

15 September 2021**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES****PROGRESS ON DEVELOPING THE COVID PARTNERSHIP SOCIAL RECOVERY FUND AND THE COMMUNITY HUB FOOD PLAN FUND****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members on the development of the Covid-19 Partnership Social Recovery Fund and the Community Hub Food Plan Fund.
2. To seek approval for:
 - the key principles for governance and distribution of the funds; and
 - the allocation of £50k to a small projects element for both funds to distribute to pilot projects during the autumn, such small projects to be awarded and distributed at the sole discretion of the HAG.

Information

3. The COVID–19 pandemic has exacerbated and had a negative impact on a range of issues such as social mobility, educational attainment, mental health, health, employment, and economic growth, creating a knock-on effect of reduced opportunities and resources.

The Covid-19 Partnership Social Recovery Fund

4. The COVID-19 Partnership Social Recovery Fund was approved by committee in June and progress has been made in identifying how the money could best support the people of Nottinghamshire to recover from the pandemic.
5. At its June Committee, Members approved the establishment of the Fund and the report included information on the work underway with Local Resilience Forum Partners (LRF) to identify and assess need, and to develop plans to address that need in (now) 9 priority cohorts.
6. The assessment process includes collaborating with partners across health, social prescribing, voluntary agencies, district and borough councils and the Citizens Advice Bureaux.

The Community Hub Food Plan Fund

7. The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in January 2021, as part of its Contain Management Fund, approved £800,000 to support the development of the Community Hub Food Plan.

8. The Food Insecurity Network, part of the LRF Community Support Hub, is made up of partners from across health, the voluntary and community sector (VCS), District and Borough Councils and has been developing a plan which prioritises improved partnership working across all sectors. The plan aims to take a co-ordinated approach to improving food supply for communities and families. It aims to build resilience through initiatives such as community food growing, social eating projects, open kitchens, and food clubs.
10. The Food Plan Fund has been established to help provide funds to improve food supply. It is proposed that key features of the Social Recovery Fund model are adopted for this Fund, including the assessment process to include collaboration with partners from across health, the VCS, and District and Borough Councils.

Emerging Data Regarding Need

11. The LRF Nottinghamshire Community Support Hub has been operational throughout the pandemic to meet the immediate, lower level support needs such as providing food or collecting prescriptions etc for those who were shielding or having to self-isolate.
12. As the pandemic has progressed, the hub has had less of these immediate requests to deal with, as the nature of the need for support caused or exacerbated by the pandemic has changed.
13. Data emerging from a variety of sources is giving us more understanding on these longer-term effects of the pandemic. For example, data from an Age UK report, due to be published in September, tells us that:
 - 36% of older people feel more anxious than they did at the start of the pandemic
 - 20% feel less confident going for short walks outside and
 - 18% feel less confident about leaving the house by themselves.
14. With regards to Social Prescribing referrals made during 2020/21 in the County, the majority of these were to Mental Health Services and Community Groups. Mental Health/Wellbeing and Physical Health were the most common reasons for being referred to a social prescriber (other than COVID-19 Wellness checks).
15. Data from Citizens Advice Nottinghamshire also shows that Mental Health concerns were a major issue for people throughout the pandemic and remain.
16. Data from Nottinghamshire Insight shows that specific cohorts and geographical areas of highest deprivation will be affected most by food insecurity.
17. As economic circumstances become more stretched by virtue of the pandemic, eating healthier food is likely to be less feasible and less of a priority for many residents. Looking at alternative and creative approaches that improve the supply of food in a more sustainable manner is important for communities.

Features of the Model for Both Funds

18. As the Upper Tier Local Authority, the Council has received significant amounts of government funding on behalf of the whole local system, to undertake COVID related support work.
19. As such, and in order to maintain the goodwill from partners to support our aspirations for Early Help and Prevention collaborative working, an important feature of applying the funding is the meaningful engagement of partners in identifying and deciding where the monies are applied.
20. Plans are being developed based on a needs assessment process. This approach should be a more 'scientific' way of applying the funding than a pure grant funding approach.
21. All partners including the District and Borough Councils have been requested to ensure they have local conversations and engage with local groups in their areas regarding both the Funds to ensure we achieve good 'reach' with the funding.
22. It is proposed that whilst it is still in operation, the LRF Humanitarian Assistance Group (HAG) plays a key role in reviewing and giving partnership endorsement to all proposals/business cases to spend either of the two funds.
23. To be endorsed by the HAG, the proposals/business cases must:
- have a clear purpose
 - demonstrate that they are addressing a need that has been a result of, or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
 - detail what measures that will be used to learn and improve
 - have the support of relevant partners, including district/borough colleagues, and
 - have been recommended for funding by the appropriate Needs Assessment Group or the Food Insecurity Network.
24. Once endorsed by the HAG, the proposals would be brought to the next Committee for update and County Council formal approval. Proposals for endorsement by the HAG will be worked up and recommended by those groups of partners working on the priority cohorts of need or the Food Insecurity Network.
25. Other relevant projects or proposals that are presented to the partnership would be channelled into the appropriate Needs Assessment group or the Food Insecurity Network for consideration alongside other initiatives.
26. In recent weeks several initiatives have been identified that could provide needed support quickly, but that require a small amount of funding to get started or progress. These organisations or individuals could make an impact earlier if we were able to provide funds to them during the autumn, as opposed to having to wait for formal Committee approval in November.
27. To address this, it is proposed to set aside £50k of each fund for a small projects fund. This could be distributed to initiatives that meet the requirements of each fund, and that again have partnership endorsement through the HAG. But the funding could be awarded prior to formal committee approval.

28. It is proposed that these small projects would be run as pilots, would be expected to report back on their impact, and would receive a maximum of £5k of funding.
29. Those under £5k that have been endorsed by the HAG could be provided with the funding, and work could begin shortly after. Full details of those funded would be provided in a report to future Committee meetings.
30. Those bigger scale and more longer-term initiatives endorsed by the HAG would be put before the November or subsequent Committee meetings for approval.

Other Options Considered

31. None

Reasons for Recommendations

32. Balances the need for meaningful collaboration with partners, with the need to meet County Council financial management rules. Also provides a faster and more proportionate approach to smaller initiatives that can deliver on need quicker.

Statutory and Policy Implications

33. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee approves

- 1) The key principles outlined in the report for the governance and distribution of both funds.
- 2) The allocation of £50k to a small projects element for both funds to distribute to pilot projects during the autumn, such small project grants to be awarded and distributed at the sole discretion of the Local Resilience Forum's Humanitarian Assistance Group.

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Constitutional Comments (LPW 03/09/2021)

34. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Communities Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SES 17/08/2021)

35. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

36. The two funds referred to in the report are:

- **The Community Hub Food Plan Fund** - Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in January 2021, as part of its Contain Management Fund approved £800,000 to support the development of the Community Hub Food Plan.
- **The Covid-19 Partnership Social Recovery Fund** – Communities Committee in June 2021 approved the establishment of the fund with an initial balance of £1 million. This initial balance will be funded from a combination of additional government grants and from the Council's reserves.

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