

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to allocate underspend within the Covid Recovery plan to support oversubscribed grant schemes													
Date of decision:	22 March 2022													
Decision maker:	Director of Resources and Assurance													
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>Decision taken by key cabinet member on 28th February 2022 to give delegated authority to the section 151 officer following consultation with the appropriate director to move funding between approved schemes within the Covid Recovery plan to ensure that any underspend can be maximised.</p> <p>Decision - To give Delegated Authority to the Section 151 officer in consultation with the appropriate director to move funding between the approved schemes within the agreed COVID Recovery plan - Herefordshire Council</p>													
Ward:	Countywide													
Consultation:	<p>The COVID Recovery Plan was approved by Cabinet on 24th June which provides funding of £6m to support the economy, community wellbeing and organisation with recovery. The plan provided an overview of the schemes for delivery, which included 'Educational catch up' 'Community and Personal Resilience' and 'Get Active' all appropriate consultation was undertaken at this time.</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ielssueDetails.aspx?Ild=50037702&PlanId=0&Opt=3#A158109</p> <p>Following this additional consultation with members a decision has taken place which has given delegated authority to the section 151 officer to move any underspend between pre agreed schemes to ensure that this can be maximised.</p>													
Decision made:	<p>The decision has been taken to allocate underspend within the original Covid Recovery Plan to grant schemes that have been oversubscribed as outlined below:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;">Oversubscribed grant schemes</th> <th style="width: 30%;">Additional funding allocated</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Educational Catch up administered by Herefordshire Council</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£48,816</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Get Active – Cultural Activities administered by Community First</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£22,084.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community and Personal Resilience administered by Herefordshire Community Foundation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£32,504.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Get Active – Green spaces administered by Herefordshire Community Foundation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£46,408</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£149,813</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>For more information on these schemes please see the original decisions:</p> <p>Issue details - To support community and personal resilience following the impact of COVID 19 as part of the COVID 19 recovery plan - Herefordshire Council</p> <p>Get Active Record of officer decision</p> <p>Educational Catch up Record of officer decision</p>		Oversubscribed grant schemes	Additional funding allocated	Educational Catch up administered by Herefordshire Council	£48,816	Get Active – Cultural Activities administered by Community First	£22,084.5	Community and Personal Resilience administered by Herefordshire Community Foundation	£32,504.5	Get Active – Green spaces administered by Herefordshire Community Foundation	£46,408	Total	£149,813
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Reasons for decision:	<p>The global Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting measures taken to reduce the spread of the virus have had an unprecedented impact on the national and local economy and on people's wellbeing and mental (as well as physical) health. Nationally the magnitude of the recession caused by the pandemic is unprecedented, GDP declined by 9.8% in 2020 the steepest drop since records began in 1948.</p> <p>The pandemic has also had a severe impact on people's mental health and wellbeing, due to long periods of anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty. The Herefordshire Community Wellbeing Survey 2021 found 28% of people reported high levels of anxiety, 32% experienced drop in household income, 33% doing less exercise, and 30% sleeping less well. Wellbeing is lowest in those living in the most deprived areas.</p> <p>The council has worked across all directorates to support businesses, residents and communities throughout the pandemic to remain as safe as possible and to prevent and reduce spread of infection and protect those most vulnerable in our society.</p> <p>Our focus now moves towards recovery. Over the coming months the true impact of the pandemic will become better known for the economy, community wellbeing and the organisation.</p> <p>To support the recovery cabinet approved a £6.1m COVID Recovery Plan which includes the economy, community wellbeing and organisation. The recovery plan now focuses on the immediate impactful actions we need to take in the short term. Our priorities are to:</p> <p><i>Establish Safe and Welcoming Places</i> <i>Support Business Viability and Resilience,</i> <i>Support Employment</i> <i>Support Wellbeing.</i></p> <p>There has been underspend identified across some schemes within the original covid recovery plan allocation whereas these grant schemes have been oversubscribed.</p> <p>The allocation of the additional funds will support applications that have met the grant criteria however were unable to be funded through the initial process due to funding</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>The COVID recovery plan budget allocation must be committed within the 2021/22 financial year, we want to ensure that this money can reach those smaller groups who can really make a difference in our communities and to the residents of Herefordshire. These grant schemes are supporting a number of groups who have already submitted applications that meet the grant criteria.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>To not allocate identified underspend to these grant schemes however this was rejected as the interest in the grants schemes and the high quality applications have evidenced the need to support these schemes</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	<p>N/A</p>

Signed

Andrew Lovegrove
Director of Resources and Assurance

Date: 22 March 2022