

ITEM No ...3.....

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 10 MAY 2021
REPORT ON: FUNDING FOR COVID-19 SUPPORTS FOR 2021/22
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 155-2021

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update on funding changes allowing carry forward to 2021/22, additional allocations from Scottish Government announcements and set out proposals to best utilise these for continuing key supports from 2020/21 and to effectively respond to other emerging needs of people in Dundee affected by Covid-19 during 2021/22.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note funding updates and allocations to Support Individuals at Financial Risk from Covid19 and Flexible Funding to Effectively Respond to the Emerging Needs of People in Dundee affected by Covid-19
- b) Agree the proposed priority areas of identified need and proposed allocations for both funds as set out in the tables section 5
- c) Note the update on other funding streams available in addition to above to avoid duplication and assure that any gaps are addressed

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 During 2020/21 the Council received two allocations, each for £745,000, providing flexible funding to tackle financial insecurity. The first allocation, in November 2020 was initially paid as a grant but converted to General Revenue Grant in February 2021. £508,945 of this has been spent in 2020/21, leaving £236,052. The second £745,000 was paid as General Revenue Grant and brings the total available to £981,052.
- 3.2 The Council also received £834,000 of funding in 2020/21, Flexible Funding to Meet Emerging Needs, to provide a flexible response as areas move in and out of levels. This was paid to the Council as General Revenue Grant. However, there was no spend against this allocation in 2020/21 and it is now proposed to use this funding in 2021/22.
- 3.3 The recommendations in this report would allocate a total of £1.815m to support individuals and communities. Report 120-2021 set out how the Council is projected to have a net underspend of £13.250m for 2020/21 and if agreed this will reduce the resources available for other COVID pressures in 2021/22 and future years to £11.435m.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The COVID-19 Look Back report (report no.189-2020) to Policy & Resources Committee on 24 August 2020 (Article XIII) detailed the establishment of the COVID-19 Supporting People Programme with workstreams and processes for the Council to provide humanitarian assistance to citizens across the City, including the shielding group. A key focus of this programme was a range of food related supports including Free School Meals payments.
- 4.2 The Food Insecurity Network, co-ordinated by Faith In The Community, works with the Council to provide emergency food across communities. The Council committed to procuring a total of £10k worth of food per week from April 2020 for them to distribute. At the peak of the first lockdown, food was being provided to over 4,400 people per week across the city but since early 2021 the numbers have stabilised at approximately 2,500 per week. This support equates to a total of 1,204,332 meals. 30 local food organisations of varying sizes have been involved to date and have brought in an additional £138,848 of funding to supplement this effort.

- 4.3 In addition to food parcels detailed above, a range of other food related supports (e.g. packed lunches and hot food deliveries) totalling 112,865 meals were available during the 1st lockdown and the Scottish Government also distributed 25,407 food boxes (equivalent to 533,547 meals) direct to the shielded cohort in the City. The total food provision including FSM payments (average of 6,203 per week) during 2020/21 is the equivalent of 3,717,025 meals provided to the citizens of Dundee.
- 4.4 As there has been significant demand for food related supports during the pandemic and this continues, the Food Insecurity Network is working with Council officers on plans for beyond 2021/22. In the meantime, however a further allocation of £406,052 for food stock and other household goods is made to maintain the availability of emergency food for 2021/22 and to facilitate a managed transition to a long-term community food model.
- 4.5 Changes to the funding criteria during 2020/21, becoming the Supporting Individuals At Financial Risk fund extended the purpose of the funding as set out in para 5.1. This meant that in addition to continued support for the Food Insecurity Network addition resource was allocated to fuel insecurity, discretionary housing payments and as well as to support requests for warm clothing e.g. Cozy Bairsns.
- 4.6 A summary of the expenditure during 2020/21 is outlined below:

Food Related Expenditure	Amount
Food for Marginalised Groups	£44,180
Food Insecurity Network Supplies	£544,889
Dundee Bairsns - packed lunches	£63,575
Food for Community Cafes/Groups	£23,226
Food for vulnerable families (hot meals)	£93,000
Sub Total	£768,870
Non Food Expenditure	
Test & Protect Support (2 Sisters) NRPF	£1,127
H & S Support for Food organisations	£14,999
Contingencies - Cozy Bairsns	£31,451
Fuel Well Payments	£281,965
Additional DHP	£100,000
Sub Total	£429,542
OVERALL TOTAL	£1,198,412

- 4.7 Appendix 1 to this report highlights in infographics a summary of a range of supports provided during 2020/21 including Scottish Welfare Fund, discretionary housing payments, tenancy hardship and free period products too.

5.0 FUNDING PROPOSALS FOR 2021/22

A) Supporting Individuals At Financial Risk

- 5.1 The specific purposes set out for this funding included supplementing local budgets for the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), tackling food insecurity, support for fuel costs and additional funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, as required. There is also the scope to provide other activities and services, as necessary, to support individuals to overcome financial crisis and support wellbeing.
- 5.2 In addition, by removing funding from restrictions associated with SWF, local authorities are also able to support individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) who are destitute and do not have access to mainstream benefits.

5.3 The table below sets out the full proposals from this funding stream:

PROPOSALS	Allocation
Food Insecurity The Food Insecurity Network are currently work on how to transition towards a more sustainable and dignified community-based larder model by March 2022. This allocation will ensure DCC can support the network with food stock to meet expected demand during this transitional year.	£406,052
Fuel Well Further allocation to meet fuel insecurity demands as the Fuel Well scheme moves into phase 2 of its integrated approach to fuel support, tiered levels of intervention and links to all other available resources. Links will be made to Social Renewal – Fuel funding.	£400,000
DHP Additional resource to support Discretionary Housing Payments where required	£155,000
Spring Hardship Payment Separate funding of £631, 838 was allocated to pay £100 each to the families of children in receipt of free school meals in April. Any shortfall was to be met from our At Financial Risk funding.	£20,000
TOTAL ALLOCATED	£981,052

B) Flexible Funding To Meet Emerging Needs Proposals

5.5 The purpose of the fund remains to strengthen local authority responses to meet emerging needs and support people in their communities struggling with the restrictions and guidance at all protection levels, particularly those at higher risk through health and social inequalities.

5.6 Flexible Funding is only available for 2021/22 and is to be used to support a more sustainable and flexible response to meeting need, arising from the impact of Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions, within local communities. The funding is particularly focused on those at risk through health and social inequalities.

5.7 An assessment of current data (including via our helpline) and information from local and national surveys and reports has helped identify the principal concerns resulting from Covid-19. Based on this assessment of need it is proposed that the Flexible Funding is utilised to support three key areas;

- Addressing Inequalities & Poverty – promoting integrated advice and support through community-based services such as for those regularly attending foodbanks/larders
- Promoting Mental Health & Wellbeing - local and voluntary supports to tackle social isolation and low-level anxiety as we move out of lockdown
- Protecting People – additional capacity for Domestic Abuse services to address increased demand arising from lockdown

5.8 To support the recovery phase of the pandemic and promote transitions to sustainable practice the following proposals have been prioritised.

Responding to needs identified through the Helpline The Helpline provides a gateway for people in Dundee looking to access a range of support including Support & isolation Grants, Scottish Welfare Funds and general support arising from the impact of Covid 19. Funding will support additional needs identified or adhoc supports contingency e.g. those with No Recourse to Public Funds, specialist dietary requirements, access to warm clothing e.g. Cozy Bairns partnership, etc.	£150,000
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<p>Responding to additional demand on Domestic Abuse Services 3 additional posts for Dundee Women's Aid to provide short-term crisis support addressing safety planning, assisting with housing or financial needs. The team will provide crisis response and helpline cover. 2 additional posts for WRASAC to meet the increase in demand for their services due to the impact of Covid on delays in court business and reduced response to victim support/management. Above jointly funded with HSCP 1 additional post to meet increase in demand in terms of child protection impact of domestic abuse (including sustained increase in number / proportion of children on the child protection register)</p>	£170,000
<p>Development of Community Based Integrated Advice Model Funding will build on work supported through the Fairness Commission and extend 3 x Money Advice Workers (Brooksbank, CAB and Council Advice Services) for another year. 1.5 decision maker posts for Scottish Welfare Fund to meet expected increased demand as furlough ends. Links will be made to GP Welfare Rights work.</p>	£200,000
<p>Community Based Activities to tackle isolation and support wellbeing Aimed at adults and older people in our most deprived communities and run via community cafes and community centres. There would be a range of events for different groupings to support them back into the community and socialising e.g. social groups, health eating and wellbeing & information sessions Similar support for children and families over summer period will be via the Summer of Play funding</p>	£60,000
<p>Expansion of Digital Inclusion Improve access to advice, increase income maximisation amongst vulnerable groups, promote a hybrid model of access to advice, reduce digital exclusion in communities, promote an Advice First approach to food insecurity, meeting the Menu for Change objectives. To fund Attend Anywhere/Near Me video conferencing public access devices in circa 15 community venues (e.g. Community Centres, Libraries & local Food Insecurity Network venues) Review and increase public WiFi capacity in community centres Connecting Scotland funding aimed at individuals so above is about community capacity & access to digital resources</p>	£ 20,000 £20,000
<p>Support for Community Food Organisations Additional funding to key projects supporting the Food Insecurity Network during the course of 2020/21 e.g. co-ordination and distribution</p>	£50,000
<p>Inclusive Communications Based on feedback from the Fairness Commission and equalities groups more non social media communications will be required during 2021/22 to ensure key messages regarding restrictions and information about supports is available to all.</p>	£10,000
Contingency Balance	£154,000
TOTAL FUNDING	£834,000

5.9 Actual expenditure will be monitored and reviewed quarterly to make any adjustments across allocations based on demand and to address other needs that may emerge.

C) Other Funding Streams Supporting Vulnerable Groups

- 5.10 Understanding and co-ordination of different funding streams will ensure that all available funding is best used to support the recovery of the City and ensure that any gaps are targeted as appropriate. In addition to the above two funding streams set out, a range of other funding announcements were made during March 2021 to support communities, schools, care experienced young people, mental health services, etc as set out below (note this is not an exhaustive list).
- **Summer of Play** - announcement of £20 million was made on 24 March 2021, to deliver a range of activities for children and young people and their families over the summer, ensuring they are provided with opportunities to socialise, play and reconnect within their local communities and environments. In particular this will provide support for those children and young people who may otherwise struggle to access such experiences during the holidays. Dundee's allocation is still to be confirmed.
 - In response to the **Social Renewal** Advisory Board's report 'If not now, when?' an investment of £25 million was announced on 24 March 2021 to help take forward a number of actions informed by the Board. This includes £13.5 million to help the Third Sector recover from the impact of the pandemic and build on the support given to communities, as well as a further £6.7 million to tackle fuel insecurity.
 - **Connecting Scotland** programme, to provide low-income households with digital devices and support, has now been increased by a further £26.6 million for the third and next stage of the initiative (announced on 22 March 2021), meaning a total of 60,000 households will be helped by the end of 2021. This next stage, which starts shortly, will reach a further 23,000 households and also provide existing Connecting Scotland customers with an additional 12 months of unlimited data, extending support to 24 months.
 - **Welfare Rights** - GP practices in some of the most deprived communities will receive £3.17 million to fund dedicated welfare rights advisors to address growing mental health concerns caused by money and housing insecurity. Launching in September 2021, 150 GP Practices will be able to refer patients directly to an in-house welfare rights officer for advice on increasing income, social security eligibility, debt resolution, housing, and employability issues as well as helping with representation at tribunal. (announced 19 March 2021)
 - **Helping Communities** - the continuing Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme, which is expected to make £44 million of awards by summer 2021. (announced 17 March 2021)
 - The **Tenant Hardship Loan Fund** and the Private Rent Sector Landlord (non-business) COVID-19 Loan Scheme, both of which offer interest-free loans, will continue to receive applications beyond the original deadline of 31 March 2021.
 - **Pandemic Support Payments** will be made to two distinct groups: a) payments of £130 to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and b) two payments of £100 each to the families of children in receipt of free school meals. Families who are in receipt of both Council Tax Reduction and Free School Meals will be eligible to receive both payments, worth a total of £330.
 - **Tackling Child Poverty** a range of funding supports including Free School Meals, Scottish Child Payment, Winter and Spring Hardship payments (as above), the Social Innovation Partnership and Parental Employability Support Fund, targeted specifically at supporting disabled parents.
 - **Community Lenders Funding** - will support Credit Unions and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) which offer financial help to those who have poor credit and are often turned away from high street banks.
 - In addition to the above there has been funding for specific vulnerable groups affected by homelessness, drugs and alcohol, etc

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

7. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

**GREGORY COLGAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

23 APRIL 2021

Support for people during the Covid-19 pandemic

£3.21m

awarded in Discretionary
Housing Payments



Equivalent of

3.7m

meals provided



£450,000

of support to Council
tenants facing hardship



Over

£1.72m

in Scottish Welfare
Fund grants



6,758

Crisis Grants
awarded



1,541

Community Care
Grants allocated



728

deliveries of free
period products
(each 3 month supply)

5,406

children benefited from child winter payments



6,531

children benefited from child spring payments



£2.3m

in Free School Meals
funding

(avg. 6,203 children per week)



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