

Committee	UHI North, West and Hebrides Board
Subject	Caithness Place Based Initiative
Action requested	<p>X For information only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For discussion</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For recommendation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For endorsement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For approval</p>
Summary of the paper	The purpose of this paper is to provide F&GP with an update on the Caithness Place Based Initiative and the inclusion of the Arm's Length Foundation, ALF, funding for the Thurso campus
Resource implications	Funding secured via Highland Council for place-based initiative and ALF for project. Staff time to support the initiative
Risk implications	Ensuring we have a complete audit trail for decisions previously agreed with the three previous colleges. Risk of funding being spent within timescales given the shared project, mitigated by working closely with both funders.
Date paper prepared	20 th October 2023
Date of Board / Committee meeting	F&GP 1 st November 2023
Author	Debbie Miller, Interim VP Operations
Link with strategy Please highlight how the paper links to the Strategic Plan	Our Estate is fit for purpose and an acceptable standard in line with accessibility, student and staff experience and changes in teaching practices and technology.
Island communities	The rural and islands college merger may have an impact on the Western Isles and islands covered by West Highland College that is different to other communities. As part of the merger process, the University will undertake an Island Communities Impact Assessment.
Status (e.g., confidential, non-confidential)	Non confidential
Freedom of information	Yes
Consultation How has consultation with partners been conducted?	Consultation with staff and community as part of place based working

RECOMMENDATION

The committee is asked to acknowledge the current status of the Caithness Place based initiative and the inclusion of the Arms Length foundation funding previously provided to North Highland for the Thurso campus.

Caithness Place Based Initiative

Background

Since 2021 UHI, North Highland has been engaged in a Caithness Place Based Initiative with public sector partners from NHS, HIE, Highland Council, as well as the Caithness voluntary sector. The VP Operations is the lead Executive on the project with support from Estates, Facilities, Curriculum and Marketing staff as required.

The Caithness Place-Based Demonstrator is about helping people to live well locally, through understanding and addressing key challenges in Caithness communities. It aims to learn about how organisations, services and communities can work together in new ways to improve local outcomes in Caithness. We are working together to make best use of local assets and resources, including local spaces in Caithness. With the support of Scottish Government funding, the Caithness Place-Based Demonstrator is investing in several existing buildings and spaces in Caithness, so they can better help people to live well locally of which the UHI NWH Thurso campus is one.

Current Status

A successful funding application through Scottish Future's Trust for a place-based demonstrator was approved in autumn 2022 for approx. £750k. The funding is being managed by Highland Council.

The Thurso campus is likely to receive support up to a value of £200k in both consultancy and Furniture, Fittings and Equipment, FF&E, to allow us to develop our 'community' spaces, i.e., those open to the public, including the canteen, hair and beauty access and library. Note we will not receive funding directly to UHI NWH, but funds will be spent, and items purchased on our behalf.

To make best use of both consultancy and FF&E, we are linking the project to a separate funding allocation, £54k, approved by the then North Highland board to the Arm's Length Foundation to maximise our student facilities at our Thurso campus.

Benefits realised will be share of design consultancy and other professional services, lower costs for FF&E to benefit both projects.

An additional benefit from the project is the promotion of our office and event space to the wider community and the potential for additional income from room rentals etc in the future.