

Title of Report:	DfC Food Poverty & Financial Inclusion Update DfC Additional funding for food
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	15th December 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 on the Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group, 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.

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 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 Committee in November 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

Project	DfC funding provided	Update as of 01.12.20
Covid 19 Community Support Fund - Tranche 1 - Tranche 2	£80,700 £126,227	Grants awarded for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">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. Tranche 1 – 50 grants awarded and expended. Tranche 2 – 47 grants awarded – in process of being expended.
Covid 19 Access to Food	£63,113	Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group members identified and 2 meetings convened involving organisations whose core business is tackling poverty in the Borough.
Covid 19 Financial Inclusion Partnership	£58,147	Anti-poverty action plan – desktop research and survey underway, strategic priorities and collaborative opportunities currently in development, councillor workshop completed.

		<p>Directory of local poverty intervention services and awareness raising campaign – currently being compiled with webpage, social media campaign and information leaflets planned.</p> <p>One to one wraparound support service for people experiencing poverty to improve financial wellbeing. – this service is currently being commissioned with bids due in by 11th December and an intention to commence the project in January to run until end of March. (see extract from Terms of reference for Tender in Annex A)</p>
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4.0 Further Developments

4.1 Additional NI Executive funding to address poverty

Following the recent announcement by the NI Executive to allocate an additional £3.5m for Christmas/New Year food support to the Department for Communities, officers were contacted by Department officials on the 23rd November in relation to the provision of further funding to local authorities to support additional targeted interventions for food support at a local level. This will complement the work already undertaken to develop sustainable approaches to local food programmes and services.

The Department have recognised that high levels of demand for access to food prevail and that Covid 19 has exacerbated an already difficult situation for the most vulnerable households in the community. They have been asked to consider where government can address ongoing and new emerging needs presenting on the ground in terms of access to food.

Official have confirmed that DfC plan to resource some Christmas specific activity and reach out to citizens who face real financial challenges, highlighted by the economic impacts of COVID and underlined by the pressures that the Christmas season brings. Funded activities can span December 20 to March 2021.

The Department have indicated as part of their approach they would like to work with councils to fund a range of local initiatives which may include (subject to confirmation via MoU/contract), family/individual support packages, including food and seasonal items, cooked meal provision, companionship to older or vulnerable people living alone, support to safe spaces, offering somewhere safe to spend Christmas, and Christmas meals and activities.

Eligible expenditure will be incurred between December 2020 and March 2021.

At the time of writing this report, specific and detailed criteria and levels of funding have yet to released, however it is anticipated a Memorandum of Understanding will be issued to councils by week commencing 7th December. The challenge, for Council, will be to implement the programme within a timeframe to support activities in time for the Christmas period.

In addition, staff were subsequently contacted by the Department on 2nd December to confirm that an additional programme entitled ‘Warm, Well and Connected’, will provide funding through regional organisations and local community networks, and will also now include funding for councils to address fuel related poverty (however further details are expected week commencing 7th December). Councils have been informed that this funding should prioritise

areas of deprivation as well responding to individual needs/circumstances of clients outside of these areas experiencing fuel poverty. This element of funding has been confirmed (in principle) as £42,707.52.

Officers will work with both Department officials and the Funding Unit to expedite the provision of eligible funding to the community & voluntary sector following receipt of written confirmation of details from the Department, but are developing the following working model:

- Funding via open call to C&V sector groupings for a small grant programme tackling immediate food poverty, reflecting the final DfC criteria and set at the previous grant limit for the Covid 19 fund (up to £3,000) - total budget pending final award from DfC.
- Direct funding to local borough wide established organisations which currently operate on a referral basis, including the four main food banks as well as organisations which deliver annual, established and recognised support campaigns to those experiencing food poverty. This element will also include the allocation from the Department to address fuel poverty under the 'Warm, Well and Connected Programme' which, as directed from DfC, must prioritise areas of deprivation as well responding to individual needs/circumstances of clients outside of these areas experiencing fuel poverty.

Annex A

Wraparound Support Project

Project Brief

1.1 Rationale:

As the social and economic consequences of the pandemic continue to be felt, the Department for Communities is working with Councils and their local infrastructures in order to maximise and link efforts to help address the continuing need in relation to access to food and financial inclusion and to develop a more directed and sustainable approach and ensure that information and services are easily accessible and people can access them when they need it and all through the one point of contact.

People who haven't had to access support before but, due to the pandemic, have experienced job losses and reduced income, have been thrust into financial distress and often don't know where to go or how to access support; people who experienced poverty prior to the pandemic are still experiencing poverty but with all the additional pressures that the pandemic has brought. Early appropriate referrals for support to help people work through their money worries and avoid financial problems escalating are critical as is the need to support people to become more financially resilient so that they are able to 'weather the storm' through the continued economic consequences of the pandemic.

1.2 Scope of Project:

As a result of an award of financial assistance from DfC to Council for these purposes, Council wishes to invite submissions from a suitably experienced and qualified consortium to **develop and deliver an individually tailored wraparound support programme for people who have been adversely impacted by the economic fallout of the pandemic or who aren't currently availing of services to address their immediate crisis needs as well to help them back to a position of financial stability.**

Community partners receiving referrals will carry out an assessment of support needs and put in place a holistic plan tailored to address the specific needs of the individual. Each person referred will be allocated a mentor or support worker to walk them through the process. Support will be delivered over a series of regular support sessions to include some or all of the following supports:

- food bank;
- social supermarket;
- benefits check;
- budgeting and money management advice;
- debt advice;
- information on financial wellbeing services
- support to engage with statutory agencies (such as HE, JBO etc); and
- any other 'handholding' support or signposting that is required

A referral process between the consortium partners should be developed as well as for further referral onwards such as mental health supports. Links with localised community and voluntary sector organisations and statutory agencies should be maximised in order to ensure maximum and effective signposting and referrals.

The services should be available to residents across the whole of Causeway Coast and Glens.

It is expected that this will be achievable through a collaborative approach with several partners. This may result in more than one physical location or satellite points across the Borough.

1.3 Delivery:

The service to be commissioned will be awarded in one contract, however Council would prefer to award the contract to a consortium of voluntary and community sector partners who can collectively provide the whole package of interventions services specified in 1.2 and who can deliver across the whole of Causeway Coast and Glens. This may result in more than one physical location/ satellite points across the Borough.

Food banks should those that are well established and which deliver across more than one District Electoral Area in Causeway Coast and Glens and registered with Trussell Trust Advice should only be provided by suitably qualified advisors.

Given the short turnaround time due to funding constraints, Council can provide if required external mediator support to assist in developing a Memorandum of Understanding between consortium partners.

1.4 Timescale:

The project should commence no later than start of January 2021 and should be delivered by end March 2021.

1.5 Costs:

The estimated total value of the contract will be no more than £58,000 exclusive of VAT. A detailed breakdown of the costs structure for the project is required with the tender submission.

Due to the short timescale of the project the provision can be through internal redeployment or increased hours of existing staff members in consortium partners.

An administrative allowance for partner organisations will be allowed as part of the contract, the amount of which should be worked out between consortium members.

Costs can also include digital infrastructure and other relevant costs that may be required for delivery.

1.6 Programme Management

The successful applicant will be required to develop a sustainable delivery mechanism and the consortium lead will be responsible for the overall management of the initiative. This will include:

- meeting with Council to agree a forward work plan and proposed implementation and on a regular basis throughout service delivery;
- production of monitoring information as detailed in 1.7 for provision to DfC as well as a final written evaluation report of services provided upon completion of the project.

1.7 Report Cards

Appropriate systems should be set up for gathering monitoring information to allow completion of the following report card. The report card should be completed by the consortium lead and submitted to Council on a monthly basis during delivery of the project.

How much?	How well?
<p>Number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people receiving foodbank support who received other Linked support projects (social supermarket, advice etc) • Individual financial inclusion plans • people provided with information on financial wellbeing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of people who were provided with information on financial wellbeing services that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - were satisfied with the information - felt the information had helped them - felt they were treated well • % of people who received debt advice that:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referrals to income & benefits maximisation advice service • referrals to money management/budgeting advice • referrals to debt advice service • source of referral for beneficiaries • postcode of beneficiaries • Beneficiaries whose household contained a member (s) under 18 • Beneficiaries whose household contained member (s) over 65 • Beneficiaries whose household contained member (s) with additional needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - were satisfied with the advice - felt the advice had helped them - felt they were treated well • % of people who received income & benefits maximisation advice that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - were satisfied with advice - felt the advice had helped them - felt they were treated well • % of people who received money management/budgeting advice that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - were satisfied with advice - felt the advice had helped them - felt they were treated well • % of those receiving food who were signposted to receive additional support
<p><u>Is anybody better off?</u> Number & % of clients who reported that they were making better financial decisions Number & % of clients who reported that they feel more in control of their finances Number & % of clients who reported that they have improved budgeting skills Number & % of clients who reported more disposable income</p> <p>Case Studies</p>	