

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 6 July 2023

Report of the Director of Public Health

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;

Lancashire Community Food Grant Scheme 2023-24

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

Over the last three years the communities team has administered the Lancashire Community Food Grant Scheme. The Scheme is a small grants programme for community groups within Lancashire. It is aimed at local organisations within the voluntary, community and faith sector that deliver projects to tackle food insecurity.

Community food organisations throughout Lancashire continue to report high levels of demand, and increasing costs. To support these organisations, and to allow time for further exploration of sustainable approaches to food insecurity, it is proposed that the programme continues during 2023-24, with one application round in late summer/autumn 2023 to a value of £100,000.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve that £100,000 be allocated to the Lancashire Community Food Grant Scheme for 2023-24, with one application round in late summer/autumn 2023.
- (ii) Authorise the Head of Service for Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, to approve individual grants under this scheme.

Detail

The Lancashire Community Fund Grant Scheme was established to help community food groups during the Covid Pandemic to provide emergency food support. Subsequently cost of living pressures have led to increasing demand from households and increasing costs incurred by the local food organisations.

The Scheme assists food organisations in meeting their overheads and building resilience of service users, with the aim of reducing demand over time.

The following table identifies the number and value of historic programme allocations:

Year	Number of Successful Applications	Value (£)
2020-21	45	42,054
2021-22	52	47,943
2022-23	97	260,020

The value of the 2022-23 scheme was increased as part of the Council's work to support communities with the cost of living utilising grant funding. The maximum award per application and the scope of eligible expenditure were expanded to include organisational staff costs, and projects that build resilience for those accessing support.

Activities included:

- The purchase of food for food banks, food clubs, community groceries and community meals.
- The purchase of equipment to create and renovate community cafés and community kitchens.
- The purchase of storage equipment, fridges and tables to allow food organisations to efficiently store and display food.
- Volunteer training such as food hygiene training.
- Volunteer expenses.
- Training sessions such as cooking on a budget, healthy eating, and budgeting.

Lancashire Community Food Grant Scheme 2023-24

Although it was anticipated the Scheme would end in 2022-23, with increasing demand for support and increasing costs incurred by community food organisations, it is proposed that a further £100,000 is allocated to the scheme during 2023-24, with one application round taking place in late summer/autumn 2023.

It is proposed that the maximum grant per applicant is £2,000, with eligible expenditure to include:

- Equipment
- Venue hire/overheads



- Volunteer and organisational training
- Volunteer expenses
- Food
- Projects/activities that build resilience for those accessing support
- Organisational staff costs

It is proposed to advertise the scheme from early August 2023, with an application deadline of 1 October 2023, and successful groups receiving funding by the end of October 2023. Voluntary and community organisations, registered charities, constituted groups, community interest companies, town and parish councils and faith organisations will be eligible under this scheme.

All applications will be checked to ensure they meet the grant criteria, which includes organisation type and that requested funding would go towards eligible expenditure. A panel of officers will meet to discuss all applications meeting the basic criteria. The key questions asked of each application will include:

- Who will it benefit – Number of beneficiaries or target group
- How you have identified a need for your project
- What will your project do
- Are costs reasonable
- Is there a detailed breakdown of costs, i.e. cost per session
- Existing local provision
- Sustainability of your project

To receive the grant, successful applicants are required to sign up to the grant terms and conditions. One of the grant conditions is that applicants complete and return a grant monitoring and evaluation form at the end of their project. If applicants have previously received a grant, they must have completed and returned the monitoring form to be eligible for funding from the 2023-24 scheme.

Members will be advised of the successful awards made under the scheme.

Officers will be working with district council colleagues to minimise any duplication with other funding streams. Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes will be a requirement of funding.

Consultations

Officers continue to engage with community food organisations and district council food officers through the Lancashire Local Authority Food Officers Network. The scope of the scheme has been widened as a consequence of these discussions.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:



Risk management

Financial

The scheme is funded as follows:

Source of Funding	Value (£)
Covid Outbreak Management Fund	70,000
Community Projects (Revenue Budget)	15,000
Crisis Support (Revenue Budget)	15,000
Total	100,000

Legal

The Scheme will continue to be managed in accordance with the county council's grant funding policy and procedures and is presented to Cabinet for decision as required by the county council's constitution.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

