

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND PROGRESS

Purpose of the Report

1. This report is to update Committee on progress to deliver the Fund and confirm the establishment of 3FTE temporary posts to provide additional staff resource to support delivery.

Information

2. Members will recall that in the Autumn the Government allocated £5.6m to the Council to support those in immediate need as a consequence of the Covid pandemic, with funding to be spent by the end of March 2022. The funding is to provide support with food, energy, and water bills, as well as essential costs related to those items, and (in exceptional cases) to housing costs.
3. Members will further recall that a decision was taken at November's Children and Young People's Committee to spend £2.3m of the Fund to provide food vouchers to children entitled to Free School Meals for each of the five school holiday weeks between October and the end of March.
4. Collaborative working to deliver the remaining £3.3m for other forms of support has continued through the Household Support Fund Partnership Steering Group that includes County, Borough, and District Council colleagues.
5. Working with these partners the phased launch of the Other Support funding commenced on 15th November. A report outlining progress and seeking approval for the establishment of 5FTE temporary posts to administer the fund were approved at the Communities Committee meeting in December.

Progress to Date

6. As at 4th January, in summary the following has been provided to those in immediate need:
 - £1.8m of food vouchers to those entitled to free school meals for the October and December school holidays
 - £275k of Food and Energy Vouchers to 3,680 Households
 - £4k of Essential Domestic Appliances
7. The paragraphs below provide a further breakdown of this support.

8. **School holiday food vouchers** – The amounts of food vouchers deployed by setting to date for the for those eligible for Free School Meals are set out in the table below. The vouchers have been provided to approximately 29,830 pupils for each of the weeks of the holidays.

Channel	October £	December £	Total Applied to Date £
Schools and Academies	750,795	882,195	1,632,990
Early Years Providers	71,250	70,590	141,840
Colleges	12,495	25,590	38,085
Inspire	1,560	1,770	3,330
RNN Group (Training Provider)	1,560	1,560	3,120
Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)	2,910	3,060	5,970
Total	£840,570	£984,765	£1,825,335

9. **Other support** – as at 4th January 2022, 3,680 Households have been provided with £274,509 of support, broken down between ‘food’ totalling £167,279, and ‘energy’ totalling £107,230 as detailed below.

	Food		Energy		Total	
	Number of awards	Value £	Number of awards	Value £	Number of households	Value £
Households with Children	1,906	121,228	1,403	£68,610	2,329	189,838
Households without children	1,117	46,051	790	38,620	1,351	84,671
Total	3,023	£167,279	2,193	£107,230	3,680	£274,509

10. **Essential Domestic Appliances** - support has been provided outlined in the table below.

Item	Number provided	£
Fridge Freezer	7	1,452
Washing Machine	7	1,686
Electric Cooker	5	913
Total	19	£4,051

Administration of the Scheme

11. The first design of the scheme to deliver the balance of funding was based on referrals being made approved by professionals in designated organisations.
12. At its meeting on 14th December the Partnership Steering Group identified that capacity in several partners to process the volume of referrals being requested (particularly where the applicant was not known and contacting one of the partners to be assessed) was becoming a challenge.
13. The Group discussed potential solutions to increase capacity and decided that increasing the Central Team to deal with referrals received by the partnership from those people not known to it would be the most effective solution. As such, recruitment to 3 additional short term temporary posts has commenced and the criteria of the scheme amended to allow people to refer themselves to the central team.
14. The posts and the maximum associated costs for the period of appointment to 31st March 2022 are:

Post	Band	FTE	Total Cost to 31st March £	Estimated Earliest Start Date
Project Officer	Band A	3	26,740	15 th January
	Total	3	£26,740	

15. The total projected cost of the central team until the end of March including these additional roles is now £95,028.
16. Aside from the costs of the central team, partners are incurring other reasonable administration costs. Work is underway to establish those, but at the time of writing, a figure of £100k from the Fund by 31st March is predicted to cover those, although there may be some movement on that figure.

Next Steps

17. It is estimated that from the time of writing until the scheme's end that £100k of awards per week on average for support will be made. For the February half term holiday, it is estimated that £491.5k will be spent on Food vouchers for those in receipt of Free School Meals.
18. The total predicted spend by end of the financial year based on these estimates and utilising existing approaches would be:

	Forecast £
Holiday Food Vouchers for those in receipt of Free School Meals	2,316,835
Other Essential Support	1,474,509
Administration Costs	200,000

Total Predicted Spend	£3,991,344
Amount Awarded by Government	5,646,450
Balance unallocated to be spent	£1,655,106

19. At the time of writing the scheme has been running for 7 weeks, and 11 weeks remain.
20. Work is underway with Partners to identify how to apply the balance to effectively get that support to those in immediate need. This work will focus on increasing the current voucher limits of the existing scheme to deploy the majority of the balance to those who have already received support or will receive support in the remaining weeks. This will maximise the funding support available to those most in need.
21. Any remaining funding after the changes to the voucher limits will be provided to those children entitled to Free School Meals Vouchers by increasing the value of the food vouchers that are to be issued for February half term.
22. Officers will report back to the next Committee regarding the options selected by the partnership to best deploy the funding.

Other Options Considered

23. Not allocating additional resource to administer the fund.

Reasons for Recommendations

24. To ensure that the available funding is fully utilised and effectively managed to support the intended beneficiaries.

Statutory and Policy Implications

25. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

26. £5.6m has been awarded to the Council, and £2.3m was committed at the Children and Young People's Committee on 1st November 2021, leaving £3.3m remaining to cover the costs of other support and reasonable administrative costs.

Human Resources Implications

27. The recruitment process to fill the temporary roles is taking place in accordance with relevant Nottinghamshire County Council human resources recruitment and selection

procedures and delegations. Relevant existing job descriptions were utilised to ensure the timely recruitment to the posts

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 1) Ratifies the recruitment to the additional 3FTE temporary posts established within the Trading Standards and Communities Service to administer delivery of the Fund.
- 2) Approves that a further report be brought to the next Committee to update and to ratify further development of the scheme.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact: Mark Walker, Group Manager, Trading Standards and Communities, Tel: 0115 977 2173

Constitutional Comments (KK 11/01/2022)

28. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Communities Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 07/01/2022)

29. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 26 of the report.

30. £5.6m has been awarded to the Council, and £2.3m was committed at the Children and Young People's Committee on 1st November 2021, leaving £3.3m remaining to cover the costs of other support and reasonable administrative costs.

31. This report forecasts that £1.7m of the £5.6m is currently unallocated and work is underway with partners to deploy that to those in immediate need.

HR Comments (JP 07/01/2022)

32. The Human Resources implications are contained at para 27.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All