

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement
to Cabinet
of 29 August 2023**

Subject: Covid-19 Recovery Project and LACER Funding Review

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress and outcomes achieved through the allocation of Covid-19 reserves for recovery project activity and Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery (LACER) funding.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1.1 considers the progress and outcomes achieved through the Covid-19 Recovery Project and LACER funding;**
- 2.1.2 notes that £1.055m of Covid-19 reserves remains unallocated; and**
- 2.1.3 agrees that the unallocated funds are remitted to the cross-party Financial Inclusion Member/ Officer Working Group to support the wider agenda of sustainable financial inclusion and that officers make arrangements for the Group to meet and report back to Cabinet in October on its new remit and the proposed use of the funds.**

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 15 June 2021, the Leadership Panel approved a £5.852m programme of Covid-19 recovery activity over the two financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23, funded from available Covid-19 reserves.
- 3.2 Two small additional funding allocations have been made from Covid-19 reserves to the approved Covid-19 recovery projects in line with Financial Regulations rules on budget transfers, resulting in a revised allocated programme cost of £5.926m.
- 3.3 At its meeting on 29 June 2022, Council approved a £1.958m programme of recovery activity funded from £1.668m of Scottish Government grant funding for Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery (LACER) funding and £0.270m of funding from council general reserves.
- 3.4 The Budget Management – Revenue Budgetary Control 2022/23 – Out-turn Statement at 31 March 2023 considered by Cabinet on 20 June 2023 indicated an uncommitted Covid-19 reserve of £0.935m at 31 March 2023. Further, the Cabinet

agreed a recommendation to review the previously approved Covid-19 recovery Projects and provide recommendations on the allocation of the remaining unallocated Covid-19 funds held in reserves.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet consider the progress and outcomes achieved in relation to:

(1) Covid-19 Recovery Projects, included at [Appendix 1](#); and

(2) LACER funded activity, included at [Appendix 2](#).

4.2 As highlighted in 3.4 above, the balance held in uncommitted Covid-19 reserves was £0.935m at 31 March 2023. As part of the review process a further £0.120m of allocated project funding has been identified as being eligible to be returned to the reserve, resulting in a total of £1.055m of uncommitted Covid-19 reserves. The Covid-19 reserves position will be updated to incorporate the return of funds as part of the next Budget Management Report considered by Cabinet in September 2023.

4.3 Ongoing monitoring of spend for the remaining earmarked Covid-19 funds held by services will be through the regular quarterly budget monitoring reporting process considered by Cabinet.

4.4 To determine the best use of these remaining uncommitted funds it is proposed that the allocation of the funds be remitted to the recently established cross-party working group; the Financial Inclusion Member/ Officer Working Group.

4.5 The membership of the group is as follows:

Members	Officers
Cllr Cavana	Director of Housing, Operation and Development and Depute Chief Executive
Cllr Davis	Assistant Director - Communities
Cllr Dettbarn	Service Lead – Revenues and Benefits
Cllr Hunter	Service Lead – Thriving Communities
Cllr Lyons	Service Lead – OD and Customer Services

4.6 As the cross-party group has only recently been established it requested that group meet in early course to consider its overall remit and suitable uses for the funding that will provide the greatest impact in supporting the wider sustainable financial inclusion theme. The group should report to Cabinet in October for agreement of the remit and proposed use of the funds.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Of the £5.926m of funding allocated to Covid-19 Recovery Project activity, £2.801m was spent by 31 March 2023, with £2.568m being carried forward to 2023/24 to continue the project activity. £0.436m was returned to the Covid Reserve- in 2022-23 with a further £0.120m being returned to the reserve as part of this review as it is no longer required.
- 6.2 Of the £1.958m of funding allocated to LACER Activity £1.120m was spent by 31 March 2023, with £0.838m being carried forward to 2023/24 to continue the project activity.
- 6.3 Total Covid-19 uncommitted reserves now stands at £1.055m.

7. Human Resources Implications

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

- 8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

- 8.2.1 There is a risk that if the recommendations are rejected then the uncommitted Covid-19 reserves will remain unused in the support of the wider financial inclusion agenda.

9. Equalities

- 9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 3](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Priority 4 of the Council Plan: Efficient and effective enabling services.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

- 14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Cabinet in the 'Council and Cabinet Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

Implementation	Due date	Managed by
The cross-party Financial Inclusion Member/ Officer Working Group to report back to Cabinet on its new remit and use of the remaining uncommitted Covid-19 reserve funds	31 October 2023	Director of Housing, Operations and Development and Depute Chief Executive

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 15 June 2021 – [Covid-19 Programme of Recovery Activity 2021/11 to 2022/23](#)**

Report to Council of 29 June 2022 – [Addressing Future Needs/ Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery \(LACER\) Fund](#)

Report to Cabinet of 20 June 2023 – [Budget Management – Revenue Budgetary Control 2022/23 – Out-turn Statement at 31 March 2023](#)

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Date: 21 August 2023

Covid-19 Recovery Projects activity

Project/initiative details	Funding allocated £	2021/22 spend £	2022/23 spend £	2023/24 funding (Earmarking) £	Returned to reserve £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
Revenue & Benefits: Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) - Additional Funding. The Scottish Government provide the funding for the Council's DHP budget. This proposal was to add to the core funding with Covid Recovery money to continue that enhanced support up to 31/3/2023.	150,000	-	1,931	148,069	-	It was planned to utilise the Covid Recovery Funding across both DHP & SWF budgets in 2022/23 to supplement the core funding from SG. The SG then provided additional DHP funding and we also used the Cost-of-Living Payment Admin Grant funding of £91,600 to supplement the SWF budget therefore the Covid funding was not used (other than a small amount £1,931). It is anticipated that full amount will be utilised in 2023/24 as we do not expect SG to supplement core funding again. During 2023/24 the benefits realised will be that we continue to support DHP claimants who are adversely affected by the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) benefit cap (Private Sector rental) that the core budget would not permit and continue to award Community Care Grants with the level of need set to 'Medium' that would otherwise have been refused, or the limit would be set to 'High' needs only. We are generally operating at medium need but the core funding from SG would dictate that this need is changed to High need only much earlier in the year. We are continually monitoring both the DHP & SWF budgets during the year, reviewing award policy to meet budgets. Effectively during 2023/24 the core funding will be used up and we will use the Covid 19 recovery fund.
Revenue & Benefits: Family Pandemic Payments (FPP). The Scottish Government Fund FPP for Free School Meal recipients. Funding required to make the same payments for Clothing Grant Recipients.	250,000	-	250,000	-	-	Supplement SG funding for Children in receipt of Free School Meals & Council matched for those Children in receipt of Clothing Grant - payments made successfully and initiative closed.
Customer Services: Digital Inclusion Project - purchase of digital equipment for Information and Advice Hubs and Libraries.	19,254	3,390	12,561	-	3,303	Staff using digital devices enable them to provide services in a community location for example, Schools, Foodbanks and community events. Completion of case records, benefit and grant applications and updating case management system with key details. The balance of funding not utilised was returned to Covid-19 reserves in 2022-23.
Employability & Skills: Supported Employment Tailored Jobs Programme –	180,000	26,768	-	-	153,232	Funding was utilised to create tailored jobs for young people with additional support needs within South Ayrshire Council. Case studies

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The Tailored Jobs Programme was launched in 2019. Employability & Skills work with Service Managers to identify opportunities for young people with additional support needs. The intended outcome of these tailored jobs is to support young people into employment with South Ayrshire Council that suits their individual skills, interests and abilities.						evidence that this programme has supported young people into jobs and provided valuable work experience. This programme supports the No-One Left Behind delivery plan priorities that includes closing the disability employment gap. The funding not utilised was returned to Covid-19 reserves in 2022-23 following the receipt of No-One Left Behind funding.
Employability & Skills: Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERI) will help people of all ages to secure employment. Employers from private companies and third sector organisations, with a maximum of 250 employees, will be able to apply for the incentive to help with the costs of recruiting and employing someone who fits the eligibility criteria. It can provide up to £6,000 for newly created roles or vacancies. Employers who are successful in applying for the incentive will receive the money at set intervals throughout the year	300,000	19,650	-	-	280,350	Funding was utilised to support local businesses to recruit unemployed people within South Ayrshire. South Ayrshire Council Employer Recruitment Incentive offered businesses up to £6000 to recruit young people who reside in South Ayrshire. This initiative supports SAC priorities, No-One Left Behind Delivery Plan and Community Wealth Building. Case studies are available to evidences the impact of this programme. 50 people were supported through the ERI into employment. The balance of funding not utilised was returned to Covid-19 reserves in 2022-23 following the receipt of No-One Left Behind funding.
Employability & Skills: Additional resources to support our locality-based community teams following the impact of COVID, including mental health and wellbeing, social isolation and anti-social behaviour 1 x L9 Outdoor Education Officer (18months)	170,109	18,729	143,821	7,559	-	Funding increased capacity within the Thriving Communities service, this included improving our community based outdoor learning offer across South Ayrshire. The outdoor education officer provided support for targeted groups, this included young people who were care experienced, young carers, young people and adults from our most deprived areas and young people struggling within education. Case studies evidence the impact that this role had on the targeted groups during the covid-recovery period. Additional youth workers and budget to develop new provision allowed Thriving Communities officers engage with young

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Sessional budget for additional Youth Workers (18 months) Budget to allow for the delivery of a range of interventions and programmes						people through community-based youth groups, work in schools and detached youth work.
Employability & Skills: Improving outcomes for Girvan Glendoune, as one of our most deprived areas in South Ayrshire Glendoune requires a dedicated community space and community worker to help improve outcomes.	143,478	16,880	47,574	79,024	-	Funding allowed for a Senior Communities Officer to be recruited to support Glendoune (Girvan). Evidence detailed in the Cabinet Report Glendoune - May 2023 detailed the level of support that was provided, this includes support for securing external funding, recruiting volunteers, income maximisation and community capacity building. The development of the site at Glendoune could not be progressed at this stage however funding has been used to extend the communities officers post.
Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Financial assistance for tenants in the private rented sector at risk of homelessness. It is proposed that covid recovery funding is used to assist those tenants, via one-off grant payments directly to their landlords, who are struggling with covid related arrears but would otherwise be able to sustain their tenancy in normal times. The grants would be administered by the Ayr Housing Aid Centre, using detailed criteria defined by the Council.	60,000	-	-	-	60,000	Planned scheme was superseded by Scottish Government funding for this purpose. Funding to be returned to Covid-19 reserve in 2023-24.
Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Community Co-ordinator for Wallacetown - The implementation of the 'Team around the Community model' is fundamental to bringing about significant change, with the introduction of a multi-agency team model with staff based in/dedicated to the Wallacetown area providing services to local people within their local area using Newton Primary	134,347	19,368	22,902	92,077	-	This funding has facilitated increased frontline partnership working in Wallacetown resulting in improved outcomes for residents. A full review of the post is scheduled for early 2024 to determine if this pilot role can contribute to the new locality model being implemented within Community Planning

Project/initiative details	Funding allocated £	2021/22 spend £	2022/23 spend £	2023/24 funding (Earmarking) £	Returned to reserve £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
<p>School Community Hub as a base. The range of services involved in this model requires a high degree of co-ordination to ensure services are working in partnership, maximising outcomes for residents and progressing the priorities of the Community Planning Board. It is proposed that the level 11 post would be funded (with small flexible annual budget of £15k) for an initial 23-month period after which, if successful, additional funding would be requested from CP partners to mainstream the position.</p>						
<p>Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Financial assistance for tenants in social housing at risk of homelessness -. It is proposed that covid recovery funding is used to assist those appropriate tenants, via one-off grant payments directly to rent accounts, who are struggling with covid related arrears but would otherwise be able to sustain their tenancy in normal times. This fund would be available to Council tenants and tenants of Registered Social Landlords in South Ayrshire. It should be noted that Cosla have requested the Scottish Government set up a similar fund on a national basis but there is no clarity on whether this will happen. If the Scottish Government make such a fund available, the requested funding from SAC will be used for other homelessness prevention activities as per our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.</p>	120,000	-	84,179	35,821	-	<p>Funding has been used to prevent and alleviate further legal proceedings against 89 SAC tenants who had arrears attributed to either Covid related issues or with struggles to manage cost of living pressures. In all cases measures have been put in place with Housing Officer to work with tenants to ensure that rent is manageable with the remaining grant to be utilised in the near future</p>

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<p>Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Advocacy Services for Wallacetown Residents - It is proposed that Covid recovery funding is used to commission two advocacy workers to dedicate time to the most vulnerable residents in Wallacetown who risk being further marginalised as we collectively recover from the pandemic.</p>	112,000	-	-	112,000	-	Contract awarded to Riverside Community Trust in 2023. First contract monitoring meeting due in August 2023.
<p>Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Deposit Assistance for new tenants accessing the Social Letting Service. - It is proposed the covid recovery funding is used to cover the cost of deposits for tenants accessing the SLS to allow a sustainable housing solution to be accessed quickly. The deposit would be repaid to the Council at the end of the tenancy (minus any costs incurred to the landlord) and be used again for new people accessing the service.</p>	30,000	-	900	10,000	19,100	6 tenancies have now been created and been supported by the deposit grant funding which is utilised as a revolving fund for the deposit element of the Social Letting Service. The hope is that this funding can be utilised past March 2024 on an ongoing basis to help support new tenants onto the scheme. Balance of funding not required to be returned to Covid-19 reserves.
<p>Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Trauma-Informed Practice Officer This proposal recommends that South Ayrshire Council employ an officer with the sole remit of embedding the principles of Trauma-Informed Practice in the work we do, and across the Community Planning Partnership. This post would be an internal secondment for 23 months with a view to delivering transformational change for the benefit of South Ayrshire's population during this period of recovery following the Coronavirus pandemic.</p>	92,315	9,403	62,535	20,377	-	Trauma Informed Officer has been in post since Jan 2022 and has facilitated significant progress towards the Council's Trauma Informed Strategic Action Plan. Funding bids currently submitted to external bodies to increase focus on staff wellbeing.

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<p>Policy, Performance & Community Planning: Garden Enhancements at Newton Primary - It is proposed that recovery funding is used to purchase materials to enhance the garden to provide more opportunities for pupils to engage with the outdoors and hopefully build a lifelong affinity with nature. It is hoped that the wider community could be involved in the design and build of the enhancements</p>	10,000	10,000	-	-	-	Outside space improvements made at Newton primary School.
<p>Asset Management & Community asset Transfer: A Blueprint for Transforming our Estate - an action plan to transform our estate to meet the needs of our future workforce and communities for a thriving South Ayrshire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision for our Council estate and community and commercial buildings and assets - Strategy - how we will deliver on our vision - Outline of the 'as-is' - Identification of the 'to-be' - What we need to do to get there (action plan) including options on disposals, co-location of services, services that will operate from home - Potential costs, dependencies, risks and timescales involved 	70,000	70,000	-	-	-	Cabinet approved a report on 25th April 2023 titled "Transforming the Estate". This sets out several high levels action to be completed by April 2024.
<p>Economy & Regeneration: Shopfront Scheme - continue the existing scheme to enable those that were not successful due</p>	450,000	431,530	18,470	-	-	228 Applications have been completed totalling £595,177.53 (includes other funding sources)

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to limited funds to make improvements to the shopfront						There are 62 approved applications waiting to complete to claim for the second part of the grant. (£82,997 paid and potentially a further £82,997 committed).
Economy & Regeneration: Local digital shopping platform - Provide a local place-based rival to national shopping, home delivery and booking platforms to empower local consumers, businesses and SAC with access to local products and services that meet their needs. This would support and enhance the 'Scotland Loves Local' campaign and message.	40,000	-	-	-	40,000	Project not progressed. Funding to be returned to Covid-19 reserves in 2023-24.
Health & Wellbeing: The Duke of Edinburgh's Award - The project is aimed at supporting young people who are currently at South Ayrshire secondary schools. The young people taking part in the award have faced significant barriers to accessing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in school and in the community over the course of the past year. To complete the expedition young people have to complete training before undertaking both a practice and qualifying expedition. This proposal would allow young people to complete their expedition during the school summer holidays, wild camping on route each night and travelling to and from home using a minibus	35,653	11,679	23,974	-	-	Funding was used to increase the programme of Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions to support young people to complete their award. Expeditions provided young people new and exciting opportunities to explore wild places across Scotland by canoe, bike or on foot. The funding has provided 77 expedition places as well as support within school to complete the other sections of the award and expedition training.
Health & Wellbeing: Outdoor Learning and Outdoor Activities Proposal to expand the current outdoor opportunities to ensure young people	183,427	32,123	151,304	-	-	Additional outdoor learning sessions were arranged at Dolphin House to support young people who missed out on residential and transition experiences because of Covid-19. Sessions were arranged in the community and at Dolphin House and case studies are available that

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who missed out on a residential experience, or who are struggling to engage in learning following lockdown can be supported to engage in outdoor learning.						show positive feedback from young people, parents and staff. The residential programme was delivered to all eight secondary schools as well as the three secondary special schools within the authority with 407 young people benefitting from visits to Dolphin House. The programme was successful in engaging some of the vulnerable young people, increasing key skills and confidence and improving engagement at school. These outcomes were highlighted from consultation and feedback with school staff and testimonials from young people taking part.
Health & Wellbeing: Levelling the Playing Field Reducing barriers for young people to access community sport and physical activity and supporting a return to club sport across South Ayrshire.	97,550	-	97,550	-	-	Funding was utilised to support a return to sport and physically activity following COVID across 3 different projects: Active Communities: Delivery of a range of free sport and physical activity sessions in South Ayrshire Communities. Over 1300 different opportunities delivered with over 1200 different young people and adults participating including young people from a SIMD area, those with care experience and those with additional support needs. Changing Lives Through Sport; funding utilised to support sports clubs and organisations to reduce barriers to participation focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion. Two Changing Lives workshops were delivered with £25,000 funding being awarded to 16 local clubs resulting in more opportunities for residents of communities across South Ayrshire. Coaching & Volunteering; programme of support for local sports coaches and volunteers to re-establish and create new relationships as COVID restrictions started to ease, and to upskill and retrain a network of club coaches, casual sports coaches and volunteers on their return to sport. A total of 18 coach education courses were delivered and fully funded with 150+ local people taking part. This represented 23 local sports clubs and gave us the opportunity to showcase 11 different venues including the new Riverside Arena.
Health & Wellbeing: North Ayr/River Ayr outdoor sport facilities. Proposal to develop water sport and beach volleyball opportunities to link both sides of River Ayr to Craigie campus development.	146,600	42,578	26,587	77,435	-	Beach volleyball courts completed June 2022 as a year-round facility to increase the accessibility of volleyball within the community in partnership with local volleyball clubs, Scottish Volleyball Association, UWS, Ayrshire College and local schools. A variety of programmes are now running from the courts including; Active Community sessions for

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						<p>young people and adults, local school access as part of the pathways for National Team training in partnership with the Scottish Volleyball Association, and beach sport competition venue for schools and beach sport holiday programmes. The venue has also hosted the European Small Country's Association Event with teams from Scotland, England, Finland, Ireland and Northern Ireland taking part and was selected to host the Olympic Games qualifier event for the Women's Beach Volleyball attracting players from Poland, Czech Republic, Belgium and Scotland.</p> <p>The River Ayr water sport development is due for completion in October 2023 but ongoing partnerships with Scottish Rowing, UWS, Ayrshire College are positive regarding usage of the facility.</p>
<p>Health & Wellbeing: Craigie Park Sport for All facility development - Development of an 'Active Zone within Craigie Park to provide a 7 aside MUGA as a safe area for schools, community and local sports clubs to use. This would provide a safe area for the local schools, community and clubs to use</p>	251,614	-	-	251,614	-	<p>Project is completed and the facility is open to the public. The facility is utilised by local primary schools during the day and is part of the Active Communities programme providing a venue for free community sport sessions as well as a free recreational space for local residents. The facility will be part of a programmed showcase of the Craigie campus facilities on Saturday 12th August 2023. The project was led by PDS and the funding is to be drawn to the capital programme in 2023/24.</p>
<p>Sport & Leisure: Multi-Function Activity Space - transform the vacant café area in the Citadel into a space that provides opportunities to increase footfall, generate income and provide targeted health and wellbeing activities for our most vulnerable residents.</p>	25,000	23,427	1,573	-	-	<p>The new Multi-Function Activity Space in the Citadel now accommodates over 40 programmed health and fitness classes, providing exercise and relaxation opportunities to over 900 participants every week and over 45,000 participant sessions each year. The location and design of the room provides the ideal space to deliver a range of Yoga, Pilates and low-impact fitness classes targeted at supporting the health and wellbeing of customers.</p>
<p>Early Years: Support for parents of babies to reduce social isolation and improve outcomes particularly early language and communication skills in areas of deprivation. A range of parent and baby classes are already available for a cost across the authority. The aim is to provide this experience free for parents in areas of</p>	48,000	13,060	23,604	11,336	-	<p>To support families with babies and young children who were finding themselves socially isolated post covid we have provided a programme of family learning opportunities in early years centres in localities across South Ayrshire with a focus on areas of deprivation.</p> <p>A range of family groups including Baby Massage, Jiggly Wrigglers, Glow Bambino and Baby Sensory ran classes which families could access for free.</p>

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deprivation so that both parents and children in key areas benefit from the rich experiences.						This has provided opportunities for babies and young children to mix together socially and for parents to come together and meet one another. These sessions have also supported outcomes for babies and young children particularly in relation to the development of language and communication skills and supported families to further develop these at home. As the sessions have taken place within early years centres this has supported children as they transition to their funded early learning and childcare placement
Education: Summer Care Experienced Activity Programme - Activities led and delivered by Health and Wellbeing Team at Dolphin House, comprising of two weekdays per week over the period of the 6-week summer holiday, including residential stay option one night per week. Lunches and transport included in programme	6,050	4,181	1,869	-	-	Funding was used during 2022 to support young people who are care experienced and their families to engage in outdoor learning activities at Dolphin House. Residential and day activities at Dolphin House in partnership with Education Care Experienced Officers. Weekly visits took place throughout the holidays giving 18 families the chance to take part in a residential experience and a further 15 young people took part in day activities.
Education: Supporting the implementation & delivery of school-based nurture groups to support young people who experience social, emotional & behavioural needs.	65,486	24,486	41,000	-	-	This funding supported an increase in support provided to children and young people who experience social, emotional and behavioural needs in our schools and EYC settings. Children missed out on opportunities to socialise and develop life skills during the pandemic. This funding has led to an increase in training and direct support to practitioners, young people and parents/carers. Additional resource has furthermore been directed to this approach to ensure the long-term sustainability of this work and a Nurture Outreach Team is now in place.
Education (in partnership with HSCP): Secondary School Family First Project. Partnership between Education and HSCP to provided targeted early intervention support for young people and families to support COVID recovery.	665,000	5,637	314,205	345,158	-	Primary aim was to reduce need for Statutory Services – 45 young people and their families have been supported by the service previously. Since closing, 1 young person has been referred to SCRA with 6 young people and families (including young person referred to the reporter) have been open to locality social work. 1 young person has been re-opened to the service for additional targeted support. Support plans are in place for all young people and families, prior to ending showing what worked previously and what has been tried. 6 young

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						<p>people have moved on to further education and 2 young people have been supported to SASKA. At point of referral, it was estimated that 97% of the 45 young people would from somewhat to highly likely require a referral to Statutory Social Work.</p> <p>3 initial assessments have been completed for the Scottish Children’s reporter by the service recommending families continue to work with Small Steps on voluntary basis and reduce the need for statutory measures on a family.</p> <p>Currently, the team are supporting 36 young people and their families – the primary cause for referral is attendance and parents struggling with behaviour. Interventions include: - diversion programme, LIAM Anxiety management, Sleep Scotland input, parental work, self-harm reduction. At point of referral, 94% of the 36 young people would from somewhat to highly likely require a referral to Statutory Social Work.</p> <p>The service utilises and supports families by signposting to existing services for additional support including Information & advice hub, Thriving Communities, Penumbra and Barnardo’s. We are approved food bank voucher holders as well and can provide additional support when required.</p> <p>Group work is undertaken in Prestwick (Summer, Easter and 2nd Summer Programme) working on emerging issues within the young people at the school. Within Marr College, the group work has focussed on Cooking, Lego based emotions work and summer diversion group for young people in conflict with the law.</p> <p>Families report the benefit of someone bridging the gap between home and school. School benefit from direct link to Social Work to discuss wellbeing concerns that would not meet IRT threshold but were they require advice and guidance.</p>
Housing Services: Provision of resources to support homelessness prevention activity and to deal with increased service demands from homeless households because of Covid-19	220,000	40,880	114,120	65,000	-	<p>Over the course of 2022/23 the Housing Options Teams dealt with 874 homeless applications, which was up on 794 in 2021/22. 869 assessments were made in that year and the additional resources have supported this increased area of activity and allowed the team to provide appropriate levels of housing advice and information. From the approved earmarked funding of £0.065m available in 2023/24, this will continue to fund a temporary Housing Options Officer to support this</p>

Project/initiative details	Funding allocated £	2021/22 spend £	2022/23 spend £	2023/24 funding (Earmarking) £	Returned to reserve £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
						activity and is helping to support funding towards the temporary Team Leader post in the Anti -Social behaviour Team.
Housing Services: Resources to Support the delivery of Anti-Social Behaviour Services and to increase scope to undertake developmental activity and engage more proactively with communities and other agencies.	100,000	20,329	79,671	-	-	In the 2022/23 reporting year, 491 cases of anti-social behaviour were reported, this was an increase on the 318 cases reported in 2021/22. Despite the increased number of cases, 438 of the 491 cases were resolved in the 2022/23 reporting year - equating to 89.2%. The remaining 53 cases were 'open active' cases, and all were within the timescales of locally agreed targets. The funding has supported the provision of additional staffing resources to support this activity and has allowed the Council to more effectively respond and manage cases of anti-social behaviour. In addition, the temporary post of Team Leader - Anti Social Behaviour has allowed development work with partners to be progressed, creating stronger partnership working arrangements with Police Scotland. Daily briefing meetings have been established, information sharing protocols are in place and a more pro-active approach to is being taken through the provision of joint visits to by Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Police Officers
Housing Services: Financial Resources to Support Award of Grants to Owners for Mixed Tenure Capital Improvement Works undertaken or commissioned by the Council - This bid is to support the delivery of increased levels of owner engagement. This will require to be supported by the recruitment of a Housing Asset Management Officer at (Level 8), with the remainder of the funding being directed to increasing the available budget to support the award of grants to owners to increase levels of engagement and sign up to mixed tenure works.	250,000	-	-	250,000		Engagement work has taken place with owners in mixed tenure blocks for capital works that are currently underway or planned to be completed in 2023/24, and scheme of assistance grants have been agreed in principle for owners using the agreed earmarked funds of £0.250m.
Neighbourhood Services: Promenade and Shorefront Improvement Scheme - The project aims to improves the built asset along the promenades with	750,000	-	-	750,000	-	Initial proposals for the promenades were developed that looked at feasibility/costs, decorative lighting, structural repairs etc. The development of these plans was put on hold pending the confirmation of further capital funding included as part of the 2023/24 capital

Project/initiative details	Funding allocated £	2021/22 spend £	2022/23 spend £	2023/24 funding (Earmarking) £	Returned to reserve £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
reconstruction/surfacing, cycle paths, benches, lighting, signage and interpretation linked to each town with the promenade. This project focuses on residents and visitors alike to improve the appeal of our built assets regarding shorefronts and promenades making South Ayrshire a destination venue for people from across the UK whilst growing the local economy.						programme agreed in March 2023. The project is now recommencing and will utilise both funding streams to enhance the improvement of the promenade areas.
Neighbourhood Services: Neighbourhood Place Teams - This initiative is to create Place based teams to supplement the current Neighbourhood Services hit squad for until March 2023. This will enable 5 dedicated teams to cover: 1. Girvan, Maybole & Southern Villages 2. Ayr and Prestwick 3. Troon & Northern Villages 4. Wallacetown, Ayr 5. Glendoune, Girvan Intention is to utilise a participatory budgeting approach through engagement with the public as to where to target work. Encouraging the community to take ownership and ensure linkage with Place planning.	750,000	94,826	342,174	313,000	-	Enhanced environment, localised improvements, cross departmental delivery (no boundaries for projects) enhanced reputation for the Council.
	5,925,883	938,924	1,862,504	2,568,470	555,985	

LACER Funding activity

Proposal	Funding allocated £	2022/23 Spend £	2023/24 funding (earmarking) £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
<p>Economy & Regeneration – Training Skills Fund - an allocation from the LACER fund to support the training and skills development of local residents to enable them to secure employment, progress in employment or secure redeployment. Up to £30,000 will be available to local training providers and employers to provide training to those in employment or seeking employment. Training should help to address labour market shortages, changes to business operations and re or up-skilling requirements because of the pandemic and will support the local economy in the recovery from COVID. Each applicant will be asked to meet set criteria within their application that demonstrates business need and how the funding will be used. Bids will be assessed against these criteria by the Council’s Economy & Regeneration Service (with input and necessary approvals from Council). Successful providers/ businesses will enter into a grant agreement with the Council.</p>	600,000	-	600,000	<p>The LACER Training Grant was held pending an updated Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan submission to Council and UK Government, this was to ensure best alignment to programmes going forward. The launch of the LACER training fund programme will be reviewed following the pending endorsement of the new Shared Prosperity Fund investment plan by UK Government. The programme application, appraisal documentation and processes have been developed and reviewed in preparation for a future launch.</p>
<p>Economy & Regeneration – Boosting Local Spend programme - Glasgow City Council have disbursed over £9 million of COVID recovery funding to residents in receipt of Council tax benefits, using the ‘Scotland Loves Local Gift Card’ to distribute funds. Benefits are two-fold as it also supports Community Wealth Building ensuring spend is redistributed amongst local businesses adversely affected by the COVID pandemic; as well as providing funds to those residents most in need. In Glasgow, since the announcement was made, over 500 businesses have additionally signed up to the scheme, increasing the number of local businesses benefitting from the scheme. This proposal would see a pre-loaded Scotland Loves Local Ayrshire Gift Card with £50 per card provided to all residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction (approx. 10,150). Concerns were raised by the group on a lack of coverage in Maybole/Girvan, however 8 businesses in Girvan have signed up and 5 in Maybole including Boots, Scotmid, Semi Chem, and ASDA as well as smaller businesses. Following the Glasgow example, this would be an incentive for more businesses to sign up. The card can also be used South Ayrshire wide. An additional proposal (viii below) would also help to increase promotional activity and engagement with local businesses to encourage them to sign up (it is anticipated by up to 500%).</p>	530,000	530,000	-	<p>A total of 9,905 x £50.00 Scotland Loves Local Ayrshire Gift Card provided to all residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction (eligible on 13 Sept 2022). The total value loaded to cards and issued in November 2022 was £495,250.</p> <p>The comms campaign for the LACER Gift Card saw a doubling of the number of South Ayrshire businesses registered to accept the South Ayrshire Gift Card with the current number being 191.</p> <p>The comms campaign around the disbursement project was incredibly successful a has resulted in several positive press articles.</p>

Proposal	Funding allocated £	2022/23 Spend £	2023/24 funding (earmarking) £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
<p>No stigma is attached to using the Gift Card and this initiative could pave the way for other schemes to distribute funds using this mechanism e.g., Thriving Communities. Additional cards would require to be printed and this would be covered by the monies allocated (there are around 3,000 cards remaining from existing supplies). In terms of distribution, personal details are held for those benefitting from Council Tax benefits which could be passed on to the Economy & Regeneration team. The proposed funding of £0.530m will be sufficient to meet the estimated cost of purchasing sufficient cards, pre-loading the cards with £50 and posting to the eligible households.</p>				
<p>Economy & Regeneration – Economic Support Officer - An Economic Support Officer targeting and engaging with harder to reach local businesses across South Ayrshire who have suffered losses because of the pandemic, to connect them with recovery and business support. This will also help the Council to better understand the needs of local businesses and ensure support can be developed and tailored to meet their needs and support economic recovery across our towns and rural areas. • Offer one to one in person and virtual contact • Promote a range of tools (e.g., Scotland Loves Local Gift Card) to aid recovery and support business growth • Explore business options, e.g., Growth, diversification • Record number and nature of businesses engaged with • Signpost products and agencies that can offer support and advice • Inform future policies and direction of travel in how to target and support industries impacted by the pandemic. This is a one-year temporary post, managed by Economy & Regeneration and working across and with Thriving Communities.</p>	36,000	-	36,000	<p>Currently being advertised. Have experienced difficulty in filling post, i.e. on two separate occasions the post had been advertised and candidates recruited, however on both occasions the candidates accepted alternative employment.</p>
<p>Customer Services – Household Boost Fund - providing grants to replace the current low income Discretionary Covid Support Grant and Fuel Poverty Grants which have been delivered using Addressing Future Needs funding. It will offer financial support to combat the increased cost of living impact for low-income households. Access to the Fund will be provided via a referral or self-application process and delivered by advisors at the Information & Advice Hub (IAAH). It is anticipated that over 1,200 households would be supported in 2022/23. As well as the grant customers will be offered ongoing budgeting support provided by IAAH advisors and access to services provided by the Fuel Bank Foundation & the Energy Agency.</p>	400,000	248,862	151,138	<p>A total of 1,098 households have been helped via this fund so far. £110,550 remains in budget, assuming current rates continue with on average 10 to 12 grants per week issuing around £3,500 per week to clients. If current trends continue, we should exhaust the fund in 30 weeks.</p>

Proposal	Funding allocated £	2022/23 Spend £	2023/24 funding (earmarking) £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
<p>Thriving Communities – NEC free travel support - The Scottish Government launched the NEC Free Travel for young people up to the age of 22 years on 31st January 2022. Local authorities have been supporting the NEC Free Travel rollout through Customers Service, Education and Young Scot. Over 2300 young people have benefitted from the scheme however this is lower than the most local authority areas. To allow the NEC Free Travel scheme to reach those who are digitally excluded and ensure young people and families can benefit from the scheme, helping reduce the cost of living and encouraging free travel in and around South Ayrshire. Funding required £44,865 to recruit two level 5 Thriving Communities Assistants. These new temporary posts will be responsible for promoting the scheme and administering the process for new cards. The posts will be temporary for 9 months to allow every young person aged 5-22 years to access this offer.</p>	45,000	29,586	15,414	This funding allowed two communities officers to be recruited to support the implementation of the NEC free travel in South Ayrshire. Officers facilitated drop in in schools, libraries, community events, schools and youth groups. 11, 046 now have access; to NEC free travel this equates to 57% of this cohorts population.
<p>Thriving Communities – Social Enterprise Support - programme administering £10-20k grants to allow local social enterprises to implement plans for recovery, growth and sustainability. The last Social Enterprise Census in 2019, funded by the Scottish Government, showed there were 85 social enterprises in South Ayrshire, an increase of 24 since 2015. The full impact of COVID19 on the sector locally isn't clear yet. It is difficult for social enterprises to find start up and development funding for new staff posts, improved premises, feasibility studies and marketing. Our previous social enterprise funding programme: Ambition for Social Enterprise, which ran from 2013/14 - 2015/16 provided grants of up to £15k per financial year to new or established social enterprises. Over the 3 years, a total of £410,697 was distributed via 32 grants to 23 different organisations. Funding requested £200,000 to support up to 15 organisations across South Ayrshire. The applications would be managed by an SAC Social Enterprise Officer on a rolling programme between June 22 - June 23. A panel of officer's would assess applications.</p>	200,000	200,000	-	The evaluation information for the SEGAR grant is currently being collated. Funding was used to provide local social enterprises with support.
<p>Thriving Communities – Empowering communities Fund - South Ayrshire Council and our Community Planning Partners continue to support 3rd sector community groups and organisations who continue to assist low-income families impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Over the past 18 months we have provided direct funding to groups and organisations, purchased food and essentials to support low-income families and provided advice and guidance</p>	100,000	100,000	-	The cost-of-living fund supported 13 community groups and 3rd sector organisations to aid local communities in financial hardship. Funding was used for staffing costs, energy vouchers, food and other essentials. An evaluation has been carried out that includes impact statements and feedback from groups and communities.

Proposal	Funding allocated £	2022/23 Spend £	2023/24 funding (earmarking) £	Outcomes Achieved/Benefits realised
for groups responding to Covid-19. Funding requested - £100,000 to administer small grants of up to £10,000 for 3rd sector groups and organisations, including community associations and community councils to help them support low-income families with the cost-of-living crisis. Funding will be used to enhance the support for families and communities to address issues such as food insecurity, fuel poverty while supporting communities to recover from Covid-19.				
<p>Education/IAAH – Senior Community Advisor (Peripatetic) - In May 2021 approved was given to fund 3 Peripatetic Senior Advisors at Level 8 temporarily for 24 months to work in community and educational based settings, assisting with welfare benefits, money/debt advice & employment. The 3 posts were filled in September 2021 with 1 FTE covering the North (Troon/Prestwick/Dundonald areas), 1 FTE covering the South (Maybole/Girvan/Daily etc), and 1 FTE covering Ayr. The role of the peripatetic senior advisors is to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an outreach service in multiple locations across the authority including home visits. • Provide support to clients who require additional assistance. • Work with schools, partner agencies, GP’s & midwives in these localities and develop new relationships with Community Councils and volunteer groups to maximise access to information and advice services provided by the Hub. The remit also includes delivering educational sessions within schools to pupils and parents/carers however, the considerable demand of the service within the community has made it challenging to offer this much needed support in schools. The Information and Advice Hub are currently providing support in Newton Primary on a weekly basis which is generating in the region of 10 enquiries every week. It has been identified through education there is a need for further support across all schools to ensure harder to reach parents/carers in poverty, who have disengaged from other services, are able to access support locally. To provide this support an additional 1 x Peripatetic Senior Advisor is required in the Information and Advice Hub, funded temporarily for 12 months. Total funding required £46,967 - 1 x Level 8 Peripatetic Senior Advisor temporarily for 12 months £42,467 with an additional £4,500 for training, travel, and ICT. 	47,000	11.292	35,708	Operating in 8 School locations from April 2023, the post holder has supported 165 parents to make successful claims for additional benefits/support grants.
	1,958,000	1,119,740	838,260	

**South Ayrshire Council
Equality Impact Assessment
Scoping Template**

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. [FSD Guidance for Public Bodies](#) in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018 and revised in October 2021. See information here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

1. Policy details

Policy Title	Covid-19 Recovery Project and LACER funding Review
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Tim Baulk, Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement – tim.baulk@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	-	-
Disability	-	-
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	-	-
Marriage or Civil Partnership	-	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-	-
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	-	-
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	-	-
Sex – (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys)	-	-

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Sexual Orientation – person’s sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	-	-
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children’s Rights	-	-

3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage i.e. The Fairer Scotland Duty (This section to be completed for any Strategic Decisions). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	-	-
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	-	-
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	-	-
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	-	-
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parent’s education, employment and income	-	-

4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the ‘Three Key Needs’ of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium or Low)
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Low
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Low
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low

5. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as Medium and/or High)	YES NO
Rationale for decision: This report provides an update on progress and outcomes achieved following the Allocation of Covid-19 LACER funding for recovery activity within services. Members' decision on this has no specific equality implications	
Signed : Tim Baulk Date: 27 July 2023	Head of Service