

ANGUS COUNCIL – 7 SEPTEMBER 2023

LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY (LACER) FUNDING

REPORT BY

ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR VIBRANT COMMUNITIES & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ABSTRACT

This report provides an update on projects funded using Scottish Government Local Authority Covid-19 Economic Recovery (LACER) funding.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) Note the update on progress with previously approved projects using LACER funding set out in Appendix 1;
- (ii) Note that a future report will be brought to members to provide a further update on progress with these schemes; and
- (iii) Note ongoing discussions to develop proposals for use of the £275,000 allocated as part of the budget setting 2023/24 to deliver further projects aligned with LACER principles and that a report will be brought back to committee with proposals for approval.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following priorities in the Angus Council Plan: We want to:

- be more commercial in our approach to contracts and support growth of business locally whenever possible through a *community wealth building approach.
- maximise the uptake of universal supports available for families in Angus.
- maximise funding opportunities and grants to the Third Sector and communities to support their ambitions to deliver services.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reference is made to Report 180/22 considered by the Council at its meeting of 30 June 2022, Report 363/22 considered by the Council at its meeting of 3 November 2022, and report 90/23 considered by Council at its meeting of 16 March 2023 which gave background on the guiding principles of the LACER funding; the key themes that were identified to support both individuals, families and businesses in Angus; the range of projects being proposed; and project proposals seeking member approval.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Angus Council received LACER funding of £1,666,869 as part of the grant redetermination payment for 2021/22.

4.2 Members have to date approved uses for the whole amount of £1,666,869, which includes allocations of £1,649,869 for 7 project schemes, and an allocation of £17,000 distributed for additional spend or new projects, as outlined in Table 1 below. Detail of these projects is provided in Report 180/22, 363/22 and 90/23 and a brief update on progress with these is provided in Appendix 1.

TABLE 1 - APPROVED SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FUNDED LACER PROJECTS

Key Theme and Proposed Intervention	Allocation (£)	Actual Spend end July 23 (£)
Town Centres Economic Growth - Support for Local Economic Recovery	400,000	315,144
Child Poverty Schools One-off Support Payments to low-income families	350,000	350,000
Child Poverty Welfare Rights and Social Care discretionary funds	150,000	17,949
Fuel Poverty/Cost of Living One-off Support energy Payments/Vouchers (Round 1)	400,000	400,000
Food Poverty Funding to Support Agencies & Capacity Building	103,717	103,717
Climate Change/Transport Poverty Targeted Free Public Transport	50,000	10,357
Food Poverty Cost of Living Roadshow Pilot 2022	1,000	1,000
Food Poverty Cost of Living Roadshows 2023	5,000	5,000
Fuel Poverty/Cost of Living One-off Support energy Payments/Vouchers (Round 2)	200,000	191,438
Food Poverty Summer 2023 Holiday Food and Fun Programme	7,152	7,152
Total	1,666,869	1,435,755

4.4 £1,666,869 Scottish Government LACER funding has now been fully committed to projects that will support our local businesses and lowest-income households, particularly families, with the increasing costs of living, increasing the income people have to spend in the local economy and prioritising our town centres, encouraging collaboration and economic growth.

4.5 At the budget setting meeting of 2 March 2023, Report 57/23, Elected Members agreed to set aside £275,000 to deliver further projects aligned with LACER principles (Appendix A to Report 57/23 refers).

4.6 Consultation with Council Officers and external partners is currently underway to develop project proposals and funding requests for the Angus Council LACER Funding of £275,000. Various other funding streams are available, and time is being taken to explore these which will add value to the additional LACER funding. A report will be brought to committee in November with these proposals.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Angus Council's share of the LACER funding has been confirmed and received as £1,666,869. All projects as set out in this report will be funded from this source so there will be no additional call on Angus Council financial resources other than officer time to administer the funding and deliver the projects.

5.2 All uses for the funding will be on a basis which does not add to the Council's running costs on a permanent basis.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 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) relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report is:

Angus Council – 30 June 2022 LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY (LACER) FUNDING Report 180/22

Angus Council – 3 November 2022 LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY (LACER) FUNDING Report 363/22

Angus Council – 13 March 2023 LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID 19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY (LACER) FUNDING - PROPOSAL FOR USE OF UNALLOCATED BALANCE OF FUNDING Report 90/23

Angus Council – 2 March 2023 PROVISIONAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2023/24 AND BEYOND AND SETTING OF THE 2023/24 COUNCIL TAX AND RELATED ISSUES - UPDATE ON THE GENERAL FUND RESERVE AND THE PROPOSED BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24-2027/28 Report 57/23

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Update on previously approved projects using LACER funding.

UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROJECTS USING LACER FUNDING

Project	Update
Child Poverty - One-off Support Payments and Discretionary Support Fund	2,365 individuals (one payment per eligible child) were supported, benefiting 1597 families. Project fully spent and complete.
Fuel Poverty/Cost of Living - One-off Support Payments / Vouchers (Heatwell Round 1)	Supported 1558 unique households and benefited 1484 children across Angus over October and November 2022 ensuring a warm home during difficult times. Project fully spent and complete.
Food Poverty - Funding to Support Agencies & Capacity Building	17 applicants were awarded full or part funding to deliver community food projects offering healthy eating / no cost initiatives. Project fully spent and complete.
Food Poverty – Cost of Living Roadshows 2022-23	Six Roadshows have been delivered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbroath, 5 November 2022 approx. public attendance 200, partners 22 Slow cookers distribution 44 • Brechin, 30 November 2022 approx. public attendance 80, partners 28 Slow cooker distribution 40 • Forfar, 7 December 2022 approx. public attendance 100 partners 21 Slow cooker distribution 26 • Montrose, 17 January 2023 Approx. public attendance 60, partners 21 Slow cooker distribution 12 • Newtyle, 1 February 2023 Approx. public attendance 13, partners 16 Slow cookers distributed 3 • Kirriemuir, 7 February 2023 Approx. public attendance 180, partners 25 Slow cookers distributed 8 Project is fully spent and complete.
Food Poverty – Summer 2023 School Holiday Food Provision	Funding towards costs of food provision during the Summer 2023 Holiday Food and Fun Programme has been allocated to partner providers. This project delivered additional support to assist with increased cost of living impacts on low-income households. Project is fully spent and complete.
Town Centres Economic Growth – Support for Local Economic Recovery	Independent retail programme – 57 grants approved. Total amount approved £113,950. Consultant Support to deliver independent retail programme (Elevator). Total spent - £169,992. Town Centre grant – 6 applications received. 4 awards have been made totalling £31,201.80. Awards agreed for:

	<p>Arbroath £8187.50 Brechin £7846.67 Kirriemuir £8903.63 Montrose £6264.00</p> <p>We are currently awaiting further information from Carnoustie and Forfar. (Max £20,00 award)</p> <p>Monifieth did not submit an application.</p> <p>Total spend to date: £315,143.80</p> <p>The remaining funding is being used for the potential implementation of an Angus gift card/loyalty programme to support businesses right across Angus. Feasibility work is currently underway to explore options.</p> <p>This project is still in the delivery period and further updates will be presented to Elected Members.</p>
<p>Child Poverty - Welfare Rights and Social Care discretionary funds</p>	<p>Steady demand on the fund through July. Predominantly paying to people in crisis for essential items such as food and electricity supply, essential household items and clothing. We continue to see people generally falling short before payday etc and/or hit with unexpected expense. Free travel passes have been helpful in some of these cases.</p> <p>Spend is commensurate with demand for the fund once other statutory options have been exhausted. Spending on the fund fluctuates and demand is expected to increase now schools are back and once autumn/winter arrives as this will put additional pressures on people with regard to increased expenditure on household costs and essential clothing etc. We also have a new project about to start focussing on older people and it is anticipated that this will also increase demand on the fund.</p> <p>It is difficult to anticipate when the money will be spent as external forces and wider government policy can affect the income and resources of people. This funding was not restricted to being spent within this financial year and therefore could be carried over into the next year. Ultimately it will continue to help alleviate financial crisis.</p> <p>Total spend to date: £17,949</p> <p>This project is still in the delivery period and further updates will be presented to Elected Members.</p>
<p>Climate Change / Transport Poverty – Targeted Free Public Transport</p>	<p>187 bus passes issued, with 2343 bus trips undertaken by pass holders to date</p> <p>Current average spend of around £2.5K per month. However, pass holders are increasing every month and user journeys vary, so speculative timescale for spend is 12 to 18 months.</p> <p>Total spend to date - £10,355.</p> <p>This project is still in the delivery period and further updates will be presented to Elected Members.</p>
<p>Fuel Poverty/Cost of Living – One-off Support energy</p>	<p>709 household supported with an energy payment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 270 direct payments totalling £68,502 to either their energy or oil provider.

**Payments/Vouchers
(Heatwell Round 2)**

- 156 Post Office vouchers totalling £38,514 for prepayment meter.
- 302 Pay-Point vouchers totalling £78,596 for prepayment meter.
- 13 households supported with Energy Saving Pack, totalling £568.
- Admin cost for issuing all payments totalling £5,259.

Total Spend to date: £191,439.

The remaining budget of £24,561 will now be dedicated to the Scarf Angus Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) who will utilise the vouchers at home visits or events in Angus. Same criteria applies.

This project is still in the delivery period and further updates will be presented to Elected Members.



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):

LOCAL AUTHORITY COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY (LACER) FUNDING

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:

Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth

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

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

(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).

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

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

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

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
Disability
Gender reassignment
Marriage and Civil Partnership
Pregnancy/Maternity
Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)
Religion or Belief
Sex
Sexual orientation

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.

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)?

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

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

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?

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

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?

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

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

Prepared by: Victoria Gibbons, Grants Officer, 16 August 2023

Reviewed by: Doreen Philips, Snr Practitioner (Equalities), 17 August 2023

Approved by: Alison Smith, Director Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth, 21 August 2023
