

Item No. N/A	Classification: Open	Date: 21 April 2023	Decision Taker: Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Report title:		Rose Voucher Grant Fund	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Strategic Director of Children and Adult Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing approve the allocation of £100,000 to Alexandra Rose Charity via a one-off grant fund. This grant will part-fund the delivery of the Rose Voucher scheme in Southwark for 12 months from May 2023.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Rose Voucher scheme has been delivered in Southwark since 2018 and is provided by the Alexandra Rose Charity.
3. The scheme provides vouchers for pregnant women and families with children under 5 years old who have a low income or no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Vouchers can be redeemed at local markets to purchase fruit and vegetables.
4. Since 2018, the scheme has been funded in full by Impact on Urban Health (IoUH). However, from February 2023, IoUH will reduce the funding of the Rose Voucher scheme. As such, Alexandra Rose is now seeking alternative funding streams, reflecting models in other areas whereby 25% of funding is from the local authority. This funding model demonstrates to other funders how valued the scheme is locally and enhances Alexandra Rose's ability to leverage external funding.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing is asked to approve the one-off transfer of £100,000 to Alexandra Rose Charity to enable continued delivery of the Rose Voucher scheme.
6. The total cost of the Rose Voucher project for 2023-24 is estimated at £480,000. The budget allocation includes: provision of vouchers (approximately £300,000), voucher distribution costs, communications and marketing, evaluation, one full-time Project and Volunteer Co-ordinator at 1st Place Children & Parents' Centre, one full-time Alexandra Rose Project

Officer, and core overheads.

7. The scheme currently supports approximately 1300 children in Southwark, and has provided vouchers for over 3300 children since 2018. Approximately 88% of families identify as black, Asian, or minority ethnicity, and 25% of families have no recourse to public funds (Appendix 1).
8. The scheme also acts as a lever to engage families who are less likely to attend Children's Centre services, and is used as an opportunity to register families for other financial support schemes, such as Healthy Start.
9. Eligibility criteria:
 - i. Have a child under 5 years old,
 - ii. have an income below £16,200 per year and/or have NRPF,
 - iii. live in SE1, SE5, SE15 or SE17
10. The postcodes in which families are eligible have been selected due to a higher level of deprivation and food insecurity.
11. The scheme supports the local economy and market traders, of which many are residents, as vouchers can be redeemed for fresh fruit and vegetables at local markets only. An Economic Impact Assessment in 2022 found that the vouchers provided £610,000 in gross value added between 2021-22 (see Appendix 1).
12. The most significant risks are:
 - i. That the Alexandra Rose Charity (ARC) fails to deliver Rose Voucher Scheme. However, the scheme has been successfully delivered since 2018, having raised significant awareness of the scheme amongst target families and working in partnership with Southwark Council, market traders, Children's centres and community organisations.
 - ii. The delivery of the Rose Voucher scheme for the year 2023-24 is estimated at £480,000. To fund the scheme for 2023-24, Alexandra Rose has so far secured £200,000 from IOUH and £10,000 through ARC's own fundraising efforts. A £100,000 grant-fund from Southwark Council would bring this to a total of £310,000, leaving a shortfall of £170,000. In order to meet this deficit, ARC has applied for a further four years of match funding from IOUH which would be released in June of 2023. In addition, ARC will continue to use its fundraising resources to support the delivery and development of the Rose Voucher scheme, including accessing funding from the National Lottery, Trusts and Foundations, corporates and individuals.

Policy implications

13. The Rose Voucher scheme directly contributes to Southwark Council's Fairer Future Commitment of tackling health inequalities.

14. The Rose Voucher scheme will support children and families most affected by the cost of living crisis, therefore helping to meet the council's Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 section regarding: A thriving & inclusive economy - Support residents hit hardest by the cost of living crisis.

15. The Rose Voucher scheme contributes to Southwark's Food Security Action Plan and manifesto pledge to become a Right to Food Borough.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

16. The Rose Voucher scheme intends to provide targeted support to children and families vulnerable to food insecurity and help them to access nutritious food.

17. The 2019 Survey for Londoners highlighted the stark issue of food insecurity in Southwark. 23.5% of people over 16 years and 25.8% of children surveyed were food insecure, equating to approximately 75,000 of residents over 16 years and over 15,000 Southwark children (Appendix 2). Food insecurity for both adults and children is worse in Southwark than the London average (21% for adults and 17.5% for children).

18. The Rose Voucher scheme also provides value by partnering with community-led organisations and training volunteers, as well as providing a return to the local economy. Wider social impact is demonstrated through regular engagement with early years services, which includes 9 children's centres in Southwark.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

19. The service recipients provided with Rose Vouchers will be low-income households who are most vulnerable to the effects of the cost of living. This disproportionately affects those from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Health impact statement

20. The provision of Rose Vouchers allows families and pregnant women to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables, which contribute to improving the health of the diets of low-income families.

Climate change implications

21. There are no apparent climate change impacts arising from this decision.

Resource implications

22. The costs of this grant-fund can be met using Public Health reserves. As a grant-fund, VAT does not apply:

	Cost excluding VAT
Annual cost	£100,000
Total cost	£100,000

23. The grant-fund will be monitored by the Public Health Policy Officer for Obesity and Physical Activity. A Memorandum of Understanding will be established between Southwark Council and ARC which will clearly state the one-off nature of the grant due to it being funded from non-recurrent Public Health reserves.

24. The Public Health Policy Officer for Obesity and Physical Activity will seek support from the Council's Economic Development Team to improve the exposure of ARC to potential corporate donors, and Community Southwark for fundraising support and expertise.

Consultation

25. Feedback and insights gained from service users have directly influenced planning for the 2023 scheme.

26. There is a steering group led by 1st Place Children's Centre which shapes and informs the Rose Voucher scheme development and involves Public Health, Children's services, Markets team, and Alexandra Rose. Rose Voucher distribution sites are also invited to share the impact of this programme on their communities and the challenges faced by their organisations and service users so that the project team can be receptive to these needs.

27. Alexandra Rose is currently carrying an evaluation of the scheme in Southwark and will utilise the findings to develop the scheme further.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance

28. This report seeks approval of grant funding in the sum of £100,000 to Alexandra Rose Charity for the purpose of part-funding the delivery of the Rose Voucher scheme in Southwark for 12 months from 1st April 2023.

29. The decision to approve the report recommendation is one which is expressly reserved to the Cabinet Member under Part 3D of the council Constitution. The proposed grant award is consistent with the council's statutory duties and powers (notably the Public Sector Equality Duty imposed by the Equality Act 2010) and with corporate policy, in particular, the Delivery Plan 2022-26, Food Security Action Plan, Southwark Stands Together and the council's Fairer Future commitments.

30. The proposed grant award will be regulated by appropriate funding conditions, including a break clause which would allow the council to end the funding arrangement in the event of any serious and/or persistent failures in service provision.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance REF: [67PHAS2022-23]

31. The Strategic Director notes the recommendations of the report and the finance implications stated in points 22-24.

32. The one-off contribution will be met from Public Health reserves, hence the service should work closely with Alexandra Rose charity to ensure the proposed outcomes are satisfied.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Food Security Action Plan	Public Health Directorate, Children and Adult Services, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH	Rachel Isted 020 7525 7479
https://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/10363/Fairer-Food-Southwark-Summary.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Rose Vouchers Project Report October 2022
Appendix 2	Southwark Council Household Food Insecurity 2021, Southwark's JSNA

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children and Adult Services	
Report Author	Rachel Isted, Public Health Policy Officer	
Version	Final	
Dated	20 April 2023	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive - Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		20 April 2023