

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

2 June 2021

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND 2021/22

Report by Head of Culture & Community Services (Report No. 21/83)

This report summarises the impact to date of the Community Investment Fund; the arrangements for managing rollover funding from 2020/21 and recommends revised funding criteria and governance arrangements for 2021/22.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2018/19 the Council established a Community Investment Fund (CIF) as part of its commitment to devolve more decisions to local communities. Since then, with £50,000 allocated to each Council ward in each CIF funding round, £1.2m has been distributed in total to over 200 community projects.
- 1.2 [Report 18/196](#) approved June 2018 set out the governance for awarding CIF grants. This was a three-stage process: initial assessment by Ward Panels comprising ward Councillors and community representatives; sign-off of grant recommendations by the Local Action Partnership Chair; and final approval by SP&R Committee. [Report 19/109](#) confirmed this process should remain in place for 2019/20. Whilst SP&R has maintained a clear overview of CIF decisions across Perth and Kinross, the process has drawbacks:
 - a long waiting time for applicants, often for small projects which the community wants to make happen quickly on the ground
 - in some wards it has been difficult to recruit enough Ward Panel members to make the assessment process fully transparent
 - administration is time-consuming and labour intensive for a small Council team.
- 1.3 [Report 19/342](#) approved recommendations for the first tranche of 2019/20 funding and due to COVID, the second tranche of grants were approved under emergency powers in April 2020. 127 projects were awarded funding in 2019/20, 100 of which were significantly delayed or had to change their approach because of COVID. Where appropriate 2019/20 CIF grants have been rolled over to 2021/22. Any requests to change CIF funded projects have been approved by the Chairperson of the relevant Ward Panel.
- 1.4 As a result of COVID and lockdown restrictions, there was no CIF process in 2020/21 and the £300,000 budget has been carried over into 2021/22. The Council approved a further £300,000 for CIF in 2021/22, meaning a total of

£600,000 will be distributed this year. A further £300,000 has also been approved for 2022/23.

2. IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

2.1 The CIF was set up to support community-led projects to help tackle inequalities and improve quality of life for local people. Eligibility criteria were deliberately broad to encourage as many applications as possible, based on the most common priorities identified by Local Action Partnerships in their Local Action Plans¹:

- social isolation and loneliness
- connectivity (digital and transport)
- services for children and young people
- community capacity and empowerment
- quality of life
- low income / access to employment

2.2 Analysis of CIF since 2018/19 has been completed. The infographics below show the geographical distribution of CIF grants by Community Council area; the distribution across different types of applicant; and the key themes which CIF projects impacted on.

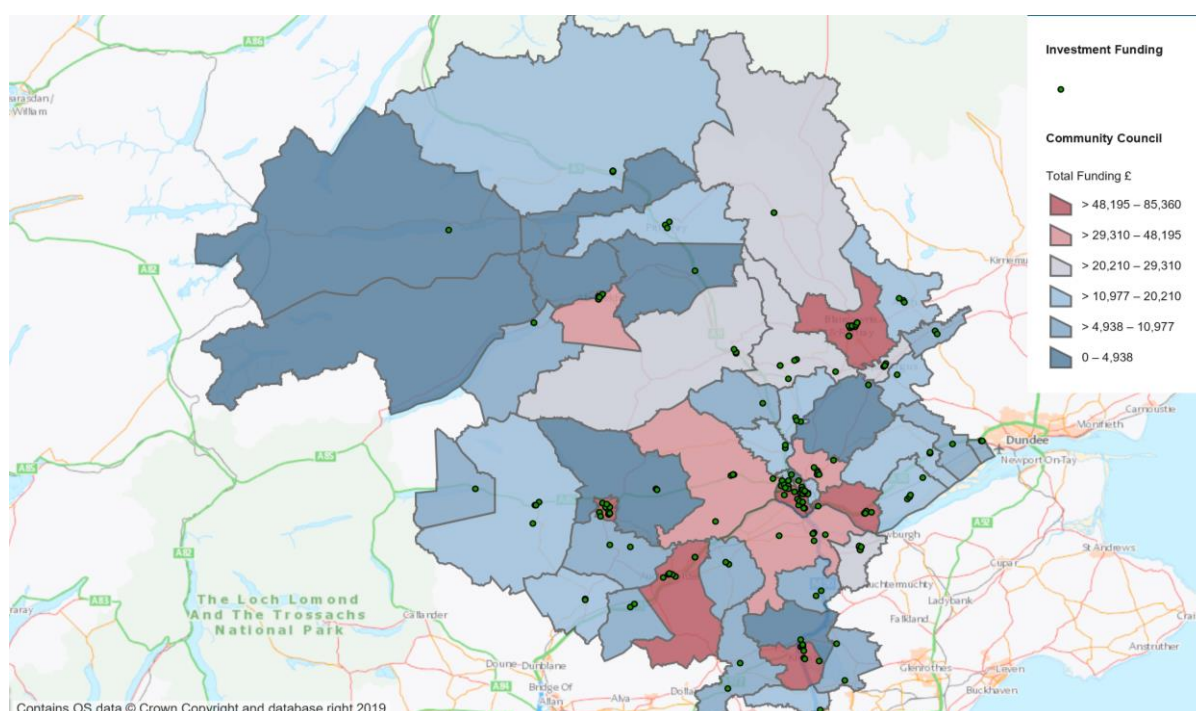


Figure 1 – Geographic distribution of funds across Community Council areas

¹ Local Action Plans are a local version of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). Both are statutory plans overseen by the Community Planning Partnership in fulfilling its duty under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act to improve outcomes, particularly for those experiencing socio-economic inequality.

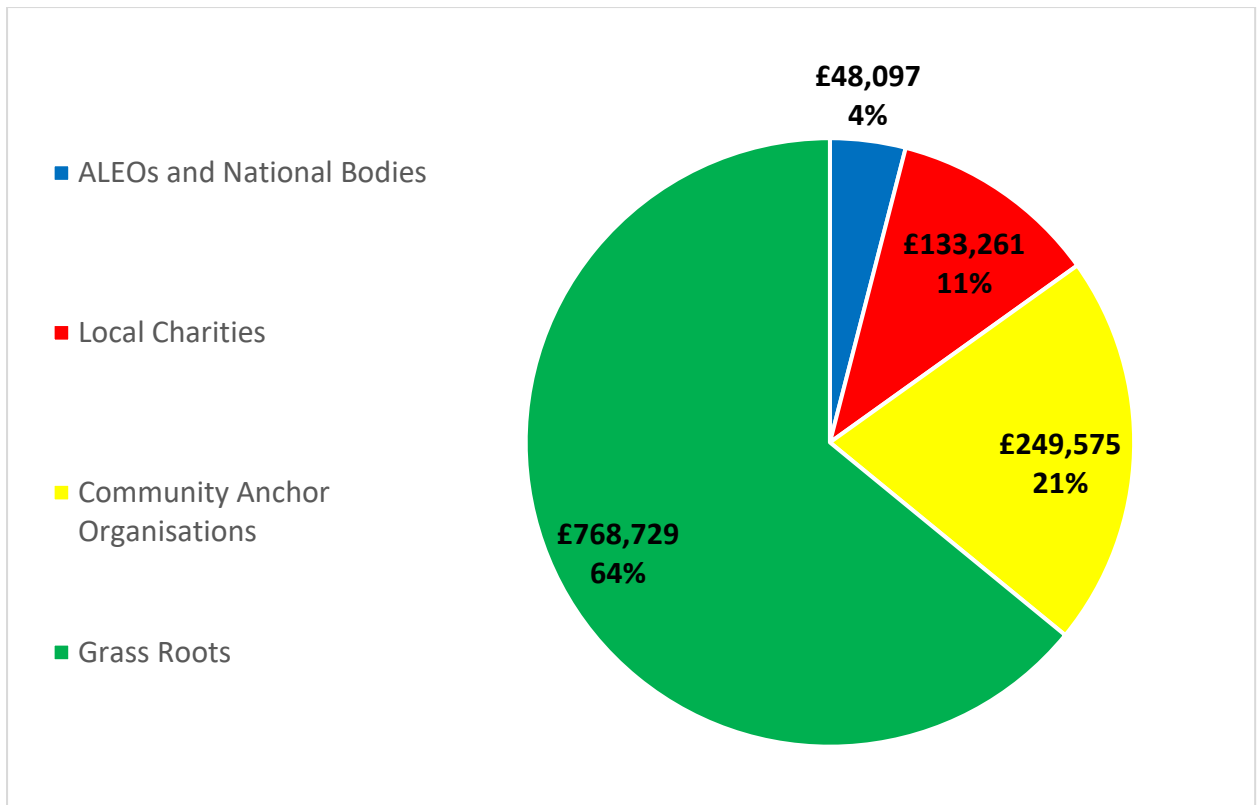


Figure 2 – Distribution across sectors

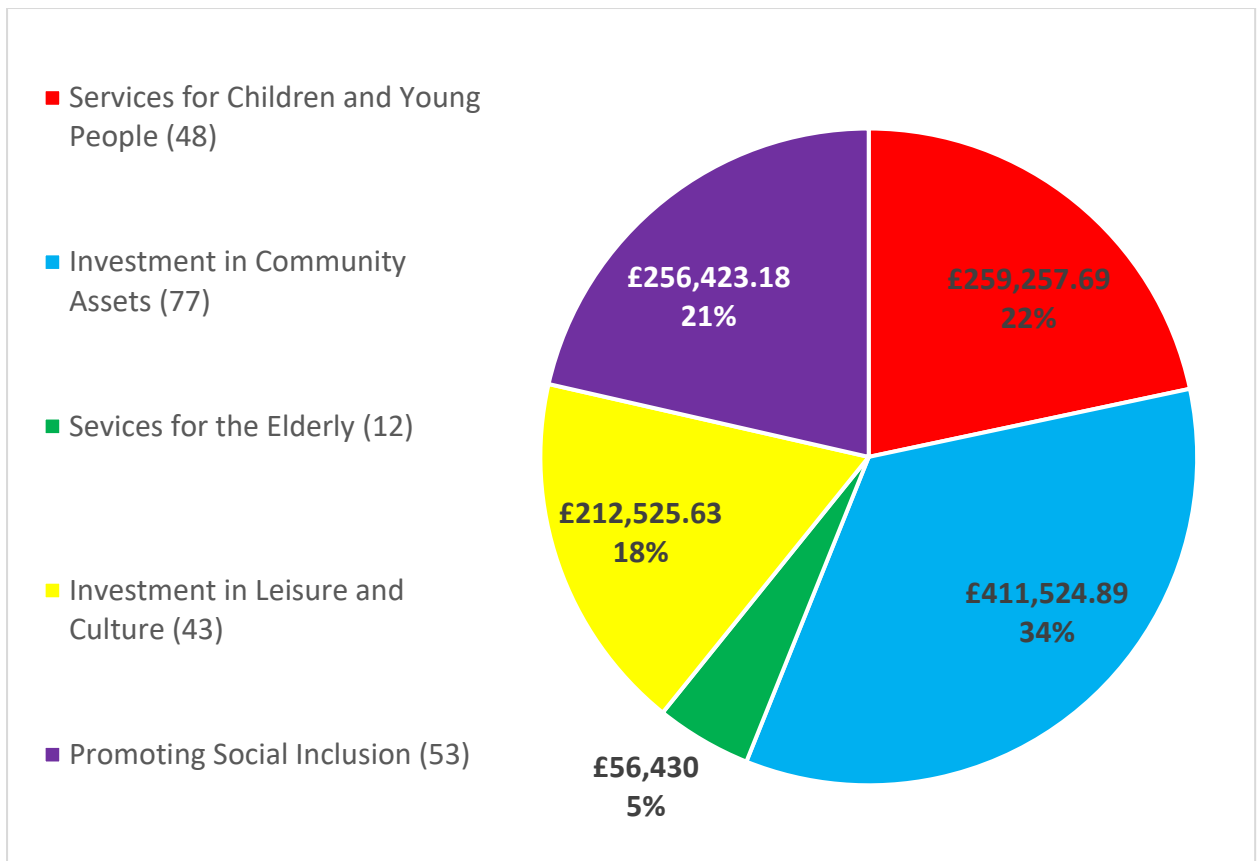


Figure 3 – Investment against key equality themes

- 2.3 Monitoring reports on completed CIF projects tell us that around **16%** of the Perth and Kinross population (24,386 people) have benefited from a CIF funded project. An estimated 1,678 volunteers have supported project delivery.
- 2.4 The majority of CIF funding has gone to smaller grassroots organisations, closest to the issues which affect, positively or negatively, people's lives. This is a positive impact of CIF overall.
- 2.5 4% (£48,097) of funding was approved for projects delivered by ALEOs or national charities already in receipt of major funds from the Council or elsewhere. This does not mean that these CIF grants were inappropriate; they enabled existing activities to be expanded or enhanced. However, to ensure CIF is directed at grassroots good causes in future, it is recommended that ALEOs or national charities' involvement be limited to the role of a project partner for any future CIF grants.
- 2.6 In the three Perth City wards, it has occasionally been difficult to assess projects at ward level, because project benefits are often trans-boundary. For this reason, and in response to feedback from ward Councillors and other panel members, combining the Perth City CIF into a single pot is recommended.
- 2.7 It is difficult to quantify the impact that CIF has made on inequalities across Perth and Kinross. This is because CIF projects are generally small scale and all are time limited.
- 2.8 This does not mean CIF projects have no meaningful impact. In particular, over a third of CIF funds went to improving local amenities such as community halls, playgrounds and greenspaces. As the analysis shows, other projects enabled existing initiatives to expand their activities, for example in supporting young people and socially isolated older people. Given the size of most CIF awards, it is important to be realistic about long-term impact. What it has done is enable many small-scale improvements and initiatives which matter to local people to happen faster. This has included: improvements to community facilities; investment in care projects for vulnerable people; purchasing equipment for sports clubs; and supporting new groups and initiatives to get started. The impact of each CIF project has varied depending on its nature and scale, but all have made a positive difference to their local community.
- 2.9 Considering the further inequalities which COVID has brought to the fore and the smaller size of the CIF scheme for 2021/22 onwards, this is considered to be the right time to review the funding criteria to ensure CIF is targeted effectively.

3. PROPOSALS

CIF Funding Distribution

- 3.1 Previously rounds of CIF were distributed equally across all Council wards and average CIF spend per head varied quite significantly, due to different population sizes in each ward. The range is **£3.22** average spend per person

(Strathmore and Perth City) up to **£5.35** per person (Highland and Almond & Earn). This is an approximate measure because not all CIF projects are necessarily targeted at the population as a whole.

- 3.2 Alternative distribution options are complex. One approach is to consider inequalities data from the Scottish Multiple Index of Deprivation (SIMD) or other sources. However there are many different factors driving inequality in different wards, and costs of project delivery in rural areas with lower population density are always higher. For a grant scheme of this size, this is not recommended. Another option would be to allocate funding based on population size, however a straight population division would not fully reflect the variety of community structures and rurality in Perth and Kinross, which has implications for community-led activity.
- 3.3 The table below sets out a proposal which provides a straight split across the 12 multi-member wards for half of the funding (£300k), with the remaining £300k allocated on a per head basis. This reduces the significant variation in potential spend per head which currently exists, and thereby provides a more equitable settlement. This proposal reduces the variation in per capita funding to between **£3.58** and **£4.66**.

Ward	Base Fund	Population	Per Capita Top Up	Total 2021/22	Funding per head
1 – Carse of Gowrie	£25,000	10,079	£20,000	£45,000	£4.46
2 – Strathmore	£25,000	15,518	£30,500	£56,000	£3.61
3 – Blairgowrie & Glens	£25,000	11,009	£22,000	£47,000	£4.27
4 – Highland	£25,000	9,344	£18,500	£43,500	£4.66
5 – Strathtay	£25,000	12,583	£25,000	£50,000	£3.97
6 – Strathearn	£25,000	11,053	£22,000	£47,000	£4.25
7 – Strathallan	£25,000	11,671	£23,000	£48,000	£4.11
8 – Kinross-shire	£25,000	14,045	£28,000	£53,000	£3.77
9 – Almond & Earn	£25,000	9,345	£18,500	£43,500	£4.66
10 – Perth City South	£75,000	46,643	£92,000	£167,000	£3.58
11 – Perth City North					
12 – Perth City Centre					
TOTAL	£300,000	151,290	£300,000	£600,000	Ave £3.97

CIF Assessment Criteria

- 3.4 There are two options for revising CIF criteria which can be applied effectively and transparently across all wards. These are as follows:
1. Continue to use Local Action Plan priorities (status quo option)
 2. Use a combination of the themes of the Perth and Kinross Offer and the emerging Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities

Option 1: Local Action Plan priorities (status quo)

- 3.5 Continuing to use Local Action Plan priorities provides continuity as Ward Panels are familiar with them. Potentially, this option provides more flexibility as local needs and priorities change and allows the context of each locality to reflect the criteria which are used to assess applications. However, some Local Action Partnerships have struggled to update their Local Action Plans given the restrictions from the COVID pandemic and the suspension of meetings, so there is a risk they may not reflect current or emerging priorities within wards.

Option 2: Combination of Perth & Kinross Offer and Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

- 3.6 The Perth and Kinross Offer seeks to change the relationship between local public services and communities from one of provider and consumer to one where services are designed and delivered in partnership with communities. The Offer is focussed on four key themes:
1. Education
 2. Economy
 3. Environment
 4. Equalities, Empowerment and Fairness
- 3.7 The Offer continues to take shape in dialogue with Council services and communities. It would be possible to use the Offer as the overarching themes which CIF applications must contribute towards. This will allow projects to specifically identify how they are contributing, thereby reflecting the cooperative spirit of the Offer. The themes are very broad and would encourage a variety of different projects to come forward, thereby allowing the CIF to consider supporting projects which impact positively on a broad range of issues.
- 3.8 In October 2020, the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board approved five new strategic priorities for a revised Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP).
- poverty (including child poverty, fuel poverty and food poverty)
 - mental and physical wellbeing
 - skills, learning and development
 - employability
 - digital participation
- 3.9 Given that the LOIP priorities clearly align with the themes of the Perth and Kinross Offer, it would be beneficial to use both to help shape CIF for 2021/22. This combination would allow for a larger variety of applications, which reflect the themes of the Offer and the focus on inequalities outlined in the LOIP.
- 3.10 In practical terms, this would require a two stage approach. Applicants would firstly be asked to consider which of the broad Offer themes their project is aligned to, before then being asked to outline in more detail which of the LOIP priorities their project will impact on. This will offer a robust approach to the

assessment of applications and encourage a variety of applications to come forward.

Recommendation

- 3.11 It is recommended that Option 2 – a combination of the Offer themes and LOIP priorities are adopted for the CIF criteria for 2021/22, as together they encapsulate the key issues which need addressing for sustained recovery and renewal for communities across Perth and Kinross. These issues require significant resources and CIF funding can add value via a community led approach in addition to the monies outlined in paragraph 3.11. CIF criteria can be reviewed again in 2022/23.

Specific improvement recommendations to criteria

- 3.12 Assuming the recommended option is approved by Committee, the following specific changes to criteria are also proposed:
- It is not recommended that ALEOs or national charities are excluded from CIF, as their contribution in terms of skills, capacity and experience can add real value to local initiatives (paragraph 2.5 refers). However, it is proposed that these organisations are exempt from being lead applicants for CIF funds. To be eligible, they should apply in partnership with a local community-led organisation, with the latter acting as lead applicant.
 - As outlined in paragraph 2.6, following feedback from ward Councillors and LAP members in Perth City, CIF monies for city wards are combined into a single CIF pot. Governance arrangements for this larger pot are outlined below.
 - CIF allocation is changed as outlined in paragraph 3.3. This provides a more equitable starting point for distributing CIF, whilst recognising there is no perfect distribution formula based on demographic and equalities data.

CIF Governance

- 3.13 As outlined in paragraph 1.2, current CIF governance is lengthy for applicants and cumbersome to administer. Feedback from applicants, staff and ward panel members supports a more streamlined process with fewer stages.
- 3.14 It is recommended that Committee agree that CIF funding recommendations continue to be made through Ward Panels, but that these panels are organised and administered through Local Action Partnerships. LAPs would be supported to ensure appropriate ward-based local representation on each Ward Panel and would ensure that Ward Councillors were also available to contribute and chair proceedings. All relevant documentation for the Ward Panel meetings would be shared on the LAP Knowledge Hub for ease of access and distribution.

3.15 Once the Ward Panels have met and made recommendations for funding, payments would be made to successful applicants on that basis. Committee would be informed of the decisions as soon as practical thereafter. Appendix 1 shows a potential timeline for this process, based on the application process opening in June 2021.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Community Investment Fund has awarded £1.2m to a variety of community-based projects, directly benefiting almost 25,000 people across Perth and Kinross across a variety of communities and covering a number of themes. This report has provided an assessment of the impact of CIF and made recommendations for improving its delivery in 2021/22.

4.2 It is recommended that Committee:

- notes the background and assessment the impact of the Community Investment Fund to date;
- approves the proposal to use the Perth and Kinross Offer themes and LOIP priorities as the assessment criteria against which CIF applications will be judged;
- agrees that ALEOs and national charities are not eligible to directly apply to CIF, but would be welcome partners in a community-led initiative;
- approves the proposal to merge the three Perth City wards into one larger CIF pot for the city;
- approves the proposal to change the split in CIF funding; and
- approves the proposals to change the governance structure for CIF.

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 Supporting and investing in community-led solutions to locally identified issues contributes to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / LOIP in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 Supporting and investing in community-led solutions to locally identified issues contributes to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Agreeing the process for spending £600,000 in 2021/22

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment Process (EqIA) and has been assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Sustainability

- 3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.6 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 There has been consultation with the Finance Department, Communities Service and the Executive Officer Team.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Potential timeline for CIF 2021/22