

ANGUS COUNCIL – 4 NOVEMBER 2021

PROPOSED USE OF COVID-19 FUNDING – TRANCHE 2

REPORT BY IAN LORIMER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

ABSTRACT

This report seeks the Council's approval of Tranche 2 Funding Proposals from the funds set aside for COVID-19 response, recovery and renewal. It also proposes using other COVID grant funding as part of an overall package of response and funding measures.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Note the updated position regarding funds available as set out in Section 3;
- b) Approve the project proposals set out in Section 4 and Appendices 1 to 9 and the funding of these as set out in Table 2 of Section 4;
- c) Note that although recommendation b) will allocate all of the COVID-19 funding set aside the Council's COVID Contingency Reserve remains available to address any further needs or opportunities over the medium term.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 The proposals in this report are relevant to all aspects of the Council Plan and will assist with the delivery of the priorities set out in that Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reference is made to Report 285/21 – Budget Strategy Update and Use of COVID-19 Funding Initial Proposals which set out an updated budget strategy for the Council in relation to the use of uncommitted funds and initial proposals for the use of some of those funds for COVID-19 response, recovery and renewal purposes. That report was due to be considered at Angus Council on 9 September but due to the Council meeting being adjourned on the 9 September it was approved at a rescheduled meeting on the 24 September. The report recommended that £2.500 million would be set aside for COVID response, recovery and renewal. The report also recommended that £0.623 million of proposals/projects would be met from this balance which would leave a balance on the funds set aside of £1.877 million available for future use.

3.2 When members considered Report 285/21 at the meeting on the 24 September 2 motions were considered and approved as follows:-

- a. Roads Maintenance & Winter Resilience (Motion by Cllr Salmond) - £1.0 million
- b. Provision for re-opening of community toilets which are currently closed - £0.1 million

3.3 In relation to item b) above this was an allocation of funding only with officers remitted to bring a report back to members with detailed proposals on how the funding would be used and recommendations for consideration by Council.

3.4 These motions result in a further £1.100 million of the uncommitted funding for COVID-19 response being allocated leaving a balance of £0.777 million available from the original £2.5 million set aside for COVID response, recovery and renewal.

3.5 One of the first tranche of projects approved in Report 285/21 related to Trauma Informed Practice at a cost of £30,000. This funding will no longer be required because the Council will receive a sum of £100,000 over 2 years to support work in this area as specific funding from the Scottish Government. This releases the £30,000 agreed in Report 285/21 back into the funds available for other purposes.

3.6 Members are also referred to Report 325/21 agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee of 26 October 2021. That report covered other COVID related funding allocated to the Council

where there is discretion as to its use. Following approval of the projects in report 325/21 a sum of £177,762 remains from the Council's Level 4 Flexible Fund allocation. This funding is to be used by the Council 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 risk through health and social inequalities."

- 3.7 Two of the tranche 2 proposals in Section 4 below are considered to be a very good fit with these aims and accordingly it is proposed to use £115,000 of the remaining Level 4 Flexible Fund to meet some of the overall costs.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 As reported in report 285/21 Council officers have continued to discuss where further specific needs to address pandemic impacts as well as opportunities to make improvements in services and our efficiency are required. These further proposals are now presented in this report.

- 4.2 The principles identified in the initial round of proposals to guide decision making have also been applied to this second tranche of proposals. The principles are that proposals:-

- a) should primarily be guided by our Council Plan (including our Strategy on a Page) and our Finance & Change Plan – our use of available funding should be seeking to progress those priorities the Council has already agreed;
- b) should be used to address areas of greatest need in Angus communities as a result of the pandemic, where but for investment by the Council, that need would remain unmet;
- c) need to be measured against other savings or cuts the Council might have to apply in our existing core budget – the relative priority of proposed spend and its impact on achieving our priorities is key irrespective of how that will be funded;
- d) should have a clear exit strategy and avoid creating ongoing service and financial commitments;
- e) should consider projects and initiatives of a spend to save nature, i.e. those which can save money or reduce future cost increases to help us address future funding gaps.

- 4.3 A summary of the second tranche of proposals/projects is set out below in Table 1 with further detail attached in the Appendices. Council is being asked to approve these proposals and the associated funding to make them happen. The expected benefits from the proposals are as set out in the Appendices.

Table 1 – Second Tranche Proposals/Projects for Funding

Proposal/Project	Lead Directorate	Total Funding Sought £000	Further Detail
<p>Angus Alive Transformation Project – development of opportunities around health and wellbeing including social prescribing. Partnership project between the Council, Angus Alive (AA) and Angus Health & Social Care Partnership (AHSPC) with AA and AHSPC contributing £125k each to give a total project budget of £500k.</p> <p>£75k of the cost for the Council contribution of £250k is proposed to be funded from the Level 4 Flexible Fund.</p>	Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform	250	Appendix 1
<p>IT Project Management – temporary additional project manager to support delivery of digital transformation projects which are crucial to our Change Programme</p>	HR, Digital Enablement, IT & Business Support	78	Appendix 2

IT Service Desk – temporary additional team member to address backlog of service desk requests and issues. Will also help support elected member needs post 2022 elections	HR, Digital Enablement, IT & Business Support	33	Appendix 3
Outdoor Learning – project which will ensure accessibility to outdoor learning spaces in all our schools together with additional training for staff in outdoor learning. Temporary staff member will develop an outdoor learning approach for schools as part of this.	Education and Lifelong Learning	308	Appendix 4
Strategic Commissioning – temporary additional member of staff to support work including Change Programme savings by working with partners in Tayside Contracts, Angus Alive and Angus Health & Social Care Partnership.	Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform	67	Appendix 5
Tree Felling (Safety) – to commission essential safety works not carried out due to COVID restrictions and capacity constraints	Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth	30	Appendix 6
Community Benefits Officer – temporary member of staff to develop the Council's approach to community benefits in procurement	Legal & Democratic	80	Appendix 7
Visit Angus – Phase 2 – various proposals around supporting visitors / responsible tourism and in particular motorhomes	Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth	36	Appendix 8
Service Design – Child Poverty/School Meals – project arising from service design work intended to increase take up of school meals and address other poverty related issues where schools can assist parents and pupils The cost of this project is proposed to be met in full from the Level 4 Flexible Fund	Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform	40	Appendix 9
Total Proposals		922	

Overall Funding Package

- 4.4 Table 2 below explains how the above proposals will be funded and what this means for the £2.5 million of funds set aside for COVID-19 response, recovery and renewal in Report 285/21.

Table 2 – Funding Proposals for Projects in Table 1

	£000
Total Funding Set Aside Per Report 285/21	2,500
Less Approved Projects - Report 285/21	(623)
Less Motions Agreed by Council 24 September 2021	(1,100)
Funds Remaining at 24 September 2021	777
Add Trauma Informed Practice – funding no longer required	30
Less Total Tranche 2 proposals per Table 1 above	(922)
Add Level 4 Flexible Fund to support tranche 2 proposals	115
COVID Response, Recovery & Renewal Funding Remaining	0

- 4.5 If all of the proposals in this report are approved no funds would remain available from the £2.5 million originally set aside for COVID response, recovery and renewal purposes in Report 285/21. The proposals would also mean a reduction in the Level 4 Flexible Funds remaining to £62,762.

- 4.6 However, over and above these sums would be the COVID-19 Contingency Reserve itself of £1.923 million so the Council would still have a sizeable amount of one-off resources available to address further COVID-19 issues over the medium term should they arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications for the Council beyond those set out in the body of this report. The proposals set out in Table 1 can be funded from the sources identified in Table 2 which have been set aside for COVID-19 response, recovery and renewal.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESMENT

- 6.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed and is attached at Appendix 10.

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