

Title of Report:	Update on Department for Communities (DfC) additional funding and Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group
Committee Report Submitted To:	The Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	16th February 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture Community Development Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£0
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	n/a

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a monthly update on the additional funding received from the Department for Communities (DfC) to support the voluntary and community sector as it continues to recover and help citizens to get through the COVID-19 pandemic and on the Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group and Action Plan.

2.0 Background

The Department for Communities has made a series of additional funds available to Councils through the Community Support Programme in order to support efforts of the community and voluntary sector and help alleviate the social and economic impact of the pandemic. The Leisure & Development Committee requested that this item remain on the agenda for regular updating to the Committee.

The following funds have been made available to Councils to date:

- Covid 19 Community Support Fund (2 Tranches) (Apr & Sept '20).
- Covid 19 Access to Food Fund (Nov '20).
- Covid 19 Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund (Nov '20).

3.0 Update on funding received in Dec '20 and Jan '21

The NI Executive agreed in October monitoring round an additional COVID allocation of £6.5m to DfC to allow the Department through its partners to address ongoing and newly emerging emotional and material needs faced by our communities' over the Christmas and New Year period up to March 2021. Regionally £3m of the additional funds was allocated to Councils in their role as key delivery partners using the Community Support Programme (CSP) mechanism, through the following 3 funds for which a letter of variance was received on 10th December:

- Food and Essential Supplies Fund.
- Warm, Well and Connected Fund.
- Volunteering Support Fund.

Further additional funding was received in a letter of variance on 11th January Council in the form of:

- 3rd Tranche of the Covid-19 Community Support Fund.

3.1 Food & Essential Supplies Fund

The purpose of the Fund is to support the most vulnerable in our society to access food and other essential items through a range of immediate and medium term interventions to address the significant dual challenges of Christmas/New Year and Brexit, both of which will exacerbate food poverty and insecurity between now and the end of March 2021.

A grant programme was opened on 15th December with a budget of £100,000 – grants of up to £2,000 are available for provision of food and other essentials. The Fund has now been fully allocated with 53 organisations receiving funding.

In addition, an allocation from this fund will support the established food bank partners as part of the Anti-Poverty Steering Group in order to ensure sufficient stocks of food and essential items for the Jan-Mar period.

3.2 Warm Well and Connected Fund

The purpose of the Fund is to support initiatives that address fuel poverty, tackle loneliness and isolation or promote good mental health and well-being. The Fund is targeted at areas of highest deprivation including Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, Areas at Risk and Small Pockets of Deprivation.

A grant programme was opened on 4th January for community and voluntary organisations with a budget of £42,664 – grants of up to £2,000 will be available for projects that support residents in the eligible areas.

- DfC Neighbourhood Renewal Areas: Coleraine East (Millburn, Ballysally); Coleraine Churchlands; Limavady.
- DfC Areas at Risk: Harpurs Hill (Cross Glebe); Portrush - Hopefield 1 Super Output Area (SOA).
- DfC Small Pockets of Deprivation: Ballymoney - Carnany, Castle & Glebeside.

As of 28th January 14 applications have been successful with an amount of £28,000 awarded.

3.3 Volunteering Support Fund

The purpose of the Fund is to provide vital support for volunteering in recognition of the crucial role that volunteers have played in the crisis to date and will help deliver ongoing food need until March 2021. The Fund will assist with reimbursement of volunteer expenses and support for building volunteer capacity. In line with Department's direction that Volunteer Centres are connected into local planned responses, the 2 local Volunteers Centres in CCG ie. Causeway Volunteer Centre and Limavady Volunteer Centre were contracted to roll out a Volunteering small grant (Grant of up to £500) and other volunteering supports. A call for applications was opened on 13th January and 74 organisations have been successful in their applications for funding for volunteer expenses.

3.4 Covid-19 Community Support Fund - 3rd Tranche

A grant programme was opened on 18th January with grants of up to £4,000. The rationale for offering an uplift in the maximum award was twofold:

1. Following consultation with a number of local community groups engaged in providing COVID 19 response projects, it became evident that there was a growing demand and need for the provision of digital/ICT support to individuals, particularly older people, and families with children who were suffering social isolation or who were struggling with providing remote home schooling due to lack of adequate personal resources.
2. The overall additional funding provided to council in this tranche had significantly increased, by 49% and was time bound, needing to be expended by 31st March.

Grants are available for activities that supported:

- Food - access to food (whether due to cost or availability) for those most in need.
- Financial - to those on low income and at risk due to financial stress.
- Connectivity - to those living alone or isolated that are likely to experience greater challenges in accessing services.

A budget of £187,737 is available and the programme is a rolling one and will remain open until all the Fund has been allocated.

4.0 Overall Progress Report Summary

Project	DfC funding provided	Update
Covid-19 Community Support Fund Tranche 1	£80,700	Open grant programme for community and voluntary organisations – 50 grants of upto £2,000 awarded (April 2020) for activities that supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food - access to food (whether due to cost or availability) for those most in need. • Financial - to those on low income and at risk due to financial stress. • Connectivity - to those living alone or isolated that are likely to experience greater challenges in accessing services.
Covid-19 Community Support Fund Tranche 2	£126,227	Open grant programme for community and voluntary organisations – 47 grants of upto £3,000 awarded (Sep 2020) for activities similar to Tranche 1.
Covid 19 Access to Food	£63,113	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding support of £20,000 provided to bolster infrastructure of established foodbanks • Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group established with terms of reference agreed. • Engagement survey and focus group undertaken and 18-month Anti-Poverty Action Plan at initial draft stage. • One to one wraparound support service for people experiencing poverty to improve financial wellbeing has been procured – LCDI will lead a consortium of advice organisations and food banks to deliver this service between Jan-Mar 21. • Awareness raising campaign 'Where To Turn' underway with dedicated webpage, social media campaign and information leaflets being developed. • Other projects to be identified within Anti-poverty Action Plan
Covid 19 Financial Inclusion Partnership	£58,147	
Food and Essential Supplies Fund	£168,186	Open grant programme for community and voluntary organisations – grants of up to £2,000 for activities that provide food and other essentials prior to Christmas and the New Year and medium-term projects that support people in food poverty leading up to March 2021. Opened 15 th December; Fund now fully allocated; 53 organisations have received funding. Direct award of £60,000 to 4 established foodbanks to ensure sufficient stocks of food for Jan-Mar period.
Warm, Well and Connected Fund	£42,664	Open grant programme for community and voluntary organisations – grants of up to £2,000 for activities that address fuel poverty, tackle loneliness and isolation or promote good mental health and well-being in eligible areas of deprivation. Opened 4 th January; rolling programme

Volunteering Support Fund	£42,046	2 local Volunteer Centres rolled out a Volunteering small grant and other volunteering supports. A call for applications was opened on 13 th January and 74 organisations have been successful in their applications for funding for volunteer expenses.
Covid-19 Community Support Fund Tranche 3 (Strand 5)	£187,737	<p>Open grant programme of up to £4,000 available for activities that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food - access to food (whether due to cost or availability) for those most in need. • Financial - to those on low income and at risk due to financial stress. • Connectivity - to those living alone or isolated that are likely to experience greater challenges in accessing services. <p>Opened 18th January; Rolling programme.</p>