

ANGUS COUNCIL – 24 JUNE 2021

COVID-19 FUNDING - DISCRETIONARY FUNDING PROJECT APPROVALS

REPORT BY IAN LORIMER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

ABSTRACT

This report seeks member agreement to use Scottish Government COVID-19 funding provided to the Council to help support local people and communities where the Council has a degree of discretion over the use of the funding.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) approve the proposed use of COVID-19 funding where the Council is able to use the funding with a degree of discretion as set out in this report and Appendix 1;
- (ii) note the additional allocation of £34,000 to Schools Direct Payments as set out in Appendix 2.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

- 2.1 This report contributes to the following strategic priorities in the Angus Council Plan, we want:
- To maximize inclusion and reduce inequalities
 - Our communities to be strong, resilient and led by citizens
- 2.2 In light of the COVID-19 pandemic we have looked again at our priorities to best support our people and our businesses in Angus to recover and renew over the short, medium and longer term. We have looked at our response to COVID-19, the strong partnerships developed, the pace at which we responded and how we adapted our ways of working to support our citizens.
- 2.3 As will be evident from this report's contents the Council and Third Sector Partners continue to be on the front line in providing support to people in response to the pandemic and these support actions will contribute to many of the priorities and ambitions in the Council Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Angus Council is in receipt of several Scottish Government grants in relation to COVID-19. Most of these grants are for a set purpose with specific requirements in place, while others are offered with a degree of flexibility and discretion on how their core purposes can be delivered.
- 3.2 To ensure that the funding provided to the Council to support local communities (where there is discretionary over how to deliver that support) is being spent/allocated in ways that will address need Expressions of Interest (EOI's) have been sought from Council services and Third Sector Partners using the funding and criteria provided by Scottish Government.

Criteria and Objectives cover:

- COVID-19 Response
- COVID-19 Recovery
- Working in Partnership

- 3.3 Funding requests must directly relate to needs that have occurred as a result of COVID-19. Applicants are asked to clearly define the need in their EOI. This can be:
- A 'new need' that did not previously exist, or was not known to exist prior to COVID-19
 - An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to COVID-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of COVID-19
- 3.4 Applications for funding are assessed in line with objectives of the Scottish Government Strategic Framework and the Angus Council Plan.
- 3.5 Reference is made to Report 328/20 considered by the Council at its meeting of 17 December 2020 and to Report 333/20 to the same Council meeting and to Report No 137/21 to the Angus Council meeting of 13 May 2021 all of which gave further background on the range of grants being provided and how these would be managed through a mixture of delegated authority and seeking prior member approval. This report covers the use of funding which although intended by the Scottish Government to help Councils provide support to local communities involves discretion and choice on how the Council does that.
- 3.6 Responding to the pandemic continues to be a huge challenge and this report therefore seeks member agreement to use some of the Government COVID-19 funding provided to the Council where the Council is able to use the funding on a discretionary basis.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 At the present time the Council currently has one funding stream provided to enable COVID related support to local communities on a discretionary basis. Angus has received a Flexible Fund allocation of £653,000. The Council has also received funding to support the administration of COVID support grants.
- 4.2 The First Minister announced the £15m Flexible Fund for local authorities on 17 November 2020, to enable local authorities to strengthen their support for people and communities impacted by level 4 restrictions. This funding was to cover spend up to 31 March 2021 including administration and delivery costs.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government wrote again to Local Authorities on 2 March 2021 to advise that an additional £15 million had been allocated to the Flexible Fund and, to amend and broaden the purpose 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.
- 4.4 It was agreed between Scottish Government and COSLA to combine the original £15m and additional £15m and provide £30m of funding through the Local Government finance settlement, paying the whole amount as a redetermination of the General Revenue Grant (GRG) for 2020-21 with no follow up reporting requirements. This approach to funding provides flexibility on the timing of any spend.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Details of the individual projects for which formal approval is sought are contained in Appendix 1 in this report. The Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub-Group of officers views were sought regarding the proposed projects and the responses are noted in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 Details of an additional allocation for Schools Direct Payments for noting are contained in Appendix 2 in this report. The Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group of officers views were sought regarding the request and the responses noted in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 Further reports will be presented to Council/Committee, if and when further project approvals are required during the financial year.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financial impact of the proposals in Appendices 1 and 2 is covered in full by additional government funding provided to the Council as COVID-19 funding for specific schemes the Government has asked Councils to deliver.
- 6.2 A summary of the financial implications are outlined below if the Council are minded to agree all the proposed projects.

Funding Source	Funding Allocated	Spend / Commitment to date	Current Balance	Additional costs per this report	Remaining Balance
Level 4 Flexible Fund	£653,000	£41,000	£612,000	£200,446	£411,554
COVID Grant Admin	£256,000	£185,800	£70,200	£3,000	£67,200

- 6.3 The funding which has yet to be committed remains available for COVID-19 response. Work to identify needs and potential uses for uncommitted COVID-19 funding is ongoing and proposals in this regard will be brought to members after the summer recess.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed 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.

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PROJECTS FOR WHICH FORMAL APPROVAL IS SOUGHT

Project Reference	02.1
Organisaton	Angus Women's Aid
Value	£142,986
Funding Stream	FS2 "Level 4 Flexible Fund
Description	Funding requested for 2 additional Community Resource Worker posts, Landward and Coastal, to accommodate increase in demand and provide longer term emotional support to women who have experienced domestic abuse/coercive control. New referrals have increased by 49% on previous year. AWA have been forced to operate a waiting list due to increased demand as a direct result of Covid-19. Current waiting list is 29 and anticipate this to increase. This is compared to no waiting list pre Covid-19. The duration of support has increased due to Covid-19. A previously short intervention period (avg 6 months) with women has moved to longer term support (ongoing beyond primary crisis period). This is a key factor in the waiting list numbers.
Alignment with grant criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to Covid-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of Covid-19 • Covid-19 Response • Covid-19 Recovery • Working in Partnership
Status	Recommended for approval by Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group

Project Reference	07.4
Organisaton	Angus Council, Education
Value	£3,000
Funding Stream	Scottish Government COVID-19 Grants - Admin Funding
Description	Funding was recently allocated for Schools Direct Payments and School Grant Allocations. An additional £3,000 to cover associated costs of additional hours worked by clerical staff to administer and distribute these payments to families is needed.
Alignment with grant criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to Covid-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of Covid-19 • Covid-19 Response
Status	Recommended for approval by Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group

Project Reference	10.1
Organisaton	Homestart Angus
Value	£8,460
Funding Stream	FS2 "Level 4 Flexible Fund
Description	Funding requested for costs of family coordinator post for 1 year. The Family Coordinator will provide 1-1 support for 35 families (58 children) per week. They will ensure that families already experiencing disadvantage (poverty, lack of social opportunity, poor housing, poor parental mental health, disability), are not further disadvantaged due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. These families have the opportunity to remain connected to services and supports within their communities, preventing them from slipping through the net and suffering further disadvantage and isolation.

Alignment with grant criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to Covid-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of Covid-19 • Covid-19 Response • Covid-19 Recovery • Working in Partnership
Status	Recommended for approval by Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group

Project Reference	10.2
Organisaton	Homestart Angus
Value	£1,500
Funding Stream	FS2 "Level 4 Flexible Fund
Description	<p>Funding requested for provision of Crisis Support Grants for families registered with the service. During the last 6 months, families have requested £750 emergency/crisis support for fuel vouchers, essential household supplies, top-up food supplies (supplementary to food-bank supplies), and essential clothing items.</p> <p>The organisation is primarily funded to provide emotional and practical help within families' homes, and had previously fundraised to have funds available for provision of crisis grants for families. Their normal fundraising efforts for such demands has been severely hampered due to Covid restrictions, and they have exhausted their existing reserves, at a time when they are seeing an increased need. Isolation and poverty has escalated during this period and has negatively impacted families already experiencing disadvantage.</p> <p>The sum of £1,500 would ensure this level of need is met over the period of 1 year, by which time fundraising will hopefully have resumed.</p>
Alignment with grant criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to Covid-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of Covid-19 • Covid-19 Response • Covid-19 Recovery • Working in Partnership
Status	Recommended for approval by Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group

Project Reference	12.1
Organisaton	Monifieth Befrienders
Value	£13,500
Funding Stream	FS2 "Level 4 Flexible Fund
Description	<p>Funding requested for cost of the 1 year Schools Coordinator post. The pandemic has impacted on elderly members of our community in ways that add to pre-existing feelings for some of loneliness and isolation. The main beneficiaries of this project are people over 60 within the community of Monifieth who are experiencing loneliness and isolation, and bereaved people of any age. Volunteers will also benefit from training and skills development, as well as general wellbeing through community involvement.</p> <p>The organisation currently works with 54 female clients and 10 male clients aged between 63-100. They have 58 female befrienders and 10 male befrienders aged between 17 – 94. They hope to extend the reach of the service within the community both through promoting the 1:1 befriending</p>

	which is the core of what the organisation does, but also to find innovative ways to involve clients and volunteers, especially young volunteers, in appropriate social groups
Alignment with grant criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to Covid-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of Covid-19 • Covid-19 Response • Covid-19 Recovery • Working in Partnership
Status	Recommended for approval by Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group

Total funding requested:-

Scottish Government Flexible Fund - £166,446

Scottish Government Grants Admin Fund - £3,000

ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION FOR NOTING

Project Reference	07.1
Organisaton	Angus Council, Education
Value	£34,000
Funding Stream	£34,000 from FS2 "Level 4 Flexible Fund"
Description	Direct Payments – additional allocation (May 2021). The cost of these payments exceeded the original estimate because of an increase in the number of families eligible. The pandemic has seen a rise in the number of children eligible for free school meals.
Alignment with grant criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An 'existing need' that was known to exist prior to Covid-19, but there is additionality as a direct result of Covid-19• Covid-19 Response• Covid-19 Recovery
Status	Recommended for approval by Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub Group



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

(To be completed with reference to Guidance Notes)

Step 1

Name of Proposal (includes e. g. budget savings, committee reports, strategies, policies, procedures, service reviews, functions):

COVID-19 FUNDING - DISCRETIONARY FUNDING PROJECT APPROVALS

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment Yes/No

(A) If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people Yes/No

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics Yes/No

(iii) It is for information only Yes/No

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year Yes/No

(v) It is technical Yes/No

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

(B) If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following:

Is this a full Equality Impact Assessment Yes/~~No~~

Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment ~~Yes~~/No

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.

If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

Step 3

(i)Lead Directorate/Service:

Finance (for reporting purposes only – delivery has been by a number of services)

(ii)Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

NONE

(iii)What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

To seek member agreement to use Government COVID-19 funding provided to the Council where Council is able to use the funding on a discretionary basis.

(iv)Is it a new proposal? Yes/~~No~~ Please indicate OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? ~~Yes~~/No Please indicate

Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?

Please indicate all which apply:

Employees	Yes/ No
Job Applicants	Yes /No
Service users	Yes/ No
Members of the public	Yes/ No

Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:

Internal data (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

Grant Criteria and assessment considers Angus Council Plan

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic we have looked again at our priorities to best support our people and our businesses in Angus to recover and renew over the short, medium and longer term. From the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen more than ever the value of the work done in our communities and the benefit of working in partnership. As we focus on recovery and renewal, we need to learn from and build on the experiences of the last few months.

'Four strategic priorities' We want:

- Angus to be a go-to place for businesses
- To maximize inclusion and reduce inequalities
- Our communities to be strong, resilient and led by citizens
- Angus Council to be efficient and effective

Internal consultation (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

Consultation with Angus Council Staff through Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub-Group meetings.

External data (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

Grant Criteria and assessment considers Scottish Government Strategic Framework

The pandemic is having significant impacts on our society and communities. Protecting and supporting people during these unparalleled times has been the focus of the Scottish Government, and that will continue. The pandemic also has global economic consequences unlike any we have seen before. Businesses and individuals have made extraordinary sacrifices as we tackled the pandemic together.

'The Four Harms';

- direct health,
- indirect health,
- economic,
- and social impacts

External consultation (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

Consultation with Third Sector Interface for Angus Voluntary Action Angus, and Third Sector Partners through Grants Assessment Panel and Grants Sub-Group meetings.

Other (general information as appropriate).

Step 6: Evidence Gaps.

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? ~~Yes~~/No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups? Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.

Age

Impact

There will be a positive impact on older people who maybe shielding, or otherwise unable to access services normally, and to tackle their isolation through the expansion of the Befriending scheme.

There is also the potential for a positive impact on younger people i.e. for more to become involved in the Befriending scheme as volunteers.

There will be a positive impact on younger people, who might otherwise go without proper food/clothing, through the increase in support to families via the Homestart request, and through the Direct Payment request (to tackle the increase in the number of children eligible for free school meals).

Disability

Impact

Some of the actions and support will have a positive impact on disabled people (who may be shielding or otherwise unable to access services normally)

There will be a positive impact on parental mental health resulting from the Homestart funding request.

Gender reassignment

Impact

None

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact

None

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact

None

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

Impact

None

Religion or Belief

Impact

None

Sex

Impact

There will be a positive impact on women and girls by providing additional funding to tackle gender based violence which may not otherwise have been available

Sexual orientation

Impact

None

Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

None

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

No negative impacts have been identified

Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?

Not required

Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.

Not applicable

Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

The actions taken are considered to have had a positive impact some of that likely to have been more apparent and important for some groups with protected characteristics as described in Step 7. If these applications are successful, it will result in the advancement of equality of opportunity by contributing to tackling food poverty, isolation, gender based violence, and other inequalities.

Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?

No

Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?

Support arrangements are subject to ongoing review as part of the Council's pandemic response

Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?

As part of the committee report

Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation. Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Victoria Gibbons 02 June 2021

Reviewed by: Doreen Philips 10/06/21

Approved by: Ian Lorimer 10 June 2021

NB. There are several worked examples of separate EIA and FSD Assessments in the Guidance which may be of use to you.
