

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
<b>DATE</b>	28 August 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Working in Partnership for Aberdeen - Supporting people with the cost of living: round two of funding allocations
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CORS/24/229
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Andy MacDonald
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Michelle Crombie
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Michelle Crombie, Community Planning Manager Susan Thoms, Fairer Aberdeen Coordinator External Advisers
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1, 3.1

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the allocation of remaining funds for 2024/25 from the £1million provided by Council to support people with the cost of living.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes that Council, on 3 July 2024 (i) approved the allocation of funds agreed by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on 12 June 2024; and (ii) agreed that the remaining funding balance be allocated by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee without the need for further approval from the Finance and Resources Committee or Council; and
- 2.2 Approves the proposed allocation of remaining funds from the £1million provided by Council to support people with the cost of living crisis during 2024/25 as detailed in paragraph 3.7 below.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

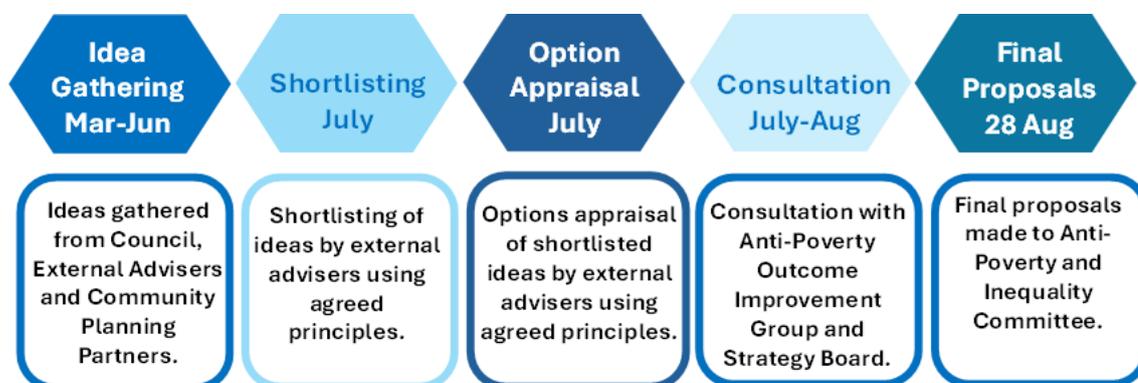
- 3.1 On 12 June 2024 the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee agreed proposals for the £1 million provided as part of the Council's 2024/25 budget to mitigate against the ongoing cost of living crisis and address poverty in the city. This is a one-off fund that has no recurring commitment.

Round 1 Proposals	Organisation	Amount
Food procurement and pantries	CFINE/ FPAA	£251,260
Fuel	SCARF	£50,000
Poverty Awareness Films	SHMU	£20,000
Discretionary Housing Payments	ACC Revs and Bens	£100,000
School costs (Winter Clothing)*	ACC Revs and Bens	£20,000
Telecare/Tec	ACHSCP	£20,020
Power of Attorney	ACHSCP	£10,000
Childcare Costs	ACC ABZ Works	£60,000
		<b>£531,280</b>

\* Note: £100,000 from the common good fund has also been awarded for winter clothing. This along with the funding from the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee provides a total of £30 per child (5,000 children) over winter 2024/25. Funds will be dispersed from October 2024.

- 3.2 Following approval of the above by Council on 3 July, funding agreements with external providers are in place and funds have been dispersed. This report presents proposals for the remaining balance of £468,720 to be allocated in a second round of funding for 2024/25.

### Round 2 Allocation Process:



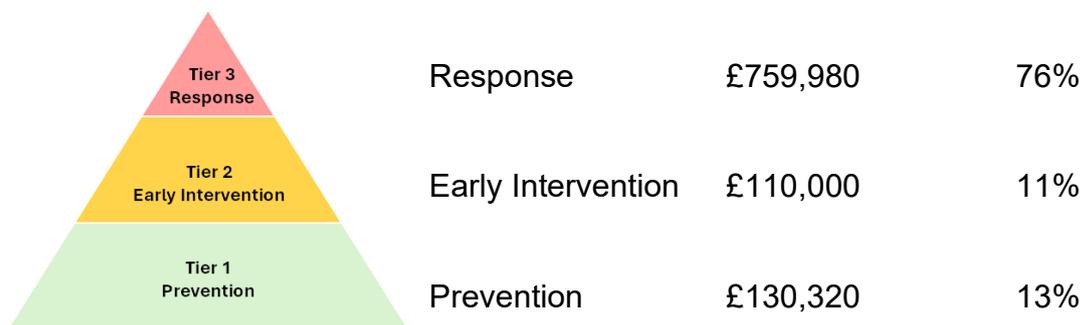
- 3.3 A large number of ideas were received from members of Community Planning Aberdeen's Anti-Poverty Outcome Improvement Group, the Council's Strategy Group and the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee. See Appendix 2 for the list of all ideas received. Lead organisations were then asked to submit a proposal form providing more detail about their idea, how it would be delivered, the number of people that would be supported and a breakdown of costs.
- 3.4 Proposals were considered by the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee external advisers and assessed as low, medium or high priority using the same principles established for the first allocation of funding agreed in June. These include:
- Alleviation of poverty and achieve best outcomes for people
  - Consider a seasonal approach to reflect differing needs, with more than one allocation
  - Ensure coverage of range of poverty issues, addressing crisis needs and prevention
- 3.5 Whilst prevention and early intervention continues to be essential, external advisers felt that due to restricted funds remaining, emergency support should be prioritised for this second round of funding to provide much needed assistance for people under pressure over the winter months ahead. A number of proposals received relating to employability will be raised with the Local Employability Partnership to identify alternative sources of funding.
- 3.6 Having taken into account feedback about funding staffing costs, external advisers agreed to introduce a fourth principle to 'avoid funding new posts which may not be financially sustainable and could lead to unemployment due to funding being non-recurring'. However, they also felt it was reasonable for organisations to recoup the costs of existing staff being asked to do additional work, for example distributing more goods and/ or where staffing costs are necessary to build capacity to make a shift towards prevention.

## Recommended Proposals

3.7 The proposals recommended to the Committee for funding are set out in the table below, shown against the three tiers of prevention. These are the proposals which have been identified as being the highest priority to support people and families to cope with upcoming winter pressures.

Proposal	Lead Organisation	Allocation £	Staff Costs Funded (% of allocation)	No. People Supported	Prevention Tier	Description/ Rationale See Appendix 1 for further information.
<a href="#">Christmas Family Panto Package for low income families.</a>	Aberdeen Performing Arts	£10,000	£0	350 families	Early intervention	A Christmas family pantomime package for Jack and the Beanstalk at HMT or The Unicorns Christmas Dance Party for younger children at the Lemon Tree. Main target group is families living with deprivation who would otherwise not be able to attend a Christmas show.
<a href="#">Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants/ Community Care Grants</a>	Aberdeen City Council (Revenues and Benefits)	£96,382	£0	1,175	Response	The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) is a national scheme, to provide a safety net to vulnerable people on low incomes by the provision of Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. Last year demand was greater than the funds provided by Scottish Government and funds ran out. This would top up funding from SG.
<a href="#">Food procurement and pantries</a>	CFINE/ Food Poverty Action Aberdeen	£242,038	£23,788 (9.6%)	5,350	Response/ Early intervention	A repeat of funding from round one to support people over winter. Includes food procurement, SAFE mobile/pantry outreach, and 500 pantry memberships/weekly shops.
<a href="#">Fuel poverty vouchers and advice</a>	SCARF	£80,000	£1,940 (2.4%)	700	Response/ Early intervention	A repeat of funding from round one to support people over winter. Includes fuel vouchers and energy advice.
<a href="#">Essentials for underprivileged families</a>	Aber Necessities	£40,300	£0	1,050 families plus 80 pregnant women	Response	Funding for the basic necessities to babies, children, teenagers and families across Aberdeen. Referrals continue to increase as the cost of living crisis continues to disproportionately affect children and families who were already in financial hardship. Items are prepared and delivered directly to families or professionals can collect from premises in Dyce. Items provided for children aged 0-18 and pregnant women free of charge.
		<b>Total</b> £468,720				

3.8 The proposed allocations for round 2, along with the expenditure from round 1 have been mapped against the three tiers of prevention to show the balance of spend from the £1million during 2024/25 .



#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The proposals within this report are within the £1million financial allocation approved by Council at the meeting on 6 March 2024. This is a one-off fund that has no recurring commitment.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Funds allocated to third parties will be subject to Aberdeen City Council's standard terms and conditions.

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental 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?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	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 recommendations to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable, alongside work and support across services, partners and third sector.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	There is a risk of failing to comply with a Council decision to spend the	Delivery of recommendations to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable,	L	Yes

	allocated £1m to help the most vulnerable in our community with energy costs.	alongside work and support across services, partners and third sector.		
<b>Operational</b>	The project delivery in this report requires some resource from the Council, but mainly through partners	Strong partnership working with organisations identified will ensure this risk is minimised.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	There is a risk of failing to deliver and spend the approved budget	The proposals present options for delivering and spending the budget.	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the cost of living could lead to reputational damage.	The delivery described in this report demonstrates a clear commitment to supporting people with the cost of living	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	No environmental risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A

## 8. OUTCOMES

<b>Council Delivery Plan 2024</b>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>  <a href="#"><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></a>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting People with the Cost of Living</li> <li>• Actively support Aberdeen’s foodbanks and provide assistance with bulk purchasing where desirable.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
<b>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</b>	<b>Stretch outcome 1: 20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home by 2026.</b>

Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Stretch outcome 12: Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.
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## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.
<b>Other</b>	N/A

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Supporting People with the Cost of Living CORS/24/152](#)

## 11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Recommended Proposals

Appendix 2 All Proposals Received

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Name</b>	Michelle Crombie	Susan Thoms
<b>Title</b>	Community Planning Manager	Fairer Aberdeen Programme Coordinator
<b>Email Address</b>	mcrombie@aberdeencity.gov.uk	sthoms@aberdeencity.gov.uk

# APPENDIX 1      RECOMMENDED PROPOSALS

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**Proposed activity**      Financial assistance and fuel voucher delivery

**Lead Organisation**      SCARF

**Number of people to be supported**      Over 700

**Funding proposed**      £80,000

**Staff costs**      £1,940 (2.4% of allocation)

**Summary of activity:**

A repeat of funding for round one to support people over winter. The proposal expands the existing service provided by Scarf Home Energy Advice Team on behalf of Aberdeen City Council to support vulnerable households in Aberdeen. Households impacted by the cost of living crisis, particularly those experiencing fuel poverty will be targeted. Financial assistance in the form of fuel vouchers for pre-payment meters and top-ups for credit meters will be provided. A discretionary payment to reduce or remove fuel debt may also be applied subject to circumstances. Scarf will carry out a remote assessment of the household circumstances and establish eligibility for support using established criteria. This will include household income under £31,000, which is in line with the Scottish Government Eco Cap, to support more people, especially those who are in work poverty. Qualifying households will receive a payment towards their fuel bill (PPM or Credit Account Top-Up) between £49 to £147 depending on household occupancy. Referrals/applications for support and onward referrals will be taken from; (not inclusive to) existing Home Energy Advice Team, established network of referral partners (e.g. CFINE, AberNecessities, Somebody Cares, Instant Neighbour and Council front-line services), Home Energy Scotland and online applications portal (developed by Scarf). Scarf will also seek to provide additional support through home visits where appropriate, general energy efficiency advice, onward referrals to further support services.

Note: Previous years underspend has been due to reduced time for supplying vouchers and has now been used. Furthermore, over the past six months the organisation has seen a 28% increase in enquiries for help (299 people) compared to the same period last year.

**Proposed activity** Scottish Welfare Fund  
**Lead Organisation** Aberdeen City Council  
**Number of people to be supported** 1,175  
**Funding proposed** £96,382  
**Staff costs** £0

**Summary of activity:**

The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) is a national scheme, underpinned by law and delivered on behalf of Scottish Government by all 32 local authorities. It aims to provide a safety net to vulnerable people on low incomes by the provision of Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. Crisis Grants are provided where an individual is facing a disaster or emergency situation, and where there is an immediate threat to the health or safety of that individual or their family. Community Care Grants are provided where a qualifying individual needs help to establish or maintain a settled home. A Community Care Grant may also be provided to support an individual or families facing exceptional pressure. Funding for the SWF is provided by Scottish Government and ACCs programme funding allocation in 23/24 and 24/25 was £1,063,545. However, spend for the SWF in 23/24 was £1,337,271 with ACC topping up funding. Unfortunately, no additional funding has been allocated for 24/25. Based on early projections of demand in Q1 the level of total spend in 24/25 would be likely to match 23/24 but with no additional funding there is a danger the fund would run out of money before the end of financial year 24/25. Based on the average award amount of £82 this funding will support 1,175 citizens.

**Proposed activity** Food procurement and pantries  
**Lead Organisation** CFINE on behalf of Food Poverty Action Aberdeen  
**Number of people to be supported** 5,350  
**Funding proposed** £246,038  
**Staff costs** £23,788 (9.6% of allocation)

**Summary of activity:**

A repeat of funding from round one to support people over winter. Includes food procurement, SAFE mobile/pantry outreach, and 500 pantry memberships/weekly shops. The winter period will see a rise in demand for food provision and funding will ensure we can meet the demands across all organisations in the city. Following distribution by CFINE, the majority of partners in Food Poverty Action Aberdeen will be involved in the ongoing distribution of the food purchased through this funding and also through the provision of additional support services. CFINE, which is the FareShare Regional Centre for the area, will use its existing suppliers to procure bulk ambient non-perishable food for distribution. This will ensure economies of scale and value for money, with lorry-loads being purchased at a time. The food will be sorted, categorised, and logged on CFINE's warehouse management system to provide traceability and food safety compliance. CFINE will utilise its fleet of vans to distribute the food throughout the city to around 90 Community Food Members (organisations that help tackle food poverty), with key organisations having the ability to request large mixed pallets delivered regularly. CFINE will also use the food to supplement the existing distribution of surplus food accessed through the food industry, delivered on daily delivery runs. The SAFE outreach work will continue to provide a vital link for individuals facing food insecurity and poverty, with support such as benefits/welfare advice, household budgeting, and other support in community settings. The SAFE outreach worker will generate financial gain for beneficiaries, securing benefits they may not have had access to previously, thus maximising household income. The free pantry memberships provided proved effective in increasing the number of people benefiting from the community pantries. Pantries offer a dignified alternative to emergency food provision, providing increased choice and access to wrap-around services (including SAFE).

**Proposed activity** Christmas family pantomime package for low-income families

**Lead Organisation** Aberdeen Performing Arts

**Number of people to be supported** 350 families

**Funding proposed** £10,000

**Staff costs** £0

**Summary of activity:**

This proposal supports 350 low income families who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend Christmas events; Jack and the Beanstalk at HMT or The Unicorns Christmas Dance Party for younger children at the Lemon Tree. Cultural events are often out of reach for those in poverty and can lead to additional stigma for children and young people. The target group will be families living with deprivation. Guidance and support from ACC Families and Communities will identify families for the offer. We don't want travel to be a barrier to families accessing His Majesty's Theatre for the pantomime and understand that travelling by public transport with young children or children who are disabled or have additional needs can make accessing the venue very difficult, if not impossible.

The Christmas family package will include:

- a family ticket
- an ice cream for each family member
- a programme
- a toy for each child from the merchandise stall
- Travel

**Proposed activity** Essentials for underprivileged families

**Lead Organisation** AberNecessities

**Number of people to be supported** 1050 families plus 80 women

**Funding proposed** £40,300

**Staff costs** £0

**Summary of activity:**

AberNecessities provide families with essential items for babies and children, helping alleviate some of the pressure of bringing up a young family with extremely limited resources. The families they support are financially vulnerable and include lone parents, kinship carers, working families in low paid jobs, women/men with children fleeing domestic abuse and many families from marginalised groups such as those with no recourse to public funds. As a direct result of Covid-19 many people experienced a loss of income due to redundancies and have been unable to find suitable alternative employment, along with delays in receiving benefits and now with the cost of living crisis those who were already vulnerable are experiencing hardship and destitution.

Since launching in March 2019 AberNecessities have helped over 18,000 children and families. In the past year they supported 9,793. In the wake of the pandemic they saw a 900% increase in applications from families struggling to provide the basic essentials and currently support approximately 250 children per month, increasing to 730 children per week over the Christmas period. AberNecessities operate on a referral basis, accepting applications from professionals throughout the health, social care, education systems and other thirds sector organisations. This referral system enables them to efficiently and fairly distribute items to the families who need them the most.

The proposed funding would support 80 pregnant women with maternity clothes and hospital bags, essential kitchen items for 50 families fleeing domestic abuse, and 1000 families with toiletries and cleaning products.

## APPENDIX 2 ALL PROPOSALS RECEIVED AND CONSIDERED

While all proposals received were felt to have merit, they were categorised as high, medium or low priority in terms of how they would provide support to those in financial difficulties due to the cost of living crisis, and in relation to the funding available.

Proposal		Lead Org	Requested	Outcome
1	Aberdeen Sports Village Energisers Programme	Aberdeen Sports Village	£17,000.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
2	Aberdeen Sports Village Families	Aberdeen Sports Village	£9,656.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
3	Aberdeen Sports Village Leaders	Aberdeen Sports Village	£33,500.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
4	Employability support in priority neighbourhoods and 'at risk' areas	Pathways	£30,000.00	Shortlisted only. Not considered as high priority as other initiatives.
5	Support people through changing BRP to e-visa	GREC	£31,920.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
6	Community Power Approach	SHMU	£35,000.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
7	Priority Neighbourhood Participatory Budgeting	ACC	£45,000.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
8	Digital and non-digital campaign to raise awareness of support available	ACC	£10,224.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
9	Family Support (Food education, budgeting programme)	Russell Anderson Foundation	£27,550.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
10	Employability Project Aberdeen Sports Village Academy	Aberdeen Sports Village	£71,886.00	Shortlisted only. Not considered as high priority as other initiatives.
11	Christmas Family Package for low income families.	Aberdeen Performing Arts	£15,000.00	High priority, access to cultural opportunities. Allocated £10,000
12	Challenge Poverty Week Event	SCARF	£4,000.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
13	Unexpected bills/ repairs	ACC Housing	TBC	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
14	Passports for Tall Ships Trainees	ACC City Development	TBC	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
15	Paid work experience placements for long-term unemployed people	ACC	£124,048.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
16	Employability Support for international students and people with NRPFs	GREC	£27,660.00	Shortlisted only. Not considered as high priority as other initiatives.

Proposal		Lead Org	Requested	Outcome
17	Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grants/Community Care Grants	ACC	£200,000.00	High priority, emergency provision. Allocated £96,382
18	Food procurement and pantries	Cfine/FPPA	£251,260.00	High priority, early intervention support and emergency provision. Allocated £242,038
19	Fuel poverty vouchers and advice	SCARF	£82,500.00	High priority, early intervention support and emergency provision. Allocated £80,000
20	Flooding Damage Emergency Fund	ACC	TBC	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
21	Tier 3 Seasonal Response - Fuel Poverty Disbursement Fund	Aberdeen Cyrenians	£199,335.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
22	Creche for 8 children under 2.	Printfield	£7,500.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.
23	Essentials for underprivileged families	Abernecessities	£201,695.00	High priority, emergency provision. Allocated £40,300
24	Continued early intervention and prevention	Cyrenians	£192,526.00	Not considered as high priority for this fund.