

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	CC/29/25

The Highland Council

Committee: Caithness Committee

Date: 3 November 2025

Report Title: Allocation of Invitation to Pay Income in Caithness

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report advises Members of the Invitation to Pay (ITP) income in 24/25, the total ITP balance to date and outlines potential ways of allocating the funding, including deferring the allocation of funds to allow a strategic funding pot to build up.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:-

- i. **Note** the ITP income from 24/25 and the current balance of funds to date; and
- ii. **Defer** allocating ITP funding to allow the establishment of a strategic pot to be used for future projects.

3 Implications

3.1 **Resource** – Invitation to Pay income supports the operation and maintenance of car parking infrastructure and releases funds to Caithness Committee to allocate to area priorities.

3.2 **Legal** – No implications

3.3 **Risk** – No implications

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people)** – No implications

3.5 **Gaelic** – No implications

4 Impacts

4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary

4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken on 13 October 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that there are no impacts. Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3	Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
	Equality	No impact
	Socio-economic	No impact
	Human Rights	No impact
	Children's Rights and Wellbeing	No impact
	Island and Mainland Rural	No impact
	Climate Change	No impact
	Data Rights	No impact

5 Background

5.1 The Council approved a £1.5m Visitor Management Strategy at its meeting on 4 March 2021 in response to the increased numbers of tourists visiting the Highlands. The strategy recognised that there was a need to invest in infrastructure and council services to improve the visitor experience, and to address some of the issues arising from over-crowding in popular hotspots, including insufficient parking areas, bad/inconsiderate parking and consequential damage to roadside verges.

5.2 £250,000 from the Visitor Management Fund was allocated for improvements to parking management across Highland comprising installing charging at tourist dominated sites, improved signage, lining, minor repairs and increasing staff resources.

5.3 At a meeting of Caithness Committee on 3 November 2021 the Committee agreed to introduce Invitation to Pay at the following locations: Dunnet Head Car Park Dunnet Seadrift Car Park, Noss Head Car Park, Reiss Beach Car Park. Two locations in Wick (Camps and Riverside) were also agreed but are accounted for separately because they form part of Wick Common Good Fund.

- 5.4 As per Council policy, 50% of net income, after costs, are passed to the relevant Area Committee as earmarked funds from the previous financial year. The amount allocated for Caithness Committee (50% of net income, after costs) totals £29,376 as follows:-

Car park	Ward	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Dunnet Head Car Park	2	£5,039	£3,642	£4,315	£12,996
Dunnet Seadrift Car Park	2	£1,069	£1,903	£1,999	£4,971
Ward 2 Total		£6,108	£5,545	£6,314	£17,967
Noss Head Car Park	3	£3,730	£2,778	£4,658	£11,166
Reiss Beach Car Park	3	£167	£172	-£96	£243
Ward 3 Total		£3,897	£2,950	£4,562	£11,409
Total		£10,005	£8,495	£10,876	£29,376

6 Proposal

- 6.1 A range of options for the distribution of the funding is open to Committee including:-

6.2 **A fund for each of the Community Council areas where ITP car parks are located**

While it is recognised that the ITP income represents a welcome opportunity for communities to directly benefit from the additional income, the use of Council income is not, in general, limited to the specific location of the income generating asset. Additionally, such an approach would limit the number and scale of projects that could be supported, meaning that only very localised impacts would be likely.

6.3 **A fund for each Caithness ward**

This aligns with the Ward Discretionary Budget arrangements and would be proportionate given the amounts of funding that are available. If Members were so minded, they could prioritise projects from the communities where the income generating car parks are located, but this option also provides the opportunity for support for projects across the respective ward. However, like option one above, given the amount of funding available this approach would limit the number and scale of projects that could be supported, meaning that only localised impacts would be achieved.

6.4 **A Caithness fund**

A single Caithness fund would allow for the development of, and support for, Caithness-wide projects, however the funding available is not currently sufficient to support strategic, countywide projects.

6.5 **Allow funds to accumulate in a strategic Caithness fund**

A final option is to defer the allocation of funds to allow them to accumulate in a strategic Caithness fund. This would enable future investment in a strategic project or projects, such as those related to car parking and other tourism infrastructure, and which themselves may generate further income. This is the recommended option.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Place

Date: 13 October 2025

Author: Phil Tomalin, Senior Community Development Manager

Background Papers: None

Appendices: **Appendix 1** – Integrated Impact Assessment

Integrated Impact Assessment

There is no direct impact from the proposal to defer allocating funding to allow a strategic funding pot to build up. While potential applicants for funds (and potential beneficiaries of any funded projects) may be indirectly impacted by the ITP funding not being immediately available, other funding is available from Highland Council (Ward Discretionary Budget, CRF etc) and from other sources (e.g. windfarm community funds).