

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
DATE	30 August 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Family Wellbeing Fund and Fuel Poverty Update
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/23/253
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Jacqui McKenzie
REPORT AUTHOR	Paul Tytler
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.5, 1.8

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 On 10 May 2023, Members agreed to instruct the Locality Inclusion Manager to bring back a report to Committee regarding the review and uptake of the Family Wellbeing Fund. This includes an update on uptake of insulation measures in support of fuel poverty.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Approves the re-allocation of funding option recommended at 3.8.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 At Committee on 10 May 2023, a [report](#) was provided on spend and outcomes from the £1m allocated to Supporting People through the Cost of Living. This included two elements of funding that had not delivered as expected and had an underspend on the budgets allocated. These are described below.
- 3.2 The Family Wellbeing Fund (FWF) approach was developed by the Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) to support families affected by the DWP two child limit, through the development of a support plan linked to topics such as money advice, fuel payments and employability. The plan was to provide an initial payment of £100 to the household, with a second payment of £150 as an incentive to engage with services to maximise their income, with the aim being to support 100 families by March 2023 with a cost of £25,000.
- 3.3 While the overall number of families affected in Aberdeen is known to be around 1200, engaging with them has proved to be very difficult. Work has been undertaken with key agencies supporting families to try and increase referrals, with a session with providers taking place on 20 June 2023 involving Citizen's Advice, Homestart, Children 1st, CFINE advice team and ACC Children's and Families service. While there was recognition of the value of the approach and

potential clients, to date there has only been one further referral to the fund, meaning 3 families are being supported.

3.4 The spend on the Family Wellbeing Fund to date has therefore been £750, with an underspend of £24,250.

3.5 The second element of the cost of living support reporting an underspend in May concerned the provision of measures to support home insulation. This included packs of LED bulbs, radiator reflectors etc and were offered by SCARF alongside advice and the provision of fuel vouchers. Funding of £45k had been allocated and in May, a total of £20,262 had been spent. It was expected that the remaining £24,738 would be spent early in 2023/24, but uptake has continued to be lower than expected and that sum remains unspent. In addition, SCARF currently have £6,655 remaining from their allocation of £100k for fuel vouchers.

3.6 The overall current underspend is therefore:

Family Wellbeing Fund	£24,250
SCARF Fuel Vouchers	£ 6,655
SCARF Insulation	£24,738
Total	£55,643

3.7 Discussions with the FIT team and SCARF have included the following suggestions for using the underspend:

Suggestion		Cost
Purchase 100 dehumidifiers	These will help clients control condensation and damp in their properties, especially if they are drying clothing inside. These models have the ability to remove up to 450mls of water per day, can reduce humidity from 80% to 45% and are low cost to run.	£3,082
Purchase 100 fleece blankets	Offer these to clients who are waiting to have gas uncapped or are self-rationing to reduce fuel costs	£1,567
Purchase 50 air-fryers	More cost-efficient cooking method	£3,500
Continued provision of fuel vouchers	A level of demand remains and will likely	£47,494

	increase as we move towards colder months	
Total		£55,643

3.8 The options for consideration are:

1. Return the underspend to Finance as part of the 2023/24 budget management process
2. Agree the funds are allocated as in the table at 3.7;
3. Allocate all available funding for the provision of fuel vouchers.

It is recommended that committee approves option 2. The external advisers have considered the proposed areas of spend and support the recommendations.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The funding currently underspent is from an existing approved budget, so no additional funding is required. If the funding is returned to finance, that would contribute to savings required in 2023/24.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the increased cost of living could lead to longer term economic harm.	Delivery of recommendation to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable.	L	Yes

Compliance	There is a risk of failing to comply with a Council decision to spend the allocated £1m to help the most vulnerable in our community with energy costs.	Delivery of recommendations to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable,	L	Yes
Operational	The project delivery in this report required minimal additional resource from the Council.	Strong partnership working with organisation identified will ensure this risk is minimised.	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risk identified as the budget has already been allocated			Yes
Reputational	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the increased cost of living could lead to reputational damage.	The delivery described in this report demonstrates a continued commitment to supporting people with allocated budgets.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	There will be a positive (small) impact on efforts to reduce carbon emissions through the recommendations on tackling fuel poverty.		L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The delivery of outcomes described in this report align with the Partnership agreement with regard to the mitigation of poverty.

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposal recommended in this paper impact on stretch outcome 1 – No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	N/A
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	N/A
Regional and City Strategies	There will be a positive (small) impact on efforts to reduce carbon emissions through the recommendations on tackling fuel poverty.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 assessment completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	not required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Supporting People through the Cost of Living CUS/23/122

11. APPENDICES

11.1 N/A

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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