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**REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 29 OCTOBER 2019**

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ACCESS TO SANITARY PROVISION**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the project to provide free sanitary protection to eligible members of the public throughout Moray.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to consideration of the need for new services.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee considers and notes the contents of the report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The provision of free sanitary products throughout the school estate was considered at a meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Committee on 29 May 2019 (para 16 of the Minute refers). At the meeting it was noted that a further report would be brought to this committee providing information on a project to provide free sanitary protection to eligible members of the public throughout Scotland. The Scottish Government gave an initial commitment in their Programme for Government 2017/18 that pupils and student in schools, colleges and universities should have access to free sanitary products. This proposal was later extended to the wider community. Local Authorities were provided with initial set up funding to deliver this commitment from the beginning of January 2019, with a further budget for the financial year 2019/20. It should be noted that this Committee Report is prepared in regard to the implementation of provision to the wider community outwith the school estate.

3.2 The distribution funding is calculated based on all women of menstruating age (average 12-52). This funding approach is for the 2018-21 period only. The Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) officials will agree a process to review uptake and spend to inform funding from 2021/22 onward with the underspend being rolled into following financial

years. Whilst the funding is not ring-fenced the brief states that Local Authorities should consider the wider need to address the overarching gender equality and dignity issues that affect all of those who menstruate regardless of income.

3.3 The criteria for this delivery included:

- Protecting people's dignity, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma;
- Making a range of products available in places that people use;
- A response that is reflective of communities' views and needs;
- An efficient and effective approach which demonstrates value for money;
- Individuals being able to get sufficient products to meet their needs;
- Gender equality – ensuring anyone who menstruates can access products, including transgender men/non-binary individuals, and that language is gender inclusive.
- Awareness raising and education to both promote the 'offer' and attempt to change cultural norms.

3.4 On 30 November 2018, COSLA leaders agreed to proposed funding to expand access to free sanitary products with the suggestion of expansion of the delivery through Community Planning Partnerships (CCP's).

3.5 Initially for the wider community implementation there was discussion of utilising vending machines in various locations throughout Moray and costings were requested from nominated suppliers. A number of concerns were identified mainly in regard to set up, operational costs and logistics of supply/replenishment. It should be noted that vending machines have limited space for product and would also require regular maintenance.

3.6 The Council's Equal Opportunities Officer highlighted areas of higher deprivation throughout the region for initial focus. This then led to the identification of the Moray Food Plus (MF+) who already had a marked provision in said locations. MF+ attended all meetings to identify possible locations and potentially suitable NHS units were identified. After meeting with NHS Grampian, it was agreed that MF+ would add some additional locations such as local GP practices/medical centres to the existing distribution route and an ordering process was devised. Orders are placed by Facilities Management and delivery receipted to Ashgrove depot to ensure integrity of product and then transferred to the MF+ central store. With the combination of both MF+ and the NHS it would appear that sufficient communication has been delivered to ensure the objectives of the brief have been initially communicated. With a national campaign in the planning this could further increase overall demand for the offered provision.

3.7 The Council was recently approached by Moray Information Bus and are currently in the process of ensuring product will be available via this initiative also.

3.8 The suppliers currently being used are Hey Girls and Unico, both of which appear on the procurement framework. They provide sustainable

biodegradable and reusable products. They also provide a wide range of educational support and marketing materials.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

This report supports the Council's corporate working principles of ensuring caring and healthy communities and Education and Social Care's objective of building a better future for people in Moray.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

This is currently a short term scheme and is being dealt with as such; if this becomes permanent, a policy will need to be written.

**(c) Financial implications**

The initial budget from Scottish Government for Access to Free Sanitary Products for Local Authorities 18/19 was £16,855. This comprised of £8,749 for set up costs and development funding and £8,107 for product purchase.

The total budget for product for year 19/20 is £32,426 of which £5881.20 has been spent to date.

Please see paragraph 3.1 for future funding information.

**(d) Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications other than those detailed in the report

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The inclusion of all eligible members of the public within the community including those transgender have been assessed and considered and arrangements at each location have been put in place. The delivery of free sanitary products can contribute to reducing inequalities that are a result of socio-economic differences. Careful consideration has been given to ensuring that the implementation promotes equality of opportunity on the grounds of sex and gender reassignment.

**(h) Consultations**

Consultations have been undertaken with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance); Head of Environment and Commercial Services; Environmental Protection Manager; Paul Connor, Principal Accountant; the Legal Services Manager; the Equal Opportunities Officer; Katrina Martin, Procurement Officer; and Lissa Rowan, Committee Services Officer.

**5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider and note the report and the associated budgetary information. Moray Council has fulfilled the Scottish Government commitment to ensure the provision of free sanitary protection to eligible members of the public throughout the region.**

Author of Report: Rick Cooper, Facilities Officer  
Background Papers:  
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