proposed by NICE to obtain an updated engineers survey report followed by a feasibility study into this proposal. This award would be subject to the Council’s normal grant conditions.

- 6.3.4 Nairn High Street Vennels – Nairn BID are proposing a project to refresh the High Street vennels in the Town Centre. The project will involve engaging and consulting with residential and business owners of the vennels and to discuss agree a scope of works to clean, strip and paint them as part of ongoing town centre improvement works. This piece of work will help develop the town centre into an environment which will encourage visitors and residents to use, visit and spend more time in and so contribute to stimulating economic growth by increasing footfall in the town centre.

It is proposed to allocate £7,000 towards this proposal, this funding award will be subject to the Council’s normal grant conditions.

- 6.3.5 Feasibility Study, former Farmers’ Showfield – Nairn Bowling Club are developing a project to build a new multi-faceted sport facility for the Nairn Community which will replace the existing Bowling club premises and relocate to the Farmers’ Showfield as part of a redevelopment on that site. The outcomes of their feasibility study into this project will help evaluate and support the proposed new build at their new site which will also free up their existing town centre location for alternative use. Nairn Bowling Club have strong support from both Bowls Scotland and Sports Scotland for the proposed multi-faceted facility and they have also consulted with the Nairn Community and Arts Centre to ensure that they can work together to provide complimentary offerings to the people of Nairn. The project provides an opportunity to develop a facility that will provide a sustainable use for the Farmers’ Showfield which provides an opportunity to all ages and abilities to be active in a number of sports.

It is proposed to allocate £3,000 towards this feasibility study proposal, this funding award will be subject to the Council's normal grant conditions.

- 6.3.6 NCGF Harbour Street Public Toilets & Motorhome Provision - The Nairn & Nairnshire Community Partnership (NNCP) propose to draw together the 2 local key priorities of the future use of the Harbour Street Public Toilets and the Delivery of Motorhome Infrastructure into a combined feasibility and design project. Given their close local proximity to one another, a combined project will provide benefits from shared resources.

The delivery of motorhome infrastructure has been identified as a key local priority to better manage the increasing number of motorhomes visiting Nairnshire and also improve local Infrastructure to stimulate economic growth. It is proposed that the combined feasibility study will identify suitable locations and delivery models for the provision of motorhome infrastructure on Nairn Common Good Land around the Harbour Street/Maggot/Links area, subject to required permissions and approvals in due course.

Members agreed previously that options should also be explored to identify a viable financial model for future operation of the Harbour Street Toilets, which are also situated on Common Good land. It is proposed that the combined feasibility study will examine potential operating models for the site including provision for a retail rental unit on part of the site with the income from that used to finance the revenue costs associated with the operation of a public toilet at Harbour Street.

Funding of £5,000 is already in place from the Ward Discretionary budget and Visitor Management Plan funding towards the motorhome infrastructure aspect of this work. Additional funding is sought for a combined feasibility and design study and associated project implementation costs.

It is proposed to allocate £18,000 towards this NNCP Places & Spaces project which will be delegated to the Ward Manager for Nairn to implement.

Designation: Interim Executive Chief Officer, Communities and Place

Date: 21 February 2022

Author: Lewis Hannah, Ward Manager

Appendix 1: Nairn Community Planning Partnership letter dated 10 February 2022

Date 10/02/2022

Our Ref: NNCP PBIF



Nairnshire Area Committee

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PLACE BASED INVESTMENT FUND (PBIF) – NAIRN AND NAIRNSHIRE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

Dear Members,

I am writing in my role as the Chair of the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership (NNCP) with regards to item 5 of the Committees meeting on 15 September 2021 and specifically the recommendations around the allocation of the following PBI funding;

Improving Health and Wellbeing Outcomes (£5k) and Town Centre Development (£40k).

I think it relevant to provide some context with regards the partnership, before I outline the recommendations. As many members will be aware we are currently in the process of implementing a revised partnership structure, establishing work streams and actively reinvigorating the membership. As this is a work in progress, our local place planning is not as mature as we aspire to and we recognise requires considerable work, to ensure it captures medium and long terms needs and aspirations of the community. As we work through this change process, we are committed to still ensuring shorter term outcomes continue to be delivered for the area.

A series of PBIF options, as outlined in appendix 1 was taken to the last meeting of the NNCP on 01 February 2022. The discussion at the meeting reflected our current status, and recognised that in our recommendations for the funding we do not currently have the wider, longer term, place planning vision to consider in its allocation. We were in agreement however that it was necessary for us to make the

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decision to ensure the funding was allocated and used for the community. The secondary aspect of the discussion raised a concern by some members as to the appropriateness of the NNCP making these recommendations when the beneficiaries were part of the partnership membership. There was comment that those who have a declared interest should not be part of the decision making.

As Chair I therefore offered the membership the option, that given the collapsing timescales we were facing, and no current mechanism for scoring in place, on this occasion, as a party without any direct involvement with those bidding, that I would make the required recommendations. I also committed to ensuring that for future such decisions a mechanism would be adopted, a matter which I have already taken steps in forming.

In considering the projects, unfortunately not all of the detail is available, for all of the projects, at this time, but is in development, and all those making bids are aware that prior to receiving the funds, certain criteria will need to be met.

I am making the recommendations as per column 5 of appendix 1 for your consideration. Each of these projects sit within one of the required priorities dictated by the funding, and also within the partnerships developing priorities.

I will continue to work with the Ward Manager and members of the partnership to ensure that where funds are allocated, benefits are delivered. Should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Jen Valentine, Chair
Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership

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Appendix 1

Placed Based Investment Funds – Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership

Project	Description	Lead Agency	Estimated Costs	Recommendation
Town Centre Development (£40k Available)				
Traffic Calming / Pedestrianisation - the Brae, High St Nairn	Feasibility study & design for traffic calming or pedestrianisation of The Brae utilising lowering bollards and street furniture to create versatile useable public space.	Nairn BID	Study £3k	Full cost of feasibility study £3000
Gathering places / Market Spaces Nairn High Street	Design & installation of trees with circular seated areas at Castle Square and Court House Square Possible link to BID aspirations for outdoor space use for markets	Nairnshire Partnership Places & Spaces Sub Group / BID	Variable dependant on options. Minimum for gathering place £5k Additional for market space	Contribution £7000
Former Nairn SW /Gaol Building	Preliminary Engineers survey report and feasibility study into NICE proposals for Nairn Regeneration Hub / Visitor Centre/Café	NICE	£15k Includes wider link building projects.	Contribution towards costs for engineering survey and feasibility study £12,000
Nairn High Street Vennels	Refresh the High Street Vennels to add to the appeal of the High Street as a place to visit and spend time. Consult with owners then Strip/Clean/Repaint Vennels.	Nairn BID	£5k	Contribution towards costs £5,000
Former Farmers Showfield	Feasibility study into the potential to relocate the Nairn Bowling club in	Nairn Bowling Club	No estimate available	Contribution towards costs £3,000

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	Albert Street into a multi-purpose facility at the former Showfield.			
NCGF Harbour Street Public Toilets	Feasibility Study into potential to redevelop the site creating a retail rental unit on one half of the building and unisex public toilet on the other. Operation of WC funded from rental income generated.	NCPP/ Highland Council / NICE	£10k	£10,000
Improving Health & Wellbeing Outcomes (£5k available)				
Mental Health & Wellbeing in Nairnshire Schools	Nairnshire Schools have been asked to explore whether this funding could be used to purchase specific resources or equipment that will help them to create or enhance a space which might be used as a mentally healthy wellbeing hub at school.	Education	£2k	£2000
Listening Bench Nairn Links	Mikeysline would like to install two special benches at the Links offering people somewhere to sit down and chat with strangers in a bid to tackle loneliness. Benches will have Mikeysline branding, & QR code. Design to be confirmed/ discussed with NCPP Exploring potential links with #Team Hamish	Mikeysline	£1k Full cost	£1000

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<p>Nairn Community Drop in Hub - 3rd Sector Engagement</p>	<p>The Hub is a place to meet Community groups and voluntary organisations enabling a wide range of services available within the community locally. Funding to help the 3rd & Voluntary sectors engage and connect with the community is sought.</p>	<p>NHS / 3rd & Voluntary Sector</p>	<p>£2k</p>	<p>£2000 Contribution</p>
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