

Title of Report:	DfC Food Poverty & Financial Inclusion Update
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	17th November 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture Community Development Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£0
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	n/a

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update about the Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group and Action Plan and funding received from Department for Communities (DfC) to support the voluntary and community sector as it continues to recover and help citizens to get through the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.0 Background

The Department for Communities has made 3 funds available to Councils to help respond to the Covid 19 pandemic. The funds are as follows:

Covid 19 Community Support Fund	
- Tranche 1	£80,700
- Tranche 2	£126,227
Covid 19 Access to Food Fund	£63,113
Covid 19 Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund	£58,147

An information report was provided to the committee in September 2020 in relation to the first aspect of the funding package, namely the Covid 19 Community Fund 2nd tranche which has now been fully awarded.

A further information report was provided to the committee in October 2020 in relation to the Covid 19 Access to Food Fund and the Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund. The Leisure & Development Committee requested that this item remain on the agenda for regular updating to the Committee.

3.0 Update

3.1 Covid 19 Community Support Fund

The Department, through its COVID-19 Community Support Fund, initially allocated £80,700 to Council in April 2020. When this budget was allocated, Council subsequently opened second and third strands of this grant programme with Good Relations and PCSP funding contributions. A further award of £126,227 for a second tranche of the DfC COVID-19 Community Support Fund was received in September.

Council were required by the Department to continue to allocate the funding in line with the three broad DfC criteria:

- Financial - to those on low income and at risk due to financial stress.
- Food - access to food (whether due to cost or availability) for those most in need.
- Connectivity - to those living alone or in rural and border areas that are likely to experience greater challenges in accessing services.

Some headline monitoring information in relation to the DfC COVID-19 Community Support Fund is as follows:

COVID-19 Community Support Fund (1 st Tranche)	April 2020
No of grants awarded	50
DfC Grant Award Amount	£80,700
Total Value of Awards Made (incl additional allocation from The Honourable The Irish Society Society)	£84,018
No of projects providing food	40
No of projects providing/ requiring PPE and hygiene supplies	24

No of projects involving communications	30
Families on low income supported with food	4344
Families supported with connectivity	2255
Older people	4943
People with a disability	2025
Children (under 16)	3269
People on a low income	8538
People with caring responsibilities	2619
Lone parents	2445
People living in isolated rural areas	4768
Other (please provide details)	585
Total Unique Beneficiaries	22414

COVID-19 Community Support Fund (2nd Tranche	September 2020
No of grants awarded	47
DfC Grant Award Amount	£126,227
Monitoring information currently being collated and will be provided when available	

3.2 Access to Food and the Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund

Council has secured interim approval from DfC to appoint a consultant through SIB. Work has commenced to establish an Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group to facilitate those organisations whose core business is tackling poverty in the Borough in order to ensure a collaborative and co-ordinated approach to developing an 18 month Anti-Poverty Action Plan and to address the key performance measure and outcomes associated with the DfC programme, as well as additional priorities which address broader poverty related issues. Planning is underway for the engagement process to develop the action plan.

Alongside development of the Action Plan, proposals submitted by Council for the Access to Food and the Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund have been approved and following receipt of a letter of offer from DfC on 5th November these projects can now proceed:

- Building capability of local infrastructure in the four main registered food banks with funding for purchase and installation of necessary equipment and sustainability mentoring support;
- Collation of a directory of local poverty intervention services and roll out an awareness raising campaign;
- One to one wraparound support programme for people experiencing poverty who aren't currently availing of services to improve their financial wellbeing.

The full allocation will be expended, following DfC sign off, by 31st March 2020.