

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 of the Fund to 31 March 2022, to outline the approach for the continuation of the Fund for the coming 6 months and to seek approval to extend 8FTE temporary posts to provide staff resource to continue to deliver the Fund in Nottinghamshire.

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 provided 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.

Spend

5. As at 31 March, in summary the following has been provided to those in immediate need:
 - £2.48m of food vouchers to those entitled to free school meals for the October, December, and February school holidays
 - £2.8m of Food and Energy Vouchers
 - £71k of Essential Domestic Appliances
6. The paragraphs below provide a further breakdown of this support.

Free School Meals

7. Free School Meal funding was provided to those listed as eligible and monies were provided to schools, academies, and other settings to distribute

8. The table below shows the final reconciled spend for Free Schools Meals paid for from the fund between October 2021 – March 2022

Channel	October £	December £	February £	Total Applied to Date £
Schools and Academies	£713,508	£797,496	£770,549	£2,281,553
Early Years Providers	£42,480	£46,230	£54,060	£142,770
Colleges	£7,395	£16,920	£17,550	£41,865
Inspire	£1,140	£1,320	£1,200	£3,660
RNN Group (Training Provider)	£1,320	£1,350	£1,350	£4,020
Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)	£1,950	£2,160	£2,460	£6,570
Total	£767,793	£865,476	£847,169	£2,480,438

Other Support

9. Through a process of individual referrals and requests from partners the following voucher support was issued to assist with food and energy bills.

	Food		Energy		Total	
	Number of awards	Value £	Number of awards	Value £	Number of awards	Value £
Households with Children	13683	£1,399,532	9050	£443,450	22733	£1,842,982
Households without Children	6439	£658,604	6032	£295,568	12471	£954,172
Total	20122	£2,058,136	15082	£739,018	35,204	£2,797,154

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

Item	Number provided	£
Electric Cooker	49	£12,107
Fridge Freezer	66	£19,799
Gas Cooker	13	£3,539
Tumble Dryer	27	£6,555
Undercounter fridge	9	£1,693

Undercounter Fridge with freezer	4	£571
Undercounter Freezer	10	£1,850
Washing Machine	90	£21,442
Total	268	£67,561

11. **Further domestic appliances** – the fund has also provided a number of additional household items

Item	Number provided	£
Microwave	5	£274.95
Beds	6	£947.94
Mattresses	10	£1580
Toaster	1	£37.99
Kettle	1	£22.95
Wardrobe	2	£234
Vacuum cleaner	2	£112
Total	27	£3,209

12. The total spend is outlined in the table below:

	Forecast £
Holiday Food Vouchers for those in receipt of Free School Meals	£2,480,438
Other Essential Support	£2,867,924
Administration Costs	£275,702
Total Spend	£5,624,064
Amount Awarded by Government	£5,646,450
Remaining Funds	£22,386

13. The voucher system used to provide energy and food relied on individuals activating their vouchers by the end of the scheme.

14. The underspend is the value of vouchers which were issued but not redeemed by residents in the timeframe provided to them.

Continuation of the Fund

15. An extension to the Fund was announced on 23 March 2022 in the Chancellor's Spring Statement.

16. Further detail of the amount to be provided was not initially provided and due to the pending Easter Holiday, the Chief Executive used his Urgent Decision-Making powers to approve the provision of funding of £15 per week for each eligible child and young person for the Easter Holidays 2022. This report is attached as an appendix to this report.

17. The table below shows amounts provided in order to provide Free Schools Meals for the Easter Holidays

Channel	Amount (£)
Schools and Academies	£793,200
Early Years Providers	£79,500
Colleges	£24,150
Inspire	£1,770
RNN Group (Training Provider)	£2,280
Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)	£3,660
Total	£904,560

Confirmation of Additional Funding

18. It was confirmed on 1 April 2022 that a further £5,646,450.03 has been allocated to Nottinghamshire County Council

19. The extension to the fund is to cover the period from 01 April 2022 until 30 September 2022

20. Guidance provided outlines that County Councils are to use the fund to provide support to those most in need and that at least one third must be spent on families with children and that at least one third must be spent on pensioners

21. As with the previous funding, County Councils are to design the scheme based around their local knowledge with a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills.

22. Due to the changes in the guidance provided the existing scheme must be amended to target the groups specified.

23. The County Council has taken the lead in centrally managing, administering and co-ordinating the delivery of the Fund. To continue to undertake this, approval to extend the temporary contracts of the support team sitting within the Trading Standards and Communities Service is sought.

24. Subject to ratification by this Committee, the posts, and their associated indicative costs for the period 01 April to 30 September are:

Post	Band	FTE	Total Cost to 30th Sept £
Project Manager	Band C	1.0	27,263
Project Officer	Band A	5.0	103,277
Business Support Administrator	NJE Grade 4	2.0	29,113
	Total	8	159,654

Other Options Considered

25. None.

Reasons for Recommendations

26. There is a pressing need for support in Communities that the funding should be used to alleviate as soon as possible.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. 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

28. Total spend to 31 March 2022 is £5,624,064 which has been provided to those in immediate need in the County. As outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14 to this report there is a small underspend of £22,386 as a result of some vouchers not having been redeemed.

29. A further £5,646,450.03 has been awarded to the Council for the period 01 April to 30 September 2022.

30. £904,560 of this award has been allocated to provision of free school meals over the Easter school holiday.

31. The indicative costs of the Household Support Fund team until 30th September is £159,654 and can be met from the Fund as reasonable administrative costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 1) Approves the continuation of the temporary posts until the end of September 2022
- 2) Approves the use of £159,654 of the Fund to cover the 8FTE posts
- 3) Notes the use of the Chief Executive's Urgent Decision-Making powers to approve the provision of funding of £15 per week for each eligible child and young person for the Easter Holidays 2022.

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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 (GMG 06/04/2022)

32. The report and its recommendations fall within the remit of Communities Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 06/04/2022)

33. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 30 to 33 of the report.
34. Total spend to 31 March 2022 is £5,624,064 which has been provided to those in immediate need in the County. As outlined in paragraphs 13 and 14 to this report there is a small underspend of £22,386 as a result of some vouchers not having been redeemed.
35. A further £5,646,450.03 has been awarded to the Council for the period 01 April to 30 September 2022.
36. £904,560 of this award has been allocated to provision of free school meals over the Easter school holiday.
37. The indicative costs of the Household Support Fund team until 30th September is £159,654 and can be met from the Fund as reasonable administrative costs.

HR Comment (JP 05/04/2022)

38. Any HR implications are contained in the body of the report.

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