



<b>Subject:</b>	Community Provision Funding Update
<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> August 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Sales, Director Neighbourhood Services, CNS
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager Margaret Higgins, Lead Officer – Community Provision

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	<p>The purpose of this paper is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inform members that Council has received a Letter of Variance from Department for Communities as part of the Community Support Programme, financial years 2022-23 for the Social Supermarket Fund (SSF).</li><li>• Ask members to consider and approve the proposed allocation approach for the SSF and that the Chief Executive accept the Letter of Variance on behalf of Council.</li><li>• Ask members to consider the information in relation to the impact of increased utility costs for community groups and to approve the outlined approach to provide support.</li><li>• Inform members on the outcome of the recent open call for micro and medium grants.</li></ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>That Committee is asked to agree that the Chief Executive formally accepts the Letter of Variance on behalf of Council and consider and agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recommended approach to distribution of the Social Supermarket fund</li><li>• Recommended approach to support community groups meet increased utility costs</li></ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
	<p data-bbox="233 159 408 197"><b>Background</b></p> <p data-bbox="233 264 568 302"><u>Social Supermarket Fund</u></p> <p data-bbox="145 315 1541 450">3.1 Members will be aware that each Council area is allocated an award from the Department for Communities (DfC) to deliver a Community Support Programme (CSP) which should support the aims of the DfC Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020 – 2025.</p> <p data-bbox="145 517 1541 651">3.2 In May, members approved that the Chief Executive accepted the Letter of Offer for 2022-24. DfC have subsequently issued a Letter of Variance on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 22 which provides an additional £228,342.42 for delivery of a social supermarket fund (SSF) for 22/23 only.</p> <p data-bbox="145 719 1541 999">3.3 The aim of a social supermarket model is to offer a sustainable response to food insecurity by seeking to help address the root causes of poverty rather simply provide food. This is achieved through the provision of a referral network for wraparound support which can include, but is not limited to, advice on debt, benefits, budgeting, healthy eating, housing, physical and mental health referral, education, training and volunteering opportunities to enhance employability skills. It is intended this will provide a long term solution, in a dignified manner, rather than short term crisis provision.</p> <p data-bbox="145 1066 1541 1301">3.4 The objective of this fund is to support the co-design of a social supermarket model in the council area to completion and implementation. This can include, support for the co-design process, capacity building for future implementation and testing/piloting where appropriate. The Department will also consider requests to support projects that meet the high level social supermarket principles to enable actions to address food insecurity to be supported in 2022/23.</p> <p data-bbox="145 1368 1541 1503">3.5 DfC have advised that final proposals resulting from the co-design work for the future social supermarket model within the council area should be submitted to the Department prior to moving to implementation.</p> <p data-bbox="145 1570 1541 1704">3.6 DfC have further advised that the funding is not available to provide direct payments to vulnerable people nor for the provision of any other form of direct support where an assessment of need has not been carried out and referrals to complementary supports made.</p> <p data-bbox="145 1771 1541 2007">3.7 Members may recall that in February 2022, DfC issued a letter of Variance providing a similar level of funding through the Social Supermarket fund in 21/22. Given the lateness of receipt of this Letter of Offer, DfC approved that this funding could be used for emergency food support and SP&amp;R approved that this funding could be distributed to strategic and thematic partners who had the capacity to deliver work within the remit of the fund.</p>

3.8	<p>Officers have been engaging with Strategic and Thematic Partners to identify new and existing partners who want to be involved in this area of work. Feedback suggests that there are additional challenges in ensuring that individuals that would fall within the thematic groups access complementary support beyond food. Officers will work with partners to agree an allocation approach which will include full cost recovery for lead organisations, as this has been highlighted as a key learning from previous rounds. Given the relatively small level of funding officers propose that the funding should be allocated on the following basis;</p>	
3.9	<p>Area allocation – to support partners working in defined geographies to provide support through wrap around services.</p>	<p>60% of overall allocation split across each geographic area, n,s,e,w. Each geography will agree participating partners ensuring coverage for all areas. Area allocations will be based on population and deprivation figures.</p>
	<p>Thematic allocation – to support communities working with identified communities to provide support through wrap around services.</p>	<p>40% of overall allocation to support organisations who work with key communities across the city. These will include refugees &amp; asylum seekers, individuals impacted by domestic violence, LQBT&amp;Q community, children&amp; young people, older people, those entering/leaving justice system and their families.</p>
	<p>Support for co-design of Belfast Social Supermarket approach</p>	<p>Council staff will resource this work and bring an agreed proposal back to committee for consideration. It should be noted that this work has links with the Climate team’s food resilience strategy and the newly appointed Commissioner on Poverty and Inclusion. Staff from C&amp;NS will work with officers from these teams to develop proposals for a Belfast SSM model.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Support for community organisations to meet increased utility costs</u></p> <p>At the June SP&amp;R meeting, members asked that officers explore potential mechanisms to support community organisations struggling to pay overhead costs given the recent significant increases in utility costs. Officers have contacted a sample of community organisations and they have confirmed that increased fuel and utility costs have created additional pressure for them. Community organisations have sought to manage these additional costs through different methods; mainly by reprofiling existing funding, using organisational reserves or amending programme delivery to reduce costs. It is worth noting that very few community organisations have significant reserves and this can only be a short term measure.</p>	

3.11	<p>Council's Community Provision offer supports community organisations through the following grant aid programmes;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revenue - Community Buildings - provides a contribution towards the cost of running a community facility that provides a broad based programme.</li> <li>2. Capacity – provides a contribution towards core costs (generally staff costs) for delivering a capacity building programme within defined communities.</li> <li>3. Advice – provides funding to 5 Advice Consortia across the city who deliver advice service in agreed geographies. This funding provides staff costs and some running costs.</li> <li>4. Project funding – community provision projects are supported through small grants which since 2020 has been through micro and medium grant awards. These grants do not cover core costs, they cover costs directly associated with project delivery.</li> </ol>
3.12	<p>In addition, Council also provides direct support to 7 independent community centres for their running costs. This includes utility costs and staff costs related to upkeep of buildings (caretakers, cleaners).</p>
3.13	<p>The Department for Communities, as part of an immediate response, allocated an available resource of £255,000 from existing budgets which allowed a one off payment of £1,500 to a wide number of eligible Voluntary and Community organisations, including some community centres, to help with rising energy costs.</p>
3.14	<p>As part of Minister Hargey's strategic response to the cost of living crisis she has reconvened the Emergencies Leadership Group bringing together key players in the VCSE sector at both a local grass roots and regional level, to facilitate partnership working with leaders in central and local government. Currently departmental officials are exploring the evidence available to provide clear insights into the cost of living crisis to support the development of targeted and evidenced based interventions to address need, subject to NI Executive decisions on budget allocation. The ELG, whose membership includes representation from SOLACE will help inform and shape the Department's emerging policy and operational response to the cost of living crisis.</p>
3.15	<p>In addition to this support from the department members may wish to consider issuing a Letter of Variance (as a contribution towards increased utility costs) to all groups currently in receipt of funding through the grant programmes 1-3 outlined above. Officers based suggested amounts on the fact that there is no in year budget to cover these costs.</p>
3.16	<p>Given that those organisations which operate community facilities are most impacted by utility cost increases it is recommended that awards should be made as follows;</p>

Grant Programme/Funding	Potential payment	Rationale	Cost
Revenue - Community Buildings	£500 to each organisation	Grant is for running costs of community facility, highest level of utility costs for these groups	84 projects @ £500 = £42,000
Capacity	£250 to each organisation	This funding provides staff costs and some office running costs. Lower levels of utility costs.	33 Projects @ £250= £8,250
Advice	£250 to each organisation	This funding provides staff costs and some office running costs. Lower levels of utility costs.	20 Advice Offices @ £250 = £5,000 Note Advice Space has 7 Offices.
Independent centres	£250 to each organisation	These groups received a 2% inflationary increase on their base award in 22/23. Average award of £1,011.00 was provided.	7 centres @ £250 = £1750
Project funding	£0	These grants do not cover core costs and are for project costs only. Council made awards to 226 groups in 22/23. The cost of making a payment to each group is prohibitive	
Total allocation			£57,000

3.17

Note – a small number of organisations receive both Advice funding and Revenue or Capacity funding. It is recommended that these organisations only receive one payment.

3.18	<p>There is no capacity to cover these costs within existing budgets. Any additional payments will have to be made from additional resources.</p> <p><u>Micro and Medium Grants update</u></p>												
3.19	<p>An open call to support micro (up to £1,500) and medium (up to £5,000) grants has recently closed. Following assessment and allocation the following awards were made.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="231 515 1540 728"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="231 515 667 571">Type of Grant</th> <th data-bbox="667 515 1117 571">Number of Groups supported</th> <th data-bbox="1117 515 1540 571">Allocation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="231 571 667 622">Micro</td> <td data-bbox="667 571 1117 622">72</td> <td data-bbox="1117 571 1540 622">£92,502</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="231 622 667 674">Medium</td> <td data-bbox="667 622 1117 674">154</td> <td data-bbox="1117 622 1540 674">£661,554</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="231 674 667 728">Total</td> <td data-bbox="667 674 1117 728">226</td> <td data-bbox="1117 674 1540 728">£754,056</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Members should note that the additional award through the Social Supermarket fund is the only resource within existing budgets to deliver the activity outlined in this report. Any additional payments will have to be made from additional resources.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications and Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This will be considered throughout and any appropriate issues highlighted to Members. Any amendments to existing scheme or new scheme will be considered in the context of any Equality/ Good Relations and Rural Needs considerations.</p>	Type of Grant	Number of Groups supported	Allocation	Micro	72	£92,502	Medium	154	£661,554	Total	226	£754,056
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Micro	72	£92,502											
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4.0	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p> <p>None</p>												