
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	1 February, 2022
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	PR/04/22/TMcE
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan, Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources	Contact No:	712761
Subject:	Winter Support Fund 2021/22		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy and Resources Committee regarding the £400,000 projects approved by the Council in December funded by the Winter Support Fund grant from Scottish Government and to seek approval for the allocation of the additional £112,000 balance.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced a £41m Winter Support Fund to support low income households. Included in this was £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government Winter Support Fund allocation to Inverclyde Council was £512k which was more than the initially estimated £400k. Proposals for the original £400k were approved by Inverclyde Council on 2 December 2021 as detailed in the body of the report.
- 2.3 The Officers Anti-Poverty Group have now considered the best use of the additional £112k to support households on low income and recommend that:
- further support is provided to families on low incomes who are entitled to the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment, by increasing this payment by £30 to £50 per eligible child, with the payment being made in February 2022; and
 - support to Inverclyde foodbanks so they can support the most marginalised households with both food and fuel vouchers when necessary. (£28,000)

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee:
- a) notes the content of this report and the initiatives previously approved by Inverclyde Council;
 - b) agrees the proposals set out at 2.3 above to support Inverclyde residents in the winter months; and
 - c) notes that a fuller update on progress in delivery of the previously approved initiatives funded by the Anti Poverty monies will be presented to the March meeting of the Committee.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 29 October 2021, the Scottish Government announced a £41m Winter Support Fund to support low income households. Included in this was £25m of flexible funding to local authorities to support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity in their communities. The allocation to Inverclyde was £512k which was more than the initially estimated £400k. Proposals for the £400k spend were approved by Inverclyde Council on 2 December 2021.
- 4.2 Local authorities were given the flexibility to adapt interventions to meet emerging needs including supplementing local budgets for the Scottish Welfare Fund to meet demand, boosting local funding for Discretionary Housing Payments and proactive assistance for those likely to experience hardship. This includes people who may have been impacted by the recent UK Government reversal of the temporary increase to Universal Credit and those who may not be eligible for mainstream support.
- 4.3 Inverclyde Council already supports people on low incomes with a wide range of services and initiatives including the Anti-Poverty funded projects, the more generous criteria for school clothing grants and the enhanced criteria for those entitled to Child Payment Bridging Payments. These interventions support households facing financial insecurity during the winter months, when the pressure on household finances are likely to be higher.

5.0 Winter Hardship Support Funding

- 5.1 The Council's Anti Poverty Group considered the most effective way to support local households on low income and proposals totalling £400,000 were agreed by Inverclyde Council on 2nd December 2021. These were to:
 - provide a further 20% increase in the level of Crisis grant awards for the remainder of 2021/22 plus allowance for increase in demand experienced in the last 2 months (£40,000);
 - increase funding to meet the significant increase in Community Care Grants administered via the Scottish Welfare Fund in 2021/22. Support helps individuals with costs of essential goods when moving into new tenancies/homes and reduces the risk of homelessness. (£110,000);
 - increase funding to Starter Packs to provide essential support to individuals /families settling into a new home (£10,000);
 - increase the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment by £20 to £180/eligible child (£70,000);
 - pay £100 to approximately 700 individuals not covered by earlier scheme to make £100 payments to Council Tax Reduction recipients with no children within their household (£70,000); and
 - increase funding to iHeat to increase the level of support and numbers supported via the Elderly Heating Project (£100,000).
- 5.2 The group has now considered the best use of the additional £112,000 to support households on low income during this winter and proposes the following:
 - further support is provided to families on low incomes who are entitled to the Winter Child Payment Bridging Payment, by increasing the increased payment by £30 to £50 per eligible child. The payment to be made in February 2022; and support to Inverclyde foodbanks so they can support the most marginalised household with both food and fuel vouchers when necessary. (£28,000)

5.3 Payments will be made through existing service provision and to organisations within the first three months of 2022 with any unallocated sum at 31 March added to the Anti Poverty Fund.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance

The Scottish Government allocated £512,000 Winter Support Fund to Inverclyde Council in December 2021 to support families on low income. £400,000 of proposals were agreed in 2 December 2021. £112,000 proposed within this report.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
Winter Support Fund	External Payments	2022/23	£112,000		£400k already approved by Council on 2 December 2021.

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications other than those highlighted in the report.

6.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications are highlighted in the report.

6.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES	
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report’s recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

6.5 **Repopulation**

Tackling the deep seated inequalities in Inverclyde will have a positive impact of the area’s population.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The CMT support the proposals made in this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None