

Title of Report:	DfC Covid-19 Financial Inclusion and Food Partnership Funds
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development
Date of Meeting:	October 2020
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 net cost
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. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide members with further information regarding additional funding from Department for Communities (DfC), particularly the presentation of the proposal submitted to the Department to address financial wellbeing/inclusion and food poverty.

2. Background

The Department for Communities has made 3 funds available to Councils to help respond to the Covid 19 pandemic. The funds are as follows:

- i. Covid 19 Community Support Fund (additional tranche)
- ii. Covid 19 Access to Food Fund; and
- iii. Covid 19 Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund.

An information report was provided to the committee in September 2020 in relation to the first aspect of the funding package, namely the Covid 19 Community Fund (£126, 226), which is now live and being administered and has just closed for applications with 51 applications currently being assessed.

Additionally, Council has been offered financial assistance from the Department for Communities for the following strands:

Covid-19 Financial Inclusion Partnership Fund to support preventative financial wellbeing measures, to be delivered through community sector organisations, led by Councils.	£58,147
Covid-19 Food Partnership Fund to develop a collaborative approach to deliver a more effective and efficient and flexible supply of food (and other linked supports) to those in critical need	£63,113

The Department advised that they wish to use a co-design approach to enable the design of local proposals to be delivered under these strands, the Covid 19 Food Partnership and the Financial Inclusion Partnership Funds. Meetings were held in September for DfC officials and council officers to discuss the co-design of a the local strategy for both the Financial Inclusion Fund and the Access to Food Fund. Officers were asked to submit an application by 30th September, based on indicative offer to council and at the time of writing this report, DfC have approved the submission.

3. Approach

A proposal has been submitted from officers to the Department, following meetings in early September during which DfC officials provided further details in relation to the performance measures and outcomes required of councils in relation to the funding on offer. These are included in Annex A of the report.

The proposal was compiled based on an understanding that poverty has a range of causal factors which cannot be easily segregated into types of poverty such as food, fuel and therefore the 2 strands have been compiled into one overall programme which will be guided by the establishment of an Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group (involving relevant stakeholders) with an associated Action Plan. This will ensure that a multi-disciplinary approach will be taken to addressing poverty that will

also be embedded in the Community Plan. Structures established will therefore be sustained beyond the timescale of these DfC programme strands.

I. Anti-poverty Stakeholder Steering Group

The proposal includes the establishment of an Anti-Poverty Steering Group to facilitate those organisations whose core business is tackling poverty in the Borough in order to ensure a collaborative and co-ordinated approach to developing an Anti-Poverty Action Plan to address the key performance measure and outcomes associated with the DfC programme, as well as additional priorities which address broader poverty related issues.

Prior to submission, officers carried out an initial scoping exercise with a range of organisations who deliver anti-poverty programmes to test the proposed approach and determine current need, to ensure the feasibility of adopting the approach outlined above.

II. Development of an Action Plan

Council will work with the Steering Group to research, consult and develop an 18 month Anti-poverty Action Plan that will identify collaborative interventions to assist in achieving the objectives the Financial Inclusion and Access to Food programme strands in Causeway Coast and Glens:

- To bring together local expertise to provide joined-up action to support a wide range of initiatives to help people emerge from the crisis.
- To build and develop those local support mechanisms and partnerships to further maximise limited resources to meet increasing needs in local communities.
- To build capacity and capability within the existing local infrastructure
- To facilitate a collaborative approach to develop local food poverty/food insecurity interventions and deliver a more effective and efficient and flexible supply of food (and other linked supports) to those in critical need.
- To move from an emergency response towards a longer term food poverty approach, in the context of the Anti-poverty Strategy.
- To target those most likely to be adversely impacted by the economic fallout of the pandemic, help build financial resilience and improve overall financial wellbeing
- To promote a joined-up coordinated 'whole person' approach.
- To maximise collaboration with regional resources

Engagement with the wider community and voluntary sector will be a key element of development of the action plan.

III. Programme elements and budget allocation

The submission to DfC the programme is as follows:

Strand	Details	Timescale	Estimated cost (£)
A	<p>i. Establish Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group with external facilitation to support establishment for first 4 meetings</p> <p>ii. Research, consult and develop an 18 month Anti-Poverty/ Building Resilience Action Plan</p>	<p>Initiated in October 2020</p> <p>By mid December 2020</p>	£7,200
B	<p>Build capability of local infrastructure in 4 main registered foodbanks with</p> <p>i. purchase and installation of necessary equipment</p> <p>ii. Expert mentor support to assess operating models and develop sustainability/ fundraising plans</p>	<p>By end November 2020</p> <p>By end Jan 2021</p>	£23,000
C	<p>Collate directory of local poverty intervention services (food banks, advice organisations, social supermarkets, family support services, credit unions, fuel voucher scheme etc) and develop and roll out an awareness raising campaign to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dedicated interactive webpage on Councils website - Social media campaign on Council corporate media platforms - Leaflets and posters for community houses, community centres and other community hubs - Information/ training session for community groups on services available and how to refer 	By start November 2020	£10,000
D	<p>One to one wraparound support programme <i>for people experiencing poverty who aren't currently availing of services</i> to improve their financial wellbeing</p> <p>Support will be delivered over a series of 6 regular sessions to include access to food bank, social supermarket, budgeting and money management, benefit checks and whatever other 'handholding' support is required to improve their confidence and capability – to be delivered by a consortium of community partners, with possibly one hub to cover the West of borough and another to cover the East of the borough.</p>	By end March 2021	£60,000
E	<p>Other projects to be identified within Anti-poverty Action Plan</p> <p>Eg holiday hunger projects, preparation of meals on a budget.</p>	By end March 2021	£21,060

4. Timescale

Council has secured interim approval from DfC to appoint a consultant through SIB to commence work on establishing the Stakeholder Steering Group. Work will commence immediately to establish the steering group and plan the engagement process to develop an Action Plan. The full allocation will be required to be expended, following DfC sign off, by 31st March 2020.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Report cards will be developed for each of the elements of the programme using an Outcomes Based Accountability approach to measure:

1. How much did we do?
2. How well did we do it?
3. Is anyone better off?

DfC has provided draft report cards with a range of indicators which are attached at Annex 1 and 2. Appropriate indicators will be determined when project outputs and outcomes have been agreed for each of the programme elements.

Annex A: DfC Programme Performance Measures and Outcomes

DfC Access to Food Report Card

<u>HOW MUCH DID WE DO?</u>	<u>HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?</u>
<p>Number of partnerships/collaborations (for example, Trusts, councils, DfC, Community & Voluntary sector, Private Sector, PHA) working together to provide access to food and other linked support projects by council</p> <p>Number of projects being taken forward by these partnerships by council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to food projects • Linked support projects <p>Direct food support: Beneficiaries – numbers referred and then food supplied, source of referral, postcode and date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Age • Ethnicity • Employment status • Referrals to other supports <p>Linked support projects Beneficiaries – numbers referred, source of referral, postcode and date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical • Complementary Health • Advice • Training • Volunteering • Referrals to other supports <p>Amount spent by council to provide food boxes</p>	<p>% of stakeholders reporting that they were satisfied with the quality of the engagement by the projects</p> <p>% of food referrals who received food</p> <p>Average time between referral and food supply</p> <p>% of those receiving food rating the range and quality of the food as excellent or good</p> <p>% of those receiving food who felt they were treated well/with dignity</p> <p>% of those receiving food signposted to receive additional support</p> <p>% of those receiving additional support who feel it helped them</p> <p>% of those receiving additional support who feel they were treated well/with dignity</p>
<u>IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?</u>	
<p>Number and % of beneficiaries reporting a reduction in food poverty/insecurity</p> <p>Number and % of beneficiaries showing an improvement in measures associated with self-efficacy and locus of control</p> <p>Number and % of beneficiaries showing an improvement in life satisfaction</p> <p>Number and % of beneficiaries reporting that the additional linked support had helped them, <i>These measures will depend on the specific aims of the linked support and if Councils provide some more detail we can draft appropriate measures. For example,</i></p> <p><i>Does the training aim to provide accreditation/qualification in certain areas?</i></p> <p><i>Does the volunteering aim to provide skills/experience to help secure employment?</i></p> <p><i>Does the medical/complementary health support aim to improve beneficiaries health?</i></p> <p><i>What is the aim of the advice support provided?</i></p> <p>Case Studies</p>	

DfC Financial Inclusion Report Card

<p><u>How much did we do?</u></p> <p>Number of community partnerships established</p> <p>Number of Financial Inclusion Plans developed by community partnerships</p> <p>Number of people financially impacted who would benefit from financial education and resilience support provided with information on financial wellbeing services (including credit & savings info) by target group, by council</p> <p>Number of referrals to debt advice service by target group, by council</p> <p>Number of referrals to income & benefits maximisation advice service by target group, by council</p> <p>Number of referrals to money management/budgeting advice by target group, by council</p> <p>Total funding distributed by DfC by council via Financial Inclusion fund.</p>	<p><u>How well did we do it?</u></p> <p>% of community partnerships established within agreed timescales</p> <p>% of Financial Inclusion Plans developed by community partnerships within agreed timescales</p> <p>% of stakeholders reporting that they were satisfied with the quality of the engagement by the partnership (by council)</p> <p>% of people who were provided with information on financial wellbeing services that were satisfied with the information</p> <p>% of people who were provided with information on financial wellbeing services that felt the information had helped them</p> <p>% of people who were provided with information on financial wellbeing services that felt they were treated well</p> <p>% of people who received debt advice that were satisfied with the advice</p> <p>% of people who received debt advice that felt the advice had helped them</p> <p>% of people who received debt advice that felt they were treated well</p> <p>% of people who received income & benefits maximisation advice that were satisfied with advice</p> <p>% of people who received income & benefits maximisation advice that felt the advice had helped them</p> <p>% of people who received income & benefits maximisation advice that felt they were treated well</p> <p>% of people who received money management/budgeting advice that were satisfied with advice</p> <p>% of people who received money management/budgeting advice that felt the advice had helped them</p> <p>% of people who received money management/budgeting advice that felt they were treated well</p>
<p><u>Is anybody better off?</u></p> <p>Number & % of clients who reported that they were making better financial decisions</p> <p>Number & % of clients who reported that they feel more in control of their finances</p>	

Number & % of clients who reported that they have improved budgeting skills
Number & % of clients who reported more disposable income
Number & % of clients reporting increased self-efficacy
Number & % of clients reporting increased locus of control

6. Next Steps

- The Covid 19 Community Support Fund will reopen for applications with this second DfC funding tranche during week commencing 7th September 2020 and applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the budget is exhausted.
- An introductory meeting will be held early September for DfC officials and council officers to discuss approaches on how to co-design the local strategy for both the Financial Inclusion Fund and the Access to Food Fund.
- In advance of this a small focus group has been arranged to consider the issues in Causeway Coast and Glens. Initially the invitations to this focus group are being extended to food banks and frontline advice organisations in the Borough. Tackling Poverty is a key action within the Community Plan for Causeway Coast and Glens and consideration will be given to other partners that should be around the table and how best in the context of Community Planning to involve all stakeholders that are addressing poverty in Causeway Coast and Glens.