

**From:** Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate & Traded Services  
Zena Cooke, Corporate Director Finance

**To:** County Council, 11 March 2021

**Subject:** Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:**

Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, local voluntary and community sector organisations have been working within their communities, responding to local issues and need. The Helping Hands Support Scheme has been created using £10m of the Covid-19 Emergency Grant funding, with £4m allocated to support low income households and households in financial distress including through voluntary and community sector organisations.

The Council is proposing using £486k of the £4m to establish the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund for use by elected Members in 2021-22. Members will each have £6k to award to eligible organisations in their electoral division that are undertaking projects which actively respond to the impact of Covid-19 on residents in the local community.

**Recommendation:**

The County Council is asked to note the report and support the proposal to create the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund for 2021-22 under part (a) of the Helping Hands Support Scheme via Executive Decision 21/00024.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, community groups and voluntary sector organisations across the county have been working within their communities responding to local issues and need. There have been a wide range of projects and initiatives such as foodbanks, supporting the homeless, virtual and socially distanced befriending schemes to tackle loneliness, providing activity packs for preschool children and collecting/delivering supplies for shielding residents. Many of these projects have been supported with funding from the Combined Member Grant scheme. Over the course of the first lockdown in spring 2020, approximately £170k was awarded in grants specifically for Covid-19 support projects. The second wave of Covid cases, the variant and the latest lockdown

and restrictions mean that the work of these groups continues to be critical, in the face of reduced ability to fundraise or generate income.

- 1.2. The Helping Hands Support Scheme has been created using £10m of the Covid 19 Emergency Grant funding. Part (a) of the Record of Decision states that, of the £10m, £4m is allocated to “support low income households and households in financial distress, including through council services such as the Kent Support and Assistance Service, district and borough councils, voluntary and community sector organisations, such as Kent Community Foundation and utility companies such as South East Water.”
- 1.3. In recognition of the vital work that local community groups and organisations are undertaking in response to the pandemic, the County Council is proposing that £486k of this £4m is used to create the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund. Members would each have £6k to allocate to voluntary and community sector organisations for specific Covid-19 recovery projects in their electoral division.

## **2. Outline of the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund**

- 2.1. The key objectives of the scheme are:
  - To provide funding to local community and voluntary sector organisations that are undertaking projects that respond to local need as a result of Covid-19.
  - To support residents through already established organisations who have an understanding of where the Covid Emergency Grant funding will have the most impact.
  - To allow Members to use their local knowledge to support their constituents.
- 2.2. The Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund is a funding route for smaller organisations and community groups that may have struggled to sustain funding throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.3. Funding will be available for the 2021-22 financial year and access to the Fund will start in the new municipal year.
- 2.4. Awards must be between £300 and £2,000. Setting these limits will ensure that a wide range of projects can be supported.
- 2.5. In recognition of the population density in divisions with multiple Members, Members who share a division can combine awards. The minimum and maximum limits of £300 and £2,000 will still apply to the value of the combined award.
- 2.6. Applicants to the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund will be required to demonstrate how their project responds to the pandemic, in line with the County Council’s Interim Strategic Plan objectives. These objectives are broad

in scope and will enable a wide range of organisations and projects to be eligible for an award:

- i Improve the health and wellbeing of our population.
- ii Improve access to emotional and mental health support for children and young people.
- iii Support households in financial crisis, food and fuel poverty.
- iv Enable the necessary physical, social and cultural infrastructure to make Kent an attractive place to live, work and invest in.
- v Support people to learn and retrain throughout their life so that individuals, are well-equipped to seize economic opportunities.
- vi Work with local communities to promote access to safe places to walk and cycle as an alternative to travelling by car.
- vii Consider opportunities for providing support and activities for young people online, including youth outreach work.

2.7. Highways projects will not be in the scope of the award.

2.8. The Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund will have a simple application and approval process, administered by the Member Hub.

### **3. Recommendations**

#### **Recommendations:**

The County Council is asked to note the report and support the proposal to create the Covid-19 Local Recovery Fund for 2021-22 under part (a) of the Helping Hands Support Scheme via Executive Decision 21/00024.

#### **Contact Details**

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