

Report on	Social Inclusion – Hardship Support
Date of Meeting	10 th November 2022
Reporting Officer	Claire Linney, Assistant Director of Development
Contact Officer	Martina Totten

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To confirm the continued commitment of Council to the ongoing support with the cost of living challenges, as well as channeling any potential funding from Department for Communities, and any other sources through our already established support network.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>A proposal was brought to Development committee in June 22, in considering how best to deliver a Hardship Fund, in light of Derry City & Strabane District Council announcement the previous month. At this time Officers recommended that the best way forward for Mid Ulster, was to continue to support an already established and robust network of 11 strategic crisis support groups of foodbanks / SVP partners operating across 5 main towns and Clogher Valley, and to continue to work with partners including Mid Ulster Advice Service (STEP) and other partners on interventions to support people in poverty.</p> <p>A further proposal was brought to the Development Committee in September 22, asking Officers to explore the Hardship Fund that Derry City & Strabane District Council has agreed and is delivering and to consider a proposal for Mid Ulster District Council to address the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>The services of the current 11 strategic crisis support groups of foodbanks and SVP partners operating across 5 main towns and Clogher Valley include: support with provision of food (or food vouchers), fuel costs, support to purchase white goods and other necessary household requirements. There is no set value, this is dependent on need. People can access the support on more than one occasions, depending on need. Funding for the delivery is in partnership with DfC and TEO via the Good Relations Plan.</p> <p>Council also works closely with the Mid Ulster Advice Service (STEP) through additional uplifts to the current service to support people across the District maximize all benefits. In addition, via its Good Relations Plan, Council engages with the Family Support model (BELONG) delivered by STEP, which is mainly funded through the Big</p>

	<p>Lottery, and provides one to one support for those most vulnerable and in crisis, mainly BME communities.</p> <p>Between January and March 2022, Council delivered an emergency support programme, in partnership with Save the Children, the Northern and Southern Trusts, to provide support for families with young children in financial hardship. The referrals to the programme were made through the Mid Ulster Advice Service STEP. A support worker engaged with families in need to provide a wraparound service of support with provision for early learning educational toy packs for children, food and essential household vouchers (up to a maximum of £340 per family) and signposting to additional support services. The programme supported 104 families, reaching 267 children with an average of 2.5 children per household. A total of £37,714 was invested through Mid Ulster District Council (£20,000) the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (£7,714) and the Southern Health & Social Care Trust (£10,000) as well as in kind costs from Save the Children and Mid Ulster Advice Service STEP. Evaluation of the programme was very positive with Save the Children committing a further £40,000 to extend the programme to June 2022.</p> <p>Members will also be aware that the Council recently facilitated the development of a Mid Ulster Anti-Poverty Plan, along with partners from across the Community Planning partnership Structure, to consider actions / lobbying to alleviate the impact of poverty on our residents.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The ongoing cost of living increases continue to place pressures on families and residents across the region, including within our own district. These additional pressures are pushing more people into poverty and negatively impacting upon people and their quality of life.</p> <p>Derry City & Strabane District Council has published their Hardship Fund which provides for a one off payment of £100 to people in cost of living crisis, who meet a set criteria and as agreed through their advice network. The total investment is £250,000, which provides for approx. 2500 people.</p> <p>Council has engaged with a number of local groups including the foodbanks and SVPs who are stating they are under severe pressure at the moment with the number of people accessing them.</p> <p>Officers have also been approached again by Safe the Children who due to need and demand is keen to continue its support programme for families in crisis who have young children, using the same delivery mechanisms as previous.</p> <p>Due to the pressures officers have been engaging their funders to identify additional funding sources. Additional funding has been secured from TEO under the Good Relations Programme who can commit to a further £7,050 with a Council match of £2,350 within existing budget.</p> <p>DfC has also provided an additional £12,000 as part of the mainstream community support to Council as part of the annual letter of offer.</p>

After all claims have been submitted to DfC for the additional emergency funding support, there remains £12,000 unallocated (relating to the youth engagement programme).

All allocations above creates a total funding package of £33,400.

Members may also be aware of the recent announcement by the Communities Minister to unlock COVID monies, currently held by Council, to help mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis in the context of the ongoing COVID recovery. As a result of this announcement it is further proposed to allocate an additional £124,000, to create a total fund of £157,400. The recommendation allocation for this funding is as follows:

1. **£7,195** to Save the Children, with match funding from both Health Trusts and Save the Children with a total investment of £28,780 to allow the programme to run to end of March 2023.
2. **£90,000** to Councils current model of crisis intervention, via the 11 strategic crisis support groups of foodbanks and SVP partners operating across 5 main towns and Clogher Valley to provide support with provision of food (or food vouchers), fuel costs, white goods and other necessary household requirements. There is no set value per client, this is dependent on need. Funding will be allocated as per the 3 main towns (Magherafelt, Cookstown & Dungannon) £20,000 each and 2 small towns (Maghera & Coalisland) and Clogher Valley area of £10,000 each.
3. It is further proposed to commit an additional **£60,000** to provide up to a £500 uplift to the Community (and Sports) venues and facilities to help alleviate the unprecedented financial burdens placed on them as a result of the current energy and cost of living crisis. The additional contribution would be a one off payment for energy costs over and above their current grant and claims (based on identified need). This would be distributed to the groups in the venues grant and to the facilities from the sports capital grant over the last 2 year period. This would equate to approx. 120 groups.

3.2 Through the local Anti-Poverty work, officers will continue to lobby government regarding intervention on some of the key issues affecting poverty in Mid Ulster District and poverty crisis.

3.0 Other Considerations

3.1 Financial & Human Resources Implications

	<p>Costs associated with the extension of the funding support for the Strategic Foodbank Network £33,400 from existing allocations.</p> <p>Allocation of the unlocked DFC funds to support Cost of Living support pressures in the context of the ongoing COVID recovery, of £124,000.</p> <p><u>Professional Support</u> None</p>
3.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u> None known</p>
3.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u> None</p>
4.0	<p><u>Recommendation(s)</u></p>
4.1	<p>Members are recommended to confirm the following allocations for the additional £157,195, to support individuals & groups with the ongoing cost of living pressures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) £7,195 to Save the Children, with match funding from both Health Trusts and Save the Children with a total investment of £28,780, to allow for continue delivery of the 'Families in Crisis' programme until end of March '23. (ii) £90,000 to Councils current model of crisis intervention, via the 11 strategic crisis support groups of foodbanks and SVP partners operating across 5 main towns and Clogher Valley. Funding will be allocated as per the 3 main towns (Magherafelt, Cookstown & Dungannon) £20,000 each and 2 small towns (Maghera & Coalisland) and Clogher Valley area of £10,000 each. (iii) £60,000 to provide up to a £500 uplift to the Community (and Sports) venues and facilities to help alleviate the unprecedented financial burdens placed on them as a result of the current energy and cost of living crisis
5.0	<p><u>Documents Attached & References</u></p>
5.1	<p>None</p>