



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

2 December 2021

Report of the Director of Public Health

Use of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to provide emergency energy support.

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide

2. Key Decision

2.1 Not a key decision

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities to utilise Contain Outbreak Management Funding to:

- a) Strengthen emergency energy support within Derbyshire for an additional 10 months from December 2021 to Sept 2022, at a cost of £64,000.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 In February 2021 (£32,000) and March 2022 (£64,000), Derbyshire County Council allocated £96,000 of its share of the Local Authority Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies to Marches Energy Advice (MEA), to enhance their work with foodbanks by funding emergency energy costs for people presenting in crisis. This grant was provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to support people who were struggling to afford essentials due

to the impact of Covid-19. Local Authorities had the discretion to identify and support those most in need.

- 4.2 As Derbyshire continues to respond to Covid-19, individuals will still be asked to self-isolate if they test positive for Covid-19 or, in certain circumstances, have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive. In some instances, this request to self-isolate will create challenges for individuals in terms of financial hardship, which could have knock on consequences for maintaining warm housing and adequate hot water to prevent onward spread of infection. The funding proposed in this report seeks to proactively ensure that residents can effectively self-isolate in their own homes.
- 4.3 Evidence suggests that people who present at foodbanks often go without heating or electricity and will be living in extreme financial vulnerability. One in five will also have slept rough in recent months. Rising energy costs are putting additional pressure on vulnerable individuals, with the typical household bill increasing by £139 (from £1,156 to £1,309 a year) and people with pre-payment meters seeing an even higher increase of £153 (from £1,156 to £1,309 a year) (MEA, 2021). Switching tariffs is unlikely to save money, as due to the sharp and unprecedented gas price rises this year many utility companies are no longer able to offer good deals.
- 4.4 This report seeks approval to extend the emergency fuel support project delivered by MEA, by granting a further £64,000 to continue to strengthen work with food banks, to ensure people are also supported with heating costs when in crisis. Work moving forward will also be extended to support vulnerable people presenting at Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF), with additional referral pathways to be developed.
- 4.5 Since funding for the project started, MEA have reported the following key headline outcomes:-
- 368 households have received help
 - 141 pre-payment meter vouchers have been issued.
 - £13,458 of fuel debt has been removed from clients
- Clients have also been supplied with cooking appliances, electric throws to support winter warmth, energy efficient light bulbs and other home energy efficient solutions to keep the cost of future energy bills lower.
- 4.6 Collaborative pathways have been developed between a range of services in the past 6 months to strengthen interconnection between services including the Foodbanks, Derbyshire Welfare Rights Service, Derbyshire Discretionary Fund, local contact tracing team and

Community Response Unit so that staff working in these areas can signpost individuals to appropriate support as required. This forms part of Derbyshire's holistic approach to supporting individuals to effectively self-isolate or plan for self-isolation.

- 4.7 It is intended that by providing the support needed to achieve warm homes and hot water, individuals will be less likely to challenge the rules in the future and this will enable them to self-isolate, and to provide accurate test and trace information as the financial jeopardy of doing so is substantially mitigated.
- 4.8 Funding will be allocated as a grant payment
- 4.9 MEA will monitor and evaluate the project and will sample a small number of users to understand whether the advice/support provided enabled them to effectively plan for and/or undertake a period of self-isolation. Learning will be shared to inform future local activity in this area.

5 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 Do nothing: Risk that demand will outstrip resources, once existing funding runs out, or that staff will leave the organisation as contracts come to an end.
- 5.2 Consider strengthening other providers. This carries the risk that complex situations requiring specialist energy advice will not be addressed.

6 Implications

- 6.1 See appendix 1

7 Background Papers

FINAL ALLOCATION OF DERBYSHIRE'S CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): LOCAL AUTHORITY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR FOOD AND ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES (REPORT 3) CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES - 4 February 2021

<https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/s5839/Local%20Authority%20Emergency%20Assistance%20Grant.pdf>

FINAL ALLOCATION OF DERBYSHIRE'S CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): LOCAL AUTHORITY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR FOOD AND ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES (REPORT 4) CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES - 25 March 2021

<https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/s6289/Local%20Authority%20Emergency%20Assistance%20Grant.pdf>

8 Appendices

8.1 N/A

9 Recommendation(s)

9.1 That the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities approves the usage of Contain Outbreak Management Funding to:

- a) Strengthen emergency energy support within Derbyshire for an additional 10 months from December 2021 to September 2022, at a cost of £64,000, through provision of a grant award to Marches Energy Advice.

10 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

10.1 Offer longer term capacity to provide emergency energy support that will enable people in Derbyshire to have the confidence or resources to self-isolate effectively.

11 Is it necessary to waive the call-in period?

11.1 No

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 For 2020-21 DCC has been allocated a total Contain funding grant of £20.182m of which £19.058 m has been rolled over to 2021-22. A further £3.958m of Contain funding has also been allocated via a grant funding arrangement from the Department of Health and Social Care for 2021-22. Expenditure associated with the delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan will utilise the Contain framework grant funding. The grants totally £144,000 outlined in this report will be funded from this budget.

Legal

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed the overall profile of spend when it met on 4 January 2021 and that delegated authority will be given to the Director of Public Health and Cabinet Member for Health and Communities to develop an implementation plan co-ordinate the delivery of the different workstreams described in this report. Where appropriate additional approvals from Cabinet Member would be sought in line with the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations.
- 2.2 The Council's Financial Regulations allow grants of up to £0.100m to organisations to be approved by Cabinet Member. The Council's Constitution allows for Cabinet Members to delegate authority to officers to undertake the powers afforded to them by the Constitution. The Council's standard grant agreement shall be used to set out the terms and conditions for which the grants are made, which provides for clawback of funding in certain circumstances and shall also provide that the Council is not liable for any employment liabilities.

Human Resources

- 3.1 The funding will enable local providers to deliver projects and services. Derbyshire County Council accepts no employment or future redundancy liability, with all employment and related matters to be managed by the providers

