

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY 2022

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 as set out in this report and Appendix 1;
- (ii) Note return of previously approved COVID-19 funding set out in this report; and
- (iii) Note the decisions made under delegated authority for use of 2021 Winter Flexible Fund as set out in this report and 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 the report contents, the Council and Third Sector partners continue to be on the front line in providing support to people in response to, and recovery from, the pandemic and these support actions contribute to many of the priorities and ambitions in the Council Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reference is made to Report 216/21 considered by the Council at its meeting of 24 June 2021, which gave 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.

3.2 Additionally, reference is made to Report 392/21 considered by the Council at its meeting of 16 December 2021, which noted the urgency regarding use of funding provided by the Scottish Government to prevent and respond to financial insecurity this winter. Approval was made by members to delegate authority to the Director of Finance to approve project proposals for the use of this funding on the basis that a report informing elected members of those delegated decisions will be provided in the February cycle of meetings.

3.3 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 Level 4 Flexible Fund, Angus Council Allocation £653,000
- 4.2 Angus has received a Flexible Fund allocation of £653,000, of which £591,933 has been spent to date, and £61,067 remains to be spent.
- 4.3 Local Authority Top Up Administration Grant Tranche 1, Angus Allocation £256,000
- 4.4 Angus has received COVID-19 Administration Grant Funding of £256,000, of which £243,863 has been spent to date, and £12,137 has been committed but remains to be spent.
- 4.5 Reference is made to Report 216/21 considered by the Council at its meeting of 24 June 2021, which recommended that the Council approve the proposed use of COVID-19 funding of £3,000 for associated costs of distributing Schools Direct Payments and School Grant Allocations to families.
- 4.6 Following Council approval, the applicant withdrew the request. The amount of £3,000 has been added back to the remaining balance of this fund.
- 4.7 Scottish Government 2021/22 Winter Flexible Fund, Angus Allocation £485,000
- 4.8 On 29 November 2021, Scottish Government wrote to Local Authorities confirming £25 million of flexible funding as part of the Winter Support Fund. The purpose of the flexible funding is to enable local authorities to support wellbeing by preventing and responding to financial insecurity. Activity must take place by end March 2022 in order to report to Scottish Government in April 2022.
- 4.9 Guidance was published on 11 November which provides a strong steer in favour of cash-first responses, and the integration of money advice and holistic support services to prevent future hardship. Local authorities have the flexibility to adapt interventions to meet emerging needs, action may include:
- Emergency financial assistance
 - Direct assistance to access food, fuel and other essentials
 - Other activities and services, as necessary, to support individuals to overcome financial crisis and support wellbeing, including targeted activity to support marginalised groups, activity to prevent and address homelessness, and funding to community and third sector organisations
- 4.10 Angus has received Scottish Government 2021/22 Winter Flexible Fund of £485,000, of which £340,334 has been committed to date as set out in this report and Appendix 2, and £144,666 remains to be spent. Work is ongoing to ensure these remaining funds can be spent to support people in need across Angus with tackling food and fuel poverty being a specific focus. Allocation of the remaining funds will be reported to members in a future update report.

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 recommendations are noted in Appendix 1.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financial impact is covered by additional government funding provided to the Council as COVID-19 funding for specific schemes the Government has asked Councils to administer on their behalf.

- 6.2 A summary of the financial implications are outlined below if the Council are minded to agree all the proposed projects in Appendix 2.

Angus Allocation Flexible Fund	Spend to date	Current Balance	Additional costs per this report	Remaining Balance minus additional costs
£653,000	£591,933	£61,067	£61,067	£0

- 6.3 The proposed use of COVID-19 funding if Council are minded to agree, would fully commit the remaining balance of Angus' allocation of Level 4 Flexible Fund.

Breakdown of Approved Projects Level 4 Flexible Fund

- 6.4 Below for information and completeness is a list of all projects which the Level 4 Flexible Fund has supported.

Application / Project	Amount
Kirrie Connections Wellbeing activities and Hardship Grants	£11,000
Education Schools Direct Payments	£30,000
Angus Women's Aid Community Resource Worker x 2	£142,986
Homes-Start Angus Family Coordinator and Crisis support grants	£9,960
Monifieth Befrienders Schools Coordinator	£13,500
Dundee and Angus ADHD Support Group Covid-19 Adaptations	£3,145
Angus Council Communities Volunteer-led Community Cafes	£11,130
Angus Council Education and Welfare Rights Maximise Angus Project	£200,000
Lunan Bay Communities Partnership Ranger Service	£11,705
DD8 Music Additional Development Worker	£20,000
HOPE Garden accessible toilet facilities	£21,000
Santa Claus in Montrose Event PPE	£812
Angus Alive Transformation Project	£75,000
Service Design – Child Poverty/School Meals	£40,000
Angus Upcycling Project additional equipment to increase capacity	£1,695
Angus Council Education COVID Recovery Funding for Schools *	£57,035
Angus Council Communities Hire of Premises, Adult & Family Learning Services *	£4,032
TOTAL SPEND	£653,000

* - these projects are subject to consideration through this report so not yet approved.

- 6.5 In relation to COVID Administration funding the latest position is below

Angus Allocation COVID Admin	Spend to date	Current Balance	Return of funds per this report	Remaining Balance inc. return of funds
£256,000	£243,863	£12,137	£3,000	£15,137

- 6.6 The return of previously committed funding of £3,000 increases the remaining balance of the Local Authority Top Up Administration Grant Tranche 1 to £15,137.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

NOTE: Background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report :

Angus Council – 24 June 2021 Covid-19 Funding - Discretionary Funding Project Approvals Report No 216/21

Angus Council – 16 December 2021- Covid-19 Update Report 392/21

REPORT AUTHOR: Victoria Gibbons

EMAIL DETAILS: Finance@angus.gov.uk

PROJECTS FOR WHICH FORMAL APPROVAL IS SOUGHT

Project Reference	GSG.28 COVID Recovery Funding for Schools
Organisation	Angus Council – Education and Lifelong Learning
Value	£57,035
Funding Stream	FS2 Level 4 Flexible Fund
Description	<p>Funding requested to offer schools additional funding to meet the immediate needs of their children and families in the school community, challenging poverty and promoting equity and inclusion.</p> <p>Project will provide Head Teachers with additional funds to provide opportunities for children and families to access crisis support. This may include access to breakfast, healthy snacks, warm clothing, access to affordable food using school pantry/food bank. It will also include provision of outdoor clothing and learning resources which are in need of replacement.</p> <p>Previous funding of £75,000 was used to provide 59 schools an allocation to offer crisis support in schools including food insecurities, such as snack/breakfast provision, the provision of outdoor clothing and learning equipment/storage to support the additional need for outdoor learning.</p> <p>COVID-19 Need: Due to reduced household income and rising costs because of COVID -19 children are arriving at school hungry; often they are not wearing appropriate clothing for the weather. Our schools require greater ventilation and as a result the need for our children to wear warm clothing is now much greater.</p> <p>Project will benefit: Children and young people attending schools in Angus who are facing food, clothing and/or financial hardship.</p> <p>Project Timescales: The grant will be allocated to schools in February 2022 - the funds will be spent prior to April 2023.</p> <p>Working in Partnership: Working with Head Teachers, Families, School Community</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	GSG.29 Hire of premises to deliver adult and family learning services
Organisation	Angus Council – Vibrant Communities
Value	£4,032
Funding Stream	FS2 Level 4 Flexible Fund
Description	Funding requested for costs of hiring suitable premises to deliver essential adult and family learning services, to resume contact with our most hard to reach and vulnerable citizens and service users. This work is in line with our service priorities for Adult and Family Learning across localities.

	<p>Costs: Hire of Comrie Hall, 6 hours per week @ £14 p/h for 12 months</p> <p>Covid Need: A number of our projects were stalled due to the Covid restrictions. Arrangements were put in place to support customers and learners online however, uptake on this was minimal due to several reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of suitable devices • Limited digital skills • Lack of confidence <p>As restrictions ease, there is increasing need and demand to resume face to face group work, not only as it was before the pandemic but also in response to some of the issues our learners have faced during the crisis, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social isolation and loneliness • Reduced physical activity • Increasing mental health issues <p>In order to resume these essential services and support we have been able to access third party premises to deliver this face-to-face work with appropriate physical distancing. Our current office base is inadequate as numbers are severely limited.</p> <p>Project will benefit: Carnoustie Walking Group Carnoustie Café attendees Carnoustie (Burnside) Family Learning Participants Residents requiring digital skills support and access to devices All the above will include current and new members and access will be open and inclusive, subject to national guidance and Service Risk Assessments. These will be promoted openly through the Communities Team.</p> <p>Working in Partnership: Several partners were previously involved in this work, including Penumbra, Burnside Primary School, Health Visitors, and there are plans to involve some new services if the sessions can resume. For example, Angus Wellbean Café project and ADARS, drug and alcohol recovery service. Their roles vary can involve direct support as well as client referrals to these sessions. For example, health visitors and local schools make direct referrals to family learning activities, identifying the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families who would benefit from such support.</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

Total funding requested - £61,067

APPENDIX 2

PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY FOR USE OF 2021 WINTER FLEXIBLE FUND

2021WFF.001 SCARF (Save Cash and Reduce Fuel)	Angus Wide Provision of fuel vouchers, prepaid, direct payment to fuel supplier, and advice and assistance to maximise household income through energy efficiency advice. Supporting all households in Angus who are facing increased costs due to the pandemic and increased fuel bills. households with low incomes. £100,000 (negotiating higher amount for increased referral numbers)
2021WFF.002 PAMIS (Promoting a more inclusive society)	Specialist activities in February and March 2022 to promote the health and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults in Angus with profound and multiple learning disabilities. £1,820
2021WFF.003 Kirrie Connections	Emergency financial assistance to access food, fuel, and other essentials. Targeted support for Members of Kirrie Connections dementia support hub, Families living with dementia across the Northwest locality of Angus £8,800
2021WFF.004 Forfar East and Old Parish Church	Community lunches during January, February, and March 2022, with food vouchers and hampers to take away. Support low-income families and vulnerable groups experiencing financial hardship and help to cover basic food and energy bills. £4,000
2021WFF.005 Angus upcycling project	Provision of food supplies supporting people in immediate need in the Forfar/Kirriemuir area, open to all. Work with partners to identify people in need and promote support available. Enhances existing support provided by the organisation, such as clothing bank, wellbeing activities and providing advice signposting to additional support. £1,000
2021WFF.006 S-Mart Social Supermarket	S-Mart Social Supermarket Memberships and Vouchers for discounted food to support low-income households to tackle food insecurity. S-Mart is open to all; vouchers will be offered to anyone in need. £50,000
2021WFF.007 Angus Council Welfare Rights	Supplement the remaining Discretionary Financial Insecurity Fund to expand criteria to include groups currently excluded. £12,000
2021WFF.008 Deaf Links	Increase the Sensory Advocacy Support provided in Angus during the winter period to meet demand, providing emergency food vouchers and fuel top-ups where necessary to those clients in food or fuel crisis. £8,066
2021WFF.010 Home-Start Angus	Financial assistance for families with young children in crisis, to access food and other essential items. Targeted support for Families living in poverty, disabled people, lone parents, minority ethnic households, larger families and families living on low incomes. £3,120
2021WFF.011 Montrose Community Trust	Engagement and assistance for individuals and families facing financial insecurity, particularly in relation to food, through the provision of food vouchers, food and household essentials parcels, and child activity sessions with food provision. £10,000
2021WFF.013 Brechtin Community Pantry	Provision of additional food and household essentials to meet an increase in the numbers of clients registering for support and previous clients re-registering. £5,000

2021WFF.014 Angus Women's Aid	Emergency financial assistance for food, fuel and other essentials, and welcome packages to families who are admitted to our refuge accommodation due to fleeing domestic abuse. £8,000
2021WFF.015 Hillcrest Futures	Targeted activity and support to vulnerable and marginalised people in Angus. Support will include provision of food vouchers, direct financial assistance and other activities. Project will benefit 350+ people, helping them to overcome financial crisis and support wellbeing £26,250
2021WFF.017 Angus Council Education	Emergency financial assistance distributed through Angus Schools for children and families adversely affected by COVID 19 to access food, fuel, and other essentials. £40,000
2021WFF.018 Angus Citizens Advice Bureau	Provision of a dedicated money advice/budgeting support worker to support people across Angus who are struggling on low incomes. Project will support around 150 people over a 3-month period, with referrals from Welfare Rights, Angus Carers, VAA (Voluntary Action Angus) and/or local foodbanks. A test and learn project, to gather evidence for alternative funding bids to extend the project beyond the period of this grant. £6062.12
2021WFF.019 Brechin Community Football Trust	Distribution of essential care packages to households in Brechin who are experiencing financial hardship through unemployment, low-income families, lone parents, and minority ethnic households £18,750
2021WFF.020 Angus Council Communities	Set up costs for a new Community Café based at Comrie Hall, Links Ave, Carnoustie. Project will provide hot food and a safe place to access support and direct assistance to for food, fuel, and other essentials. A proactive and non-stigmatising approach to build better relationships in the community and offer financial assistance to support people in financial hardship. £2,465
2021WFF.021 Kirriemuir Food Hub	Provision of Data vouchers, access to food, advice/ education around financial security and energy efficiency, and provide people who use the Hub with a slow cooker (energy-efficient means of cooking). £7,000
2021WFF.022 Angus Housing Association	Direct emergency financial assistance to tenants across Angus who are experiencing financial hardship. Support to access food and essential household items in times of need and where households may not meet the criteria for a Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grant £10,000
2021WFF.023 Brechin Buccaneers	Provision on Food Vouchers and packs, financial and energy efficiency advice, energy monitors and energy saving devices. £10,000
2021WFF.024 The Pitstop Project	Deliver a live feed project to identified parents who have been struggling with food poverty, giving each family a bag of ingredients every week and the recipe to follow us on our Facebook page to cook along in their own homes. £3,000
2021WFF.025 HORIZON	Provision of emergency support to Care Leavers and Young People in Conflict with the Law for Utilities, Food, Transport and Warm clothing. £5,000

Angus Allocation	485,000
Total Awarded	340,334
Balance	144,666



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

Positive Impact

Project GSG.28 will benefit children and young people attending schools in Angus who are facing food, clothing and/or financial hardship.

Project GSG.29 will benefit younger and older residents requiring digital skills support and access to devices

Winter 2021/22 projects will support marginalised and at-risk groups with tackling financial insecurity and access to food and fuel, and provide health and wellbeing benefits

Disability

Positive Impact

Project GSG.29 will resume contact with our most hard to reach and vulnerable citizens and service users.

Project GSG.28 and GSG.29, Health and wellbeing would be promoted

Winter 2021/22 projects will support marginalised and at-risk groups with tackling financial insecurity and access to food and fuel, and provide health and wellbeing benefits

Gender reassignment

Impact Neutral

N/A

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact Neutral

N/A

Pregnancy/Maternity

Impact Neutral

N/A

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

Impact Positive

Winter 2021/22 projects will support marginalised and at-risk groups with tackling financial insecurity and access to food and fuel, and provide health and wellbeing benefits

Religion or Belief

Impact Neutral

N/A

Sex

Impact Neutral

Winter 2021/22 projects will support marginalised and at-risk groups with tackling financial insecurity and access to food and fuel, and provide health and wellbeing benefits

Sexual orientation

Impact Neutral

N/A

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 child poverty, isolation, and other inequalities. Winter 2021/22 projects will support marginalised and at-risk groups with tackling financial insecurity and access to food and fuel, and provide health and wellbeing benefits

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 15 December 2021

Reviewed by: Doreen Philips 15 December 2021

Approved by: Ian Lorimer 12 January 2022

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