

PUBLIC

Author: Lois Race / Vicky Smyth

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING WITH CABINET MEMBER, HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

4 February 2021

Report of the Director of Public Health

FURTHER ALLOCATION OF DERBYSHIRE'S CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): LOCAL AUTHORITY EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANT FOR FOOD AND ESSENTIAL (REPORT 3)

1. Purpose of the report

To update the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities on the allocations of the Coronavirus (Covid-19): Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies.

To seek additional approval as outlined in the report, to enable allocation of grant funding to further external organisations as stated.

2. Information and analysis

Derbyshire County Council received £0.808m in the form of a Local Authority Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies. This grant was provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to support people who are struggling to afford essentials due to the impact of Covid-19.

Local authorities have the discretion to identify and support those most in need. As such Public Health has been liaising with key partnership groups to develop ideas being put forward, and seek assurance that the grant is meeting local needs.

Two previous reports to the cabinet member setting out the background in detail and allocating the bulk of the monies were approved on 4 September 2020 [Minute number 37/20], and 7 January 2021 [Minute number tbc]. Since those reports, disbursement of the agreed monies has taken place.

In both reports, in the 'risks' section it was stated:

"The impact of Covid-19 on our vulnerable communities is constantly changing, making it hard to predict future needs and pressure points. To mitigate against this, the report recommends that a level of contingency funding is set aside in the budget that can be allocated at a later date to meet any emerging needs that haven't already been considered in the

recommendations, or to strengthen ones that require more funding than anticipated’.

In response to these changing needs this report proposes a further allocation of funding to enhance fuel poverty support to people across Derbyshire, and to provide copies of the national ‘Quids In’ Financial Inclusion advice magazine for distribution through foodbanks and networks.

Fuel Poverty

The original report to CabCo on 4 September identified £20,000 for fuel poverty related support. £10k of which has already been dispersed to the Derbyshire Healthy Homes project.

This report seeks approval to channel the remaining £10k to Marches Energy Advice to enhance their work with foodbanks (January – March 2021). It also recommends a further top up of funding with an additional £22,000 from the contingency put towards this important agenda area. Funding will have an additional focus on funding emergency support for people with credit meters. Support to this agenda, also complements Public Health’s holistic winter pressure support programme being co-ordinated on behalf of the system by the Community Response Unit.

In partnership with food banks across Derbyshire, this additional funding will provide emergency support on energy use to a minimum of 250 householders at a time of crisis. Key deliverables include:

- Emergency credit meter funding or pre-payment meter funding
- B-Warm electric seat warmers
- 3-4 LED bulbs per home
- Staff time to facilitate the allocation
- Full subsequent support through Warmer Derby and Derbyshire including:
 - Casework support for complex billing and energy debt issues
 - Support with changing energy tariffs to get the cheapest rates available
 - Access to capital funding measures including insulation and heating repairs/ upgrades

Some households may only receive one measure, others may receive 2-3, depending on need, which will be determined using existing food bank criteria.

'Quids In' magazine

This is a national publication giving advice and 'top tips' aimed at tenants and those on low income around managing money; accessing help; avoiding rogue traders and loan sharks etc.

In conjunction with Rural Action Derbyshire and the Feeding Derbyshire network it is proposed to purchase copies to distribute through foodbanks and Feeding Derbyshire projects twice in the coming year. This would be for a one off cost paid in the spring.

There are cost savings to be had for buying in bulk and therefore it is proposed to grant fund Rural Action Derbyshire £3,000 which is sufficient to purchase 10,000 copies (twice) during 2021.

Cabinet member approval is therefore sought as follows:

Cabinet member approval sought in this report to allocate as follows:-			
£32,000	Warmer Derby and Derbyshire – Winter Fuel Support	Marches Energy Advice	To work with food banks across Derbyshire providing emergency support on energy use to a minimum of 250 householders at a time of crisis
£3,000	Provision of information around money issues	Rural Action Derbyshire	To purchase 'Quids In' magazine as a resource for Feeding Derbyshire activities and foodbanks

3. Financial Considerations

Funding for these grants will be covered by Derbyshire's £0.808m allocation of the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies provided by DEFRA.

If the allocations outlined in the report are approved it will bring the total committed so far to £0.647m.

Recommendations for the remaining £0.161m contingency will be brought to the March meeting for approval.

4. Risks

Given the unpredictable nature of the pandemic there remains a risk that demand will outstretch resources.

The impact of Covid-19 on our vulnerable communities continues to constantly change, making it hard to predict future needs and pressure points. To mitigate against this, the original report (4 September 2020) recommended that a level of contingency funding be set aside in the budget that can be allocated at a later date to meet any emerging needs that haven't already been considered in the recommendations, or to strengthen ones that require more funding than anticipated. This recommendation falls within this scope.

5. Social Value considerations

Health and wellbeing is intrinsically linked to the wider social determinants of health including access to food, unemployment and education. Poorer individuals experience worse health outcomes than people better off.

Socioeconomic deprivation puts some people at a much higher risk of catching and dying from Covid 19 (Health Foundation, 2020). Measures put in place to control the virus are also having a disproportionate effect on some communities, which is likely to deepen health inequalities in the longer term (Health Foundation, 2020).

The interventions outlined in this, and previous reports are aimed at supporting those most in need.

6. Other considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, human resources, environmental, health, and property and transport considerations.

7. Background papers

- Report for Public Health Senior Management Team: 'Allocation of Derbyshire's Coronavirus (COVID-19): Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies' (4 August 2020)
- Report for Corporate Management Team: 'Allocation of Derbyshire's Coronavirus (COVID-19): Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies' (6 August 2020)
- Cabinet Member Report – 4 September 2020 - Allocation of Derbyshire's Coronavirus (COVID-19): Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential
- Cabinet Member Report – 7 January 2021 - Allocation of Derbyshire's Coronavirus (COVID-19): Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential

8. Key Decision

No

9. Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report?

No

10. Officer's Recommendation

To note the information contained in this report and approve the recommendation regarding a further allocation of external grant to support provision of services relating to the Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies.

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health