

REPORT TO GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE – 19 APRIL 2022

GARIOCH AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2022-23

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report asks the Committee to consider the budget allocation for the Garioch Area Committee Budget and identify the split it would like to allocate to the Strategic Budget, Area Initiatives Budget and the Small Grants Budget. It also presents projects identified at an informal session with the Committee for consideration from the Strategic Budget and a list of the projects funded in the 2021-22 financial year.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to agree :

1. that the 2022-23, £81,200 budget be allocated as follows:-
 - a. £6,200 towards a Small Grants Fund;
 - b. £25,000 towards an Area Initiatives Fund; and
 - c. £50,000 towards a Strategic Budget.
2. that the general Small Grants Fund be set at a maximum grant of £500 per application and will be managed in accordance with the criteria in Appendix 1;
3. that a further specific short term small grant fund criteria be set up related to the Tour of Britain;
3. that authority to approve grants up to £500 from the Small Grants Fund (including Tour of Britain element) be delegated to the Area Manager subject to an update of the awards being provided to Councillors on a quarterly basis;
4. that the Area Initiatives Fund:-
 - a. has a maximum grant of £5,000 except for festive lights, which remains at £1,750;
 - b. will fund up to 50% of the total project cost;
 - c. sets two dates for closure of applications (31st May and 31st October) with the opportunity for emergency applications to be brought outwith these dates if required; and
 - d. that the criteria be as detailed in Appendix 1.
5. relating to the Strategic Budget:-
 - a. that applications to this fund should meet the following requirements:-

1. **projects should advance or be aligned with the Council Priorities;**
 2. **projects should be of significant benefit to the local area**
 3. **projects should be identified through local community planning processes or demonstrate that relevant community consultation has taken place**
6. **that every opportunity should be taken to promote and advertise the funds available;**
 7. **note the allocations for all three budgets for the 2021-22 financial year as detailed in Appendix 3; and**
 8. **note the feedback received from some of the projects funded by Area Initiatives fund in 2021-22 as detailed in Appendix 4.**

2 Decision Making Route

- 2.1 At the start of each financial year, the Area Committee is asked to agree the criteria for that financial year in relation to the Area Committee Budget.

3 Discussion

- 3.1 The Area Committee Budget allocation for the 2022-23 financial year has been set as £81,200.

Strategic Budget

- 3.2 In recent years the Committee has agreed that a proportion of the budget be used in a strategic way, which would allow larger, more significant projects with wider-ranging community benefits to be funded in a planned, proactive way with a view to supporting or achieving the long term aims of the Council and Communities. For the financial year 2021-22, this approach was successfully undertaken, and grants were agreed from the Strategic Budget.
 - 3.2.1 The update on last year's grants is in **Appendix 3**. Due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and recent storms, some of the projects have been delayed. A request has been made to carry over funding to allow these projects to be delivered, this will require approval through Strategic Leadership Team. Updates on the delayed projects will be reported when the information is available. It is important that the Area Committee is able to monitor and scrutinise the use of the Strategic Budget and assess the benefits, outcomes and impact on the communities of Garioch.
 - 3.2.2 The ideas and proposals for this year's Strategic Budget are included in **Appendix 2** along with feedback from Officers and proposals for projects which could be progressed in the current financial year.
 - 3.2.3 Applications to this fund would need to meet the following criteria:-

1. projects should advance or be aligned with the Council Priorities;
2. projects should be of significant benefit to the local area;
3. projects should be identified through local community planning processes or demonstrate that relevant community consultation has taken place; and
4. not be used to provide budget to fund council service delivery that was removed by a Full Council or a Policy Committee decision or when a service does not have enough budget availability to provide the same level of previous service delivery

Area Initiatives Fund

- 3.3 It is proposed that the Area Initiatives Fund operate under the criteria in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3.1 It is a usual requirement of the Area Committee Budget that projects that are awarded funding need to be completed and the invoices provided before the end of the financial year. In order to seek applications at an early stage and to allow better promotion and marketing of the fund it is proposed that two dates be identified for closure of applications. These closing dates are 31 May and 31 October. If an application should be received of an urgent nature outwith these timescales, these can still be reported to Committee for consideration.
- 3.3.2 The introduction of a closing date over the past couple of years has allowed the opportunity to generate interest and market the fund effectively. This is being done through Councillors, Community Councils, community newsletters, Community Planning website and Facebook page, the Council social media applications and the local press.
- 3.3.3 Once the budget and criteria have been agreed, applications will be reported to Committee following the closing dates for applications.

Small Grants Fund

- 3.4 In the absence of The Garioch Partnership, financial year 2021/22 was the first year the Small Grants Fund was managed by the Garioch Area Office. The Area Manager had delegated authority to make awards subject to consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair. In order to streamline the process it is proposed that, this year, the delegation sit entirely with the Area Manager to make awards up to £500, but that an update on any awards made be provided to all Councillors on a quarterly basis.
- 3.4.1 Within the Small Grants Fund, it is proposed that a specific time limited element be identified for events related to the Tour of Britain. This element will be managed in the same way as the Small Grants Fund, but with an opportunity for larger grants for individual events. Should there be a request for funds greater than £500 it is proposed that this be approved following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair. It is proposed that an initial amount of £6,200 be allocated for the Small Grants Budget but should further funds be required, a report will be brought to Committee.

- 3.4.2 Proposals have been made for the allocation of funding to all three funding strands, however, the Committee can move money between funds if the need arises.
- 3.5 A request for feedback on the projects funded by Area Initiative Funding was sought from the groups concerned. Responses received to date have been attached as **Appendix 4**. Feedback can also be sought for other awards if the Committee requires it.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 4.1 This report helps to deliver –

Council Pillar - Our People and Priorities - Education, and Health & Wellbeing
Council Pillar - Our Environment and Priorities Infrastructure, and Resilient Communities

- 4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial	X		
Staffing			X
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			X
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			X
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing			X
Town Centre First			X

- 4.3 There are no particular staffing implications arising from this report. The management of this budget will be undertaken within existing area management resources. The proposals outlined in this report are in line with the allocation of financial resources as contained in the 2022/23 Revenue Budget for Area Managers.
- 4.4 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken.

This report is looking to agree the allocation of the Area Committee Budget to specific funds and for the Committee to consider how they wish to allocate its Strategic Budget.

- 4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level: ACORP001 Budget Pressures; ACORP005 Working with other organisations. ([Corporate Risk Register](#)).

No risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Registers](#)).

5. Scheme of Governance

- 5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 5.2 The Committee is able to consider and approve this item in terms of Section B 1.1 and B.6.3 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it may determine any matter that is specific to their Area not otherwise properly delegated to any other Committee and it authorises expenditure from the Area Committee Budget.

Laurence Findlay

Director of Education and Children's Services

Report prepared by: Alison Cumming, Area Committee Officer

Date : 29 March 2022

List of Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Criteria for Area Initiatives Fund and Small Grants Fund
- Appendix 2 – Proposed Projects for Strategic budget 2022/23
- Appendix 3 - Update on awards made for 2021/22
- Appendix 4 - Feedback on Area Initiatives Projects 2021-22

APPENDIX 1

The Garioch Area Initiative Fund and the Small Grant Fund can be used to support the following Themes:

Themes
1. Improving the appearance and maintenance of towns and villages
2. Stronger and Empowered Communities
3. Healthier Communities
4. Connected Communities

Themes 2-4 are aligned to Community Planning themes and are designed to allow applicants to take an outcome-focused approach when planning projects and local interventions. Applicants should seek to achieve the following local outcomes as linked to one or more of these themes:

Improving the Appearance and Maintenance of Towns and Villages within Garioch:

- Improve the attractiveness of Garioch as a place to live, invest, work and visit.
- Improve residents' aspirations, confidence, decision-making capacity and involvement in community life.
- Improve the physical environment and infrastructure of Garioch.

Stronger and Empowered Communities: support and empower the people of Garioch to develop and deliver a vision for their local area, by delivering Place Based Community Plans, to ensure their communities are well informed, involved in decision-making and take a responsibility in delivery of local actions and priorities, to help form stronger and resilient communities through the contribution of volunteers and to enable communities feel empowered and enabled.

Healthier Communities: support and empower the people of Garioch to reduce inequalities in health outcomes between communities, to protect and support public health, community mental health and physical wellbeing and build community resilience as we adapt to live with COVID-19, to ensure greater community partnership working, increasing the ability of individuals and groups to influence matters affecting them and their communities and to increase participation in quality wellbeing activity.

Connected Communities: support and empower the people of Garioch to reduce loneliness and social isolation, to provide active travel routes that are easy and safe to access, to improve transport provision to healthcare and wellbeing activities, to challenge inequality, social exclusion, rural isolation, and vulnerability and provide greater opportunity to connect digitally to reduce commuting, access services and encourage commercial and social enterprise.

General Projects

Funding for general projects meeting the above criteria, must also meet the following eligibility criteria:-

- Amount must not exceed 50% of the total project cost

- Maximum grant of £5,000 available
- Grants must be claimed in the financial year in which they are awarded
- The balance of the funding must be in place

Funding of Festive Lights within Garioch

Funding applications for Festive Lights require to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Applications will be considered for new lights and upgrades of existing lights to LED. Repair, maintenance, installation and storage costs will not be supported.
- Applicants can source 50% of the total cost of the purchase of new lights from this fund to a maximum of £1,750.
- Funding from Garioch Area Committee Budget and/or local Common Good Funds can only be accessed once in any 3-year period.
- Support will only be given for displays, which use energy efficient technology and focus on town centres or the main village thoroughfares and have followed the required Festive Lights procedure.

Small Grants Fund

- Maximum grant of £500
- No prescribed percentage of project cost
- Applications can be considered on receipt

All awards are subject to Aberdeenshire Council's Following the Public Pound procedure.

Small Grants Fund – Tour of Britain (4 September 2022)

This is a time limited fund specifically related to the tour of Britain.

- Maximum grant of £500, although larger grants will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Open for applications until 19 August 2022
- No prescribed percentage of project cost
- Applications can be considered on receipt

Potential Strategic Budget Projects for consideration

	Project	Response	Outcome
1	Reducing overheads of Community Halls - funding for energy efficiency measures	This project was well received in 2021-22 financial year and provided an opportunity for Community Halls to reduce their overheads on an ongoing basis. It is proposed that it be progressed again in the 2022-23 financial year with the expanded criteria and a fund.	Proposal to allocate a further £20,000 towards energy efficiency measures in Garioch community and village halls. Members can determine whether to increase this allocation.
2	Next Phase of Uryside Riverside Park	This project was carried over from previous discussions. Potential projects for playpark and entrance. Cost £90,000 approx. Entrance would take 6-8 weeks.	Feedback received is that the group is not in a position to progress this project at this time as it has not secured other funding. Proposed to carry over to future years. The Group is supported by the Area Project Officer.
3	Kintore Town House Project	The Group is currently developing its business plan and will be seeking funding sources for works in the future. No appropriate project stage at this time.	Potential for Community Group to intimate need for funding in future – keep on list for next financial year. This group is supported by the Area Project Officer.
4	Green cycle routes signage/minor improvements	Officers have indicated that there are three possible projects that are relevant to the title provided. 1. A treasure trail for cyclists. This would be based on the format we already have for the in-town treasure trails but if we separate the points of interest on the trail to wider Inverurie area and use QR codes for participants to scan	Three projects to consider

Potential Strategic Budget Projects for consideration

	Project	Response	Outcome
		<p>when they reach the point for clues, we could pick points where cyclists would need to use the existing and the planned infrastructure. Cost could be around £5,000 for a trail, marking, mapping etc.</p> <p>2. An E-bike hire scheme to mirror the Kintore Station scheme – The combination of the two Schemes would be a good addition to support active travel. For information the Kintore scheme has cost circa £15,000.</p> <p>3. The Council could run a one-off event in a park in Garioch. This would be an event with bike stunt riders, E-Bike try outs, other active travel and cycling activities and bikes sales and repairs (which are popular). More investigation would be needed with Live Life Aberdeenshire and information would need to be ascertained on cost/benefit analysis and positive outcomes in terms of delivery of council and community priorities. Similar events cost about £15,000.</p>	
5	To support tree planting on available land – to replace some of the trees lost during the recent storms and tie in with the Jubilee celebrations	An MPI (Cllr Ford) was the subject of a report at the meeting of Infrastructure Services Committee on 10 March 2022 (item 8). The MPI asked how the Council could support increasing tree cover in Aberdeenshire. The report is very detailed and includes the consideration of a Council Grant scheme, use of roads and verges and current work that is ongoing to combat the damage caused by Storms Arwen, Malik and Corrie, and how the Council is delivering national and council targets and policies. A further report is being provided to a future meeting of Infrastructure Services Committee. Officers would need to consider what the recommendations will be to the policy committee in terms of strategic direction and	Requires further consideration once Infrastructure Services Committee has received a further report. There are still opportunities for local groups to apply for funding from the Area Initiative Fund.

Potential Strategic Budget Projects for consideration

	Project	Response	Outcome
		therefore for this financial year, suggest that local groups, whether considering buying woodland or trees to plant apply to the Area Initiative Fund or the Small Grants fund. The Area Office will also offer support to groups considering a larger project.	
6.	Litter prevention in Inverurie.	Update from Officers will be provided verbally at the meeting.	Possible link to ongoing projects. Noting that if a local group wished to progress a bespoke project for a settlement, then then Area Initiative Fund would be appropriate.
7.	Davah Woods path	This one has had some work done to determine land ownership and we have agreement in principle to proceed so comfortable for design work to progress. A relatively straight forward path to connect Corsemahill Drive to Davah Wood although there is a steep hill between so probably needs a lot weaving back and forth! A topographical study is being done. WSP (a company) is developing the design and producing sections etc. and are due to come back in March 22. Looking to use innovative methods of constructing the path and retaining wall such as tyres etc. Design to be completed by May/June 2022. Possibly looking at start on site Sept/Oct 2022.	Being progressed within existing budgets. Remove from consideration
8.	Town Centre Place Plans (Masterplanning)	This will be taken forward in another way and is being considered by the Area Manager, Head of Planning and Environment, Head of Property and Head of Transportation. The Strategic Budget would not have sufficient budget to be effective in progressing this project.	Remove from consideration

Potential Strategic Budget Projects for consideration

	Project	Response	Outcome
9.	Development of online booking system for community accessible rooms in Garioch	There is currently a booking system that is shared between Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) and Education which requires an application to be made to either LLA, or Education. This is then checked before the booking can be confirmed. This is required to ensure that there is the required janitorial cover for access to the room and that it will not be required for core use. Officers accept that a more accessible and streamlined system would be preferable and will be looking at this in the 2023/24 financial year following the mandatory pricing review work which will be taking place in the 2022/23 financial year.	Remove from consideration
10.	Transport Interchange in Inverurie	This would be done as a multi-agency approach as part of any town centre planning.	Remove from consideration
11.	Missing pavement at Oldmeldrum Road	This project would require a significant amount of funding and would not be able to be progressed through the Strategic Budget. The Service is aware.	Remove from consideration
12.	Tour of Britain activity fund	There is an opportunity to create a one-off fund to encourage communities involved in the route to become involved in the Tour of Britain event in September 2022. As there will be limited opportunities for the Committee to take decisions on the awards of these grants over the period that activities will be taking place, it is proposed that this be done as part of the Small Grants Fund which would have authority to grant delegated to the Area Manager up to £500. However, we are aware of the potential for larger scale events being planned and there will be a need to allow for larger grants to be awarded. It is proposed that any applications seeking more than £500 be delegated to the Area Manager following	This has been included as part of the small grants fund, but there may be a need for further funds to be transferred depending on the interest in holding community and school events.

Potential Strategic Budget Projects for consideration

	Project	Response	Outcome
		consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair. Further funds may be required and can be transferred from other funds by Committee as appropriate.	
13.	Community Action Plans	There are 3 Community Action Plans and 1 neighbourhood action plan that have been agreed to be progressed. The Community Councils and groups are being supported by our external provider and Community Planning Officer. The work needs to continue and a further amount of £5,000 will be required to progress this further over the coming year. £10,000 was invested last year and a further investment will ensure that all communities can be supported to put in place CAPS.	Proposed to award £5,000

AREA INITIATIVES FUND 2021/2022

APPLICANT	PURPOSE	REQUESTED	Committee on	AGREED
Home-Start Garioch	Volunteer prep course and travel expenses (Feedback provided in Appendix 4)	£5,000.00	22/06/2021	£2,053.13
Westhill & District Men's Shed	Replacing roof (Feedback provided in Appendix 4)	£2,000.00	22/06/2021	£2,000.00
Kemnay Community Council	Christmas lights	£ 558.60	22/06/2021	£ 558.60
Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust	Boats for Sailing Club at Loch of Skene (Feedback provided in Appendix 4)	£3,879.15	22/06/2021	£3,879.15
Garioch Rugby Football Club SCIO	Architect fees and Quantity Surveyor for new facility	£5,000.00	22/06/2021	£5,000.00
Newmachar Community Council	Replacing Christmas lights	£1,750.00	22/06/2021	£1,750.00
Westhill & Elrick Community Council	Improvement works to 50-metre section of the Westhill Orbital Trail (feedback in Appendix 4)	£2,046.00	22/06/2021	£2,046.00
LATNEM (Lets All Talk North East Mums)	Various training, packs and wellbeing boxes to support parents	£4,858.97	22/06/2021	£2,053.12
Fetternear Estate (Working with Kemnay CC)	Repairs to access road and new car park (Feedback provided in Appendix 4)	£1,300.00	22/06/2021	£1,560.00
Inverurie Rotary	Buddy Benches	£ 500.00	Chair & VC Approval, Special Powers	£ 500.00
Garioch Sports Trust	Garden Early Years	£4,400.00	Chair & VC Approval, Special Powers	£4,400.00
Total (£25,800)				£25,800.00

SMALL GRANTS FUND 2021/22

APPLICANT	PURPOSE	APPROVED
Inverurie Rotary Club	For a litter picking initiative	£250.00
Fintray Community Council	Litter picking equipment	£500.00
Cluny, Midmar & Monymusk CC	Repairs to Comers footbridge	£500.00
Logie Durno Hall Committee	Plants for Community project to encourage biodiversity	£500.00
Millbank Hall Community Association	Purchase of a defibrillator at hall	£500.00
Inverurie Rotary Club	Litter picking equipment	£250.00

Port Elphinstone Community House (PECH)	New Freezer (this amount has not been claimed within the required period)	£139.99
Echt & Skene Community Council	Litter picking equipment	£200.00
Uryside Riverside Park	Trees	£321.18
BID	Draughts Championship	£500.00
Inverurie C.C. – Evolving Inverurie SCIO	Promoting & Marketing	£500.00
Inverurie Rotary Club	Buddy Benches (Chair & VC Approval, Special Powers)	£933.00
Total (£5,095 (£95 transferred from Strategic Budget))		£5094.17

STRATEGIC FUND 2021/22

APPLICANT	PURPOSE	AGREED	Paid	Other Info
Garioch Area Manager and Principal Energy Management Engineer	Allocation for energy efficiency measures in community halls	£20,000.00	£19,889.00	£95 underspend transferred to SG
Garioch Area Manager	Community Action Plans	£10,000.00	£430	Request to carry over £9,570 To be approved by SLT
Environmental Planner	Arnhall Moss Nature Reserve Path	£20,000.00	none	Request to carry over £20,000 to be approved by SLT

Area Initiatives Feedback 2021

Organisation:	Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust
Project:	Sailing for children at Loch of Skene
Total Project Amount:	£7758.30
Amount requested:	£3879.15
Other funding:	Our reserves and £750 from the Arnold Clark Fund
Details and Outcomes:	
<p>We got our boats at the end of last season so they will first be sailed next week at Easter at Loch of Skene. So far this season we are expecting them to be sailed by children on Easter courses, an after school sailing group, some primary schools, and by a disability group.</p> <p>Outcomes we normally see when children go sailing are an increase in confidence, an increase in problem solving abilities, better teamworking, an increase in determination & finally an increase in creativity.</p>	
Community Support:	
We had free over winter storage from a supporter of Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust.	
Maintenance Arrangements:	
We will maintain these boats using our income so that they have a long and successful life.	

Organisation:	Home-Start Garioch
Project:	Volunteer expenses
Total Project Amount:	£7,644.00
Amount requested:	£2,053.13
Other funding:	£5,590.87
Details and Outcomes:	
<p>We have supported 107 families, 404 people</p> <p>83% of families reported improved mental health within their first review 96% of mums said they felt less isolated. (this can also be attributed to coming out of lockdown)</p> <p>100% of mums were contacted and an initial visit arranged within 2 days of receiving a referral. 100% of families were offered an initial visit within 1 week of receiving a referral. 100% of families identified with their co-ordinator the best support to them. 100% of families were offered a review at 3 months to evaluate the support.</p>	

Area Initiatives Feedback 2021

Community Support:	
Families have continued to review the support throughout and the service has adapted and evolved to meet the needs of the families using it. The walking groups established during the lockdown have ceased and we have returned fully to home visiting support as this is what the families needed. Groups have reopened so there was no requirement from us to provide social activities although volunteers have provided practical and or emotional support to attend them.	
Maintenance Arrangements:	
As the COVID guidelines have changed, so have we adapted and updated our procedures for working one to one with families. This will continue until all COVID restrictions have been lifted.	

Organisation:	Fetternear Estate visa the Kemnay Community Council
Project:	Repair to surface and drainage to a path on the Fetternear Estate
Total Project Amount:	£3,120
Amount requested:	£1,560
Other funding:	£1,560
Details and Outcomes:	
The work was carried out during December 2021.	
Community Support:	
The path is one of the Aberdeenshire Council Core paths and is used extensively by walkers and ramblers.	
Maintenance Arrangements:	
Fallen trees and branches and any work to keep a clear access is carried out on occurrence	

Organisation:	Westhill & District Men's Shed
Project:	Re-roofing
Total Project Amount:	£36,000
Amount requested:	£2,000
Other funding:	Nat Lottery £10,000, Robertson £5,500, our reserves £20,000
Details and Outcomes:	

Area Initiatives Feedback 2021

Project successfully completed summer 2021. Building dry with improved heat insulation.
Community Support:
Shed opened back to regular hours with attendance growing back to pre-Covid days. We are planning activities to attract new members. First goal - 100 attendees per week
Maintenance Arrangements:
The members have the skills and experience to maintain the Shed.

Organisation:	Westhill & Elrick CC
Project	Drainage & Path Improvements at Lawsondale
Total Project Amount	£4,092
Amount requested	£2,046
Other funding	£2,046 self funded
Outcomes	
Funding allowed the Westhill Orbital Trail project team to engage a specialist contractor to cut drainage channels, install drainage culverts and reinforce an extremely wet section of the Trail at Lawsondale Woods. This work means that this section is effectively all-weather and much more usable, where previously it was uninviting after periods of prolonged rainfall.	
Community Support	
Feedback has been very positive, especially from regular users and dog-walkers	
Maintenance Arrangements	
This new section in itself requires very little maintenance, but the contractor left a few tons of unused path/quarry aggregate at a nearby location. With the assistance of the "Orbital Trail Volunteers" WhatsApp group we were recently able to reinforce some of the wetter sections of the path through the woods from this excess supply.	