



**FOR PUBLICATION**

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**24 October 2022**

**Report of the Director - Public Health**

**Household Support Fund Grant Extension– 1 October 2022 to 31 March  
2023**

**1. Divisions Affected**

1.1 County wide.

**2. Key Decision**

2.1 This is a key decision due to the budget for the function concerned (this is currently defined as £500,000) and it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral areas in the County.

**3. Purpose**

3.1 The Leader of the Council is asked to:

- a) Approve the outline spending plans for Derbyshire County Council's allocation of the Household Support Fund Grant Extension of £5.400m.
- b) Agree to the continuation of the delegation of authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Director of Finance & ICT and the Executive Director of Children's Services to allow the Council to respond flexibly and effectively to any challenges, risks and opportunities that occur during the grant period and maintain the Council's ability to swiftly distribute funds to vulnerable residents.

#### **4. Information and Analysis**

- 4.1 On 26 May 2022, the Chancellor announced, as part of a number of measures to provide help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living, that the Household Support Fund (HSF) would be extended from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- 4.2 Draft notification of Derbyshire's allocation of the funds and clarifying guidance relating to the HSF grant extension was received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 26 August 2022, with final notification being received on 30 September 2022. The Council is required to provide an indicative delivery plan to the DWP by Friday 28 October 2022 indicating how it will distribute the grant. Therefore, it has not been possible to give 28 days' notice for the making of this key decision. Also, it is important that the distribution plans covered in this report commence as soon as possible in order to alleviate hardship and prevent households in Derbyshire being put at a disadvantage. There would be delay in distributing the grant, should it be necessary to wait for the next Cabinet meeting. This could not be presented sooner for a decision due to the short period of time between notification of Derbyshire's allocation of funds on 30 September and the requirement to provide the indicative delivery plan by 28 October 2022 to:
  - a) Enable the authority to distribute the grant to households within the grant period,
  - b) Avoid an underspend and alleviate hardship for households.
- 4.3 Derbyshire County Council's allocation is £5,404,080.90. Local authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in the accompanying grant determination and guidance.
- 4.4 The DWP is providing funding to county councils and unitary authorities under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to households most in need. It is important to stress this covers a wide range of low-income households in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, and other low-income households, particularly those who cannot increase their income through work, to prevent escalation of problems.
- 4.5 Although this is an extension to the previous two issues of HSF grant funding, authorities are not allowed to carry forward any underspends from the previous HSF periods, the latest of which ended on the 30 September 2022. The proposals for funding covers the extension period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 and funds must be spent or

committed before the end of the grant period and cannot be held over for future use.

### **Grant Eligibility and Usage**

- 4.6 The Authority has to ensure that the grant is primarily allocated to provide support to households with the costs of food, energy (for heating, lighting and cooking), water (for household purposes, including sewerage) and other essential living needs in accordance with the scheme guidance. In exceptional circumstances of genuine emergency and where other existing schemes do not apply, the Authority may allocate grant funds to support with housing costs as set out in the Scheme guidance.
- 4.7 There are some changes in the eligibility requirements of the grant extension compared to those of the previous HSF scheme, which saw 33% of the fund ringfenced for families with children and 33% of the fund ringfenced for pensioners. The guidance for the new issue of funding states that there will be no ringfence of any proportion of funding for any particular cohort of people, however authorities are required to record how many pensioners, disabled households and households with children are awarded support from the fund and must operate at least a portion of the fund in a manner that households can apply to directly.
- 4.8 For the purpose of this grant, and without prejudice to other schemes:
- The definition of a household with a child is a household containing any person:
    - who will be under the age of 19 at the time of award or;
    - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.
  - Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in allocation for households with children.
  - The definition of a household with a pensioner is any household containing any person:
    - who has reached state pension age at the time of award
  - The definition of disability and disabled people aligns with the definition in the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it normally would to complete a daily task like getting dressed;
  - 'long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.
- 4.9 The guidance sets out that:
- Authorities can deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food or goods, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of grants for advice provision). Authorities have the local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those most in need.
  - County councils should consider working together with District/ Borough councils and other third sector organisations to ensure the funding meets its objectives by identifying those most in need.
  - Authorities can allocate a reasonable amount of the funds for administration costs, incurred in administering the fund. These include staffing costs, advertising, and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme, web page design, printing of application forms and small IT changes to facilitate process design or reporting.
  - Authorities are required to operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis i.e. residents should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support.
  - There is also an expectation of authorities to particularly consider those groups who may not have benefitted from any of the recent cost of living support.

### **Reporting Requirements**

- 4.10 An interim management information (MI) return is required to be submitted to the DWP by 25 January 2023 for spend for the period 01 October 2022 to 31 December 2023. The interim MI return will be used to determine eligible spend to 31 December 2022 and an interim grant payment will be made for this period when the information in the return has been verified.
- 4.11 A final MI return, showing total spend from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, is required to be submitted to the DWP by 28 April 2023. The final MI return will be used to determine total eligible spend to 31 March 2023 and a final grant payment will be made for this period when the information in the return has been verified.

4.12 The full scheme guidance can be found in Appendix 2.

## 5. Proposed Use of Funds

5.1 It is recommended that the Council utilises a varied and mixed approach to distributing the grant to help ensure the funds reach a wide range of households needing financial support, including those who may not currently be claiming welfare benefits, and building on the learning from the previous schemes.

### Overview – proposed allocation of funds breakdown

5.2 Figure 1 below sets out the proposed split of the fund via the distribution elements and household types. Detail of each proposed distribution element is set out below.

**Figure 1 Summary of proposed distribution mechanisms.**

	Amount £ (m)	Could include:			
		Families with children	Pensioners	Disabled People	Carers
Derbyshire Discretionary Fund	1.000	x	x	x	x
Children's Services – referrals by professionals	0.300	x			
Winter Food Support Voucher to eligible families (incl free school meal cohort)	1.273	x			
Cost of Living support to low income pensioners and specified adult social care clients	1.694		x	x	x
District & Borough Councils (Homelessness Prevention)	0.900	x	x	x	x
Vulnerable pensioners and unpaid carer support	0.200		x	x	x
Care Leavers Support	0.010				
Administration	0.027				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5.404</b>				

## **Distribution mechanisms**

### **5.3 Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) Household Support Fund- £1.000m**

The Derbyshire Discretionary Fund supports residents facing crisis and emergency situations. It operates on a 'direct application' basis for residents and on a supported application basis for professionals. Using the DDF to support delivery of the HSF meets the DWP criteria that at least some of the funds must be made available via a direct applications process.

5.4 DDF already has a robust system for receiving and processing claims in place and its eligibility criteria and scope closely match that of the HSF, in that eligibility may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits. It is recommended that the existing DDF processes and eligibility criteria are utilised when claims are made to the HSF. The DDF scheme has existing reporting mechanisms which can be used to meet DWP MI reporting requirements, including the breakdown between households with children and adult households. DDF also has established complaints and review processes in place. Utilising the DDF puts Derbyshire ahead of other council areas who are having to set up a direct application process specifically for use in relation to the HSF.

5.5 It is recommended that £1.000m is allocated to DDF to enhance the provision of support to residents with the costs of food, energy, and essential living costs. This figure would be added to the DDF's existing budget for the October 2022 – March 2023 period.

5.6 Based on existing data it is anticipated that over 40% of this would be allocated to families with children who apply directly to the fund.

5.7 As undertaken for the first and second round of HSF funding, the scope of the DDF scheme would be enhanced:

- To make up to two Household Support Fund grant payments per household over the period April to the end of September 2022 from this fund. (The DDF policy currently contains a limit of a maximum three Emergency Cash Payments in any twelve-month period and these two HSF payments would be in addition to this). If the volume of applications results in the extra funds being depleted before the 31 March 2023 the number of payments would revert to DDF policy level of three to ensure the council does not overspend on available

funding.

- To continue to pay the increased amount of £64 for the main applicant and £20 for each affected household member for both HSF grants and standard Emergency Cash Payments (ECP). The amount of an ECP was increased from £54 to £64 when the first HSF distribution plans were agreed, with the amount awarded for each affected household member increased from £10 to £20.
- To continue to recognise financial pressures on applicants in addition to the “crisis, emergency and disaster” scope already set out by the DDF policy for the consideration of Emergency Cash Payments

5.8 The two HSF payments and the proposed award amounts set out above would align with grants provided via Children’s Professionals. Systems developed as part of the first HSF would be used to carry out checks and cross reference applications to ensure households do not receive more than two HSF grants in the period. Where a household has already accessed two HSF payments and applies for further support, they would be assessed for an Emergency Cash Payment via the DDF Team.

5.9 The Fund would be promoted and referred to as the Household Support Fund. This will help ensure that any promotion is separated from the DDF offer and would allow the time-limited availability of the Fund to be made clear. The workings of DDF will revert to the original policy in terms of payment amount and frequency from 1 April 2023, should no further funding be awarded.

5.10 **Grants allocated via Children’s Professionals - £0.310m**

The distribution plans for both previous HSF schemes saw a route developed whereby Children’s Services Early Help and Safeguarding staff and partner agencies who work predominately with families and children, such as schools and nurseries, were able to utilise their professional knowledge and relationships to identify families facing hardship and assess them for grant payments from the Fund. Feedback from professionals and families who have accessed funds via this route has been overwhelmingly positive, with many case examples shared to evidence how the support made a significant difference to families.

Eligibility for the previous rounds of grants was based on presenting financial need rather than benefit entitlement or a certain income level. This offered a route for families in work but on a low income and others who were not eligible for other support schemes to access financial help. It is recommended that this approach continues as HSF scheme

guidance encourages authorities to consider those who may be over the threshold for other schemes but who still may be facing hardship due to the current economic climate.

- 5.11 It is recommended that £0.300m is allocated to this provision for the period October 2022 to March 2023. This amount is based on the total spend of the previous grants assessed by Children's Professionals and considers the rise in need and increased demand we have seen during the second presentation of the fund. If the volume of applications results in the allocated funds being depleted before the 31 March 2023 this provision would be closed, to ensure the council does not overspend on available funding.
- 5.12 Following on from the terms of the earlier scheme, it is proposed that each household is able to access two payments from the fund within the period, either via the Children's Professionals route or via the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) team (see 5.5). The value of payments would also align with support accessed via DDF: £64 for the first adult in the household and £20 for a partner and for each child in the household.
- 5.13 Systems and processes have already been developed so the route could be re-opened with little delay.
- 5.14 In addition, it is recommended that the Children's Services Care Leavers Team be allocated £10,000 to support care leavers (up to age 25) who are living independently and who are facing hardship over the winter. The Team already have mechanisms in place to distribute funds to care leavers via vouchers, bank transfers and, in exceptional circumstances, cash payments. The Care Leavers Team have been allocated funds from previous HSF schemes and reported that these additional funds enabled the Team to respond to the increased levels of hardship reported by the young people they support over the last 12 months.
- 5.15 **Winter Food Support Payments to eligible families - January 2023 - £1.273m**  
The distribution plans for both previous HSF schemes included a grocery or food support voucher for eligible families.
- 5.16 Eligible families are those who have children who receive benefit-related free school meals (FSM) in schools and further educational colleges; care leavers up to age 21; and children in early years settings who qualify for the Early Years Pupil Premium with qualifying benefits and Early Years 2-Year-Old with qualifying benefits.



- 5.17 The second HSF saw a £50 grocery voucher issued in July 2022 as a one-off payment to the families of approx. 27,500 eligible children. 92% of vouchers distributed in July were redeemed and spent.
- 5.18 Headteachers have fed back that they would welcome a supply of additional vouchers to allocate to families in need on a case-by-case basis, including those who may not meet the FSM eligibility criteria. It is suggested that each school would be provided with extra vouchers to equal to 5% of the number of eligible FSM children in the school.
- 5.19 It is recommended that £1.273m is allocated to this provision for a further grocery voucher, with a proposed value of between £40 and £45 depending on the final number of eligible children, to be offered to this cohort in January 2023 as a winter support payment, based on a 100% redemption rate, and including the 5% extra scope for headteachers.
- 5.20 Based on feedback from schools, officers are also exploring an alternative way to distribute vouchers via schools direct, as opposed to centrally. It is anticipated that this will increase the uptake and ensure the maximum numbers of vouchers are cashed and utilised by families.
- 5.21 January is often a time that families can struggle the most, due to the costs of Christmas for many of our families, and the increased use of fuel during the colder months. Data and up-to-date parent contact details must be collected from schools and collecting this in late November /early December will ensure schools are not burdened with this as they are working to close the school year in the final weeks of term.
- 5.22 Families and care leavers who would receive Winter Food Support Payments in January would still be able to access a grant payment via Childrens Professionals or the DDF if they face financial hardship before and after January, including during the school holidays.
- 5.23 Recipients would also receive information signposting them to other sources of financial support that they could also access at other periods of financial hardship, including school holidays. The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme will also be running over the Winter holidays
- 5.24 **Cost of Living Support Payments to pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support and Adult Social Care clients with a nil or tapered co-funding contribution - £1.694m**

Across Derbyshire there are approximately 23,682 households where at least one member is either a:

- Pensioner in receipt of full or partial Council Tax Support (CTS) due to a low income (which is claimed via their local District or Borough Council); or
- An Adult Social Care client who does not pay a contribution to their home care costs, or who pay a partial contribution, due to being on a low income.

5.25 The distribution plan for the second HSF (April – September 2022) required the Council to develop a mechanism for supporting pensioners directly. This had not been required by the first funding allocation guidance.

5.26 In order to deliver this the Council set up a voucher issuing process via the Post Office and 23,682 eligible pensioners and Adult Social care clients received a letter offering them a cost of living payment of £100, and also including topical health, wellbeing and safety advice. At the time of preparing this report 92% of these vouchers were cashed with some residual ones still in circulation. District and borough councils supported the delivery of this provision through agreed data-sharing protocols, and the mechanism has proved effective, and to be a trusted way of delivering support to pensioner households. Feedback from recipients has been positive.

5.27 It is recommended that £1.694m is allocated to this provision for a further cost of living voucher, with a proposed value of between £65 and £70 depending on the final number of eligible residents, to be offered to this cohort in February and March 2023 as a 'winter cost of living payment' and based on a 100% redemption rate. It is relevant to note that the majority of these households will have received cost of living payments from government of between £250 and £600 – including the Winter Fuel Payment which are due to be paid in November to December 2022.

5.28 **Awarding funds to district and borough councils for homelessness prevention - £0.900m**

The scope of the HSF extends to support with emergency housing and Council Tax Support, where households are not eligible for existing housing support schemes and/or where residents are facing enforcement action. This can include emergency financial support to Derbyshire residents who don't qualify for Discretionary Housing Payments but who are facing exceptional housing related financial

pressure and those facing enforcement action due to rent or Council Tax arrears.

- 5.29 The distribution plans for the first and second HSF grant, allocated funds to district and borough partners to enable them to address these issues. District and Borough partners each produced proposals on how they could utilise the funds within the scheme guidance, and this was confirmed by means of service level agreements. Feedback and case studies from district and borough partners demonstrated that they were able to utilise the funds to support those in crisis situations and facing enforcement action, including preventing residents from being made homeless.
- 5.30 It is recommended that £0.900m is allocated to be split between the eight district and borough Councils in Derbyshire to enable their housing teams to support those facing housing related financial difficulty between October 2022 and March 2023.
- 5.31 It is proposed that this allocation is divided between the councils either in eight equal portions (as done for the first issue of HSF), or using a methodology agreed with representatives of those councils as being equitable to needs across the district and boroughs (as done for the second issue of HSF). This agreement will be reached in November 2022 and service level agreements drawn up accordingly.
- 5.32 **Age UK Derby and Derbyshire and Derbyshire Carers Association £0.200m**  
Public Health have an existing service level agreement in place for 2022-23 with Derbyshire Carers Association and Age UK Derby and Derbyshire to identify vulnerable and hard to reach pensioners and unpaid carers who are facing financial and/or emotional hardship and, if eligible, awarding grant funding to them.
- 5.33 It is recommended that a further £0.100m each is directed to Age UK and Derbyshire Carers to enhance the level of support available by building on the partnerships in place, to reach vulnerable households who might otherwise not be connected to financial assistance to help with cost-of-living pressures.
- 5.34 This option would utilise the existing systems and eligibility criteria both organisations have in place to deliver this programme, which would bring added benefits in terms of minimising the administration costs incurred as part of HSF distribution plans.

5.35 As part of this work, Age UK and Derbyshire Carers would also be encouraged to support eligible pensioners and any eligible carers/cared for to apply the Energy Support Grant.

## **6 Administration costs**

6.1 Whilst the Department for Work and Pensions guidance allows for administration costs to be met from the grant funding, councils are encouraged to keep these as low as possible.

6.2 In both previous distributions of funding, the Council has supported delivery by utilising alternative funding options for some of the costs incurred which has enabled administrative costs to be kept to the absolute minimum to ensure as much of the grant as possible is distributed to vulnerable residents.

6.3 The DWP published data on the administrative costs allocated by each council from HSF1. The range was between 1-10% of the grant funding. Derbyshire was cited as 1%.

6.4 For this third HSF allocation it is proposed to:

- Continue to set the additional DDF staffing costs against Contain Outbreak Management Funds until 31 March 2023 – already agreed by Public Health Senior Management Team.
- Continue to allocate £0.027m for agency staff fees to HSF for the distribution of Winter Grocery Food vouchers to eligible families and to deliver the Children's Services referrals from professional's provision.
- Continue to supplement a further £0.030m of agency staff costs to deliver the cost of living vouchers to pensioners. This was delivered by the same agency staff as the Children's Services vouchers for HSF2 and worked well.
- Continue to hold the voucher transaction costs for the DDF provision and the pensioner cost of living within the allocated funding for these elements as set out above.

6.5 At the end of the administration period should there be marginal underspends in any of the other costed elements the Council will ensure it draws down the full amount from the Department of Work and Pensions by attributing incurred costs to this budget to the value of the DWP funding.

## **7 Communications**

- 7.1 The Council will make every effort to ensure people facing financial hardship are aware of the support available from the HSF whilst being clear on eligibility criteria to manage expectations.
- 7.2 Detailed HSF eligibility criteria based on the HSF grant guidance will be published on the Derbyshire County Council (DCC) website, and this will also aide officers when responding to Freedom of Information requests which are frequent on this topic.
- 7.3 Promotion methods can include information on the Council's website and social media channels, internal and external newsletters and by utilising existing links with partner agencies and elected members. This approach can be kept under review and promotion stepped up if needed based on engagement by residents and capacity for teams to deliver, including capacity at Call Derbyshire.
- 7.4 As with HSF 1 and HSF2, the DWP have confirmed that after submitting the initial delivery plan authorities may review and make changes to these plans to respond to challenges and opportunities, they face during the grant period. It is therefore recommended that spending of the fund is kept under close review to enable the Council to take a flexible and pragmatic approach to administering the funds, taking into consideration factors such as demand, capacity, and budget. The cross departmental officer steering group will continue to fulfil this role and it is recommended that the Director of Public Health, working in conjunction with the Executive Director of Children's Services, continues to utilise the specific delegated powers previously agreed to enable them to sign off any changes to plans to enable Derbyshire to maximise the use of this one off funding from central Government. The changes to the constitution will be made in collaboration with Legal Services and this may require a further report to the Governance, Ethics and Standards Committee and Full Council.
- 7.5 In the eventuality of any small underspend at the end of the HSF period, this will be re-allocated under the oversight of the Director of Public Health and reported to the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities retrospectively

## **8 Conclusion**

- 8.1 A blended approach, as set out above, provides the best opportunity to reach a wide range of families and households in Derbyshire facing financial hardship arising from cost-of-living pressures and in line with the requirements of the DWP funding.

- 8.2 All the proposed elements align with the scope and criteria of the HSF; make the best use of existing systems such as DDF and district and borough housing teams; and build on learning from previous delivery.
- 8.3 The approach, which combines a direct application process as well as targeted support, will satisfy the directions of the DWP that people facing hardship should be able to apply to the fund. Distributing vouchers to those eligible benefit-related free school meals, care leavers aged under 21 and those in receipt of the Early Years Pupil Premium or Early Years 2-year-old with qualifying benefits, will help make sure funds are allocated to a cohort likely to be affected by the ongoing impact of the loss of the Universal Credit uplift and increases to the cost of living.
- 8.4 The proposed split between families with children, pensioners and other households is well balanced, however it is recommended that all elements of the scheme remain under close review and if significant demand, or lack of demand, is seen in particular areas then the costings can be adjusted accordingly. It is recommended that the cross departmental Household Support Fund Steering Group, made up of key officers and partners, continue to meet regularly to review how the fund is being utilised in real time, ensure a timely response to presenting need of Derbyshire residents and address any challenges.

## **9 Consultation**

- 9.1 In forming these proposals, significant consultation has been undertaken between departments: Children's Services, Public Health, and Corporate Services and Transformation (including Client Financial Services in relation to Adult Social Care clients). In addition, consultation has been undertaken with external partners such as district and borough councils and other third sector partners. Benchmarking and liaison with other Authorities has been undertaken to understand more about their approach to distribution of the fund.

## **10 Alternative Options Considered**

- 10.1 Previous DWP grants have required authorities to allocate a set amount of the funds via vouchers to families and young people eligible for benefit-related free school meals over the school holidays. A number of other local authorities across the country are continuing this approach with plans to use the majority of their HSF allocation in this way. However, as the fund covers a wider cohort of vulnerable households who would otherwise struggle to buy food, pay essential utility bills, or meet other essential living costs than previous grants, including those not

eligible for welfare benefits, it is proposed that a blended range methods would be more effective, while maintaining a smaller element of vouchers to this group of vulnerable families in January 2023 as a 'winter food support payment'.

10.2 As the HSF is paid in arrears on the submission of an MI return to the DWP, there is the option for the Council not to take up the funds and opt out of the funding. However, this is not considered to be a viable option because it would be a disservice to vulnerable households and families in Derbyshire who are likely to be facing significant financial pressure. It may also put pressure on the Council's social care services further down the line if families with children, pensioner households and other adult households reach crisis due to their financial circumstances. In addition, not utilising the funds would deny the Derbyshire economy and local businesses the funds.

## **11 Implications**

11.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

## **12 Background Papers**

12.1 [Urgent Decision taken by Managing Executive Director 11 November 2021 noted by Cabinet 13.1.2022](#)

12.2 [Household Support Fund – Grant Extension 1 April to 30 September 2022](#)

## **13 Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1- Implications.

13.2 Appendix 2 - Household Support Fund Extension April – Sept 2022 – scheme guidance

13.3 Appendix 3 – Risk management assessment

13.4 Appendix 4 – Agreement of the Chair of the I&S Committee for the decision to be made without giving 28 days' notice.

## **14 Recommendation(s)**

That the Leader of the Council:

- a) Approves the outline spending plans for Derbyshire County Council's allocation of the Household Support Fund Grant Extension of £5.400m.

- b) Agrees the continuation of the delegation of authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Children's Services to approve amendments and changes to plans for distributing the funding in line with the overall scheme eligibility requirements for the period of the grant, 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023

## **15 Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

- 15.1 Many Derbyshire residents will face financial hardship over the next few months particularly those including children and pensioners, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs. It is therefore important that the Council distributes the funds in a wide-reaching manner to support vulnerable households and takes the opportunity to boost the Derbyshire economy.
- 15.2 Failing to distribute the funds to vulnerable households facing financial pressure may cause residents to enter crisis, which may put pressure on Council services further down the line.
- 15.3 The blended approach proposed, which combines a direct application process as well as targeted support, will help reach a range of vulnerable people and make it less likely for people to fall through the gaps.
- 15.4 Delegating the authority to the Director of Public Health allows the Council to respond flexibly and effectively to any challenges, risks and opportunities that occur during the grant period and maintain our ability to swiftly distribute funds to vulnerable residents.

## **16 Is it necessary to waive the call in period?**

16.1 *No*

Report Author:	Annette Appleton, Sarah Edwards, Ellen Langton, Lois Race, Alexandra Shore, Thom Dunn	Contact details:	annette.appleton@derbyshire.gov.uk, Sarah.Edwards@derbyshire.gov.uk, Ellen.Langton@derbyshire.gov.uk, Lois.Race@derbyshire.gov.uk, Alexandra.Shore@derbyshire.gov.uk, Thom.Dunn2@derbyshire.gov.uk
----------------	--	------------------	---



**Implications**

**1. Financial**

- 1.1 The Childrens Services and Adult Social Care and Health revenue budgets will be adjusted to reflect this new ring-fenced grant and it will be monitored through the usual financial monitoring process and in line with the grant conditions.
- 1.2 Grants awarded to third-party organisations will be awarded and monitored through the usual financial monitoring process and in line with the grant conditions.
- 1.3 The grant allocation of £5.4m to the Council has been issued as a ring-fenced Section 31 Grant. The grant determination notice states that the purpose of the grant is to provide support to certain local authorities in England for expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred by them in accordance with the Grant Conditions to provide support to households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs (in exceptional cases of genuine emergency) this winter as the economy recovers.
- 1.4 Details of the proposed use of the funds and the allocations for the proposed schemes are set out in the main body of the report above.
- 1.5 The exact value of the voucher payments for the Winter Grocery Vouchers (eligible children and families) and the Cost of Living support Payments to pensioners and eligible Adult Social Care clients will be determined according to the number of eligible recipients when the data is collated.
- 1.6 The modelling for the two voucher payments will be undertaken with an assumed encashment rate of 100% to ensure financial undertakings do not exceed the available budget.
- 1.7 The grant determination notice sets out eligible expenditure for the scheme and this includes reasonable administrative costs which include, for example, staff costs, advertising and publicity and IT changes. The estimated staffing costs have been set out in the main body of the report above.

## **2. Legal**

- 2.1 Grants awarded to third-party organisations will be awarded and monitored through the usual financial monitoring process and in line with the grant conditions.
- 2.2 In accordance with the Constitution, Cabinet would ordinarily consider this matter. However, in cases of special urgency, where, by virtue of the date by which a key decision must be taken, the required notice cannot be given, the Constitution enables such decisions to be taken urgently if the decision maker obtains the agreement of the chairman of a relevant Improvement and Scrutiny Committee that the taking of the decision is urgent and cannot be reasonably deferred.
- 2.3 The decision concerns a number of Portfolios. Therefore, as the matter is deemed urgent and cannot be deferred until the next Cabinet meeting, it is appropriate for the matter to be determined by the Leader.
- 2.4 In accordance with legislation and the Constitution, as this decision affects the portfolio of more than one Cabinet Member, then it would be appropriate for the decision to be made by the Leader.
- 2.5 In accordance with legislation and the Constitution, executive decisions can be delegated to an officer of the authority.

## **3. Human Resources**

- 3.1 Redeployment of existing staff, recruitment of new agency staff as appropriate and the retention of existing agency and fixed term contract staff employed to deliver the HSF Phase 2 programme will be utilised to increase the capacity of the DDF Team, Call Derbyshire and Early Help Teams. Current DDF management will manage demand for the extended HSF scheme as part of business as usual.
- 3.2 The Council has an agreement with a broker – Comensura which simplifies the way agency workers are hired. Instead of directly contacting numerous agencies we only need to contact one broker (Comensura) who will contact all relevant agencies on our behalf. To encourage maximum engagement from suppliers, orders should be placed on C-Net, by the recruiting manager. Roles and pay rates are usually aligned to Council roles (and JPPs) to ensure we engage agency workers with the appropriate skills and comply with agency worker regulations. The flexible resource team will support where market rates demand a negotiation of pay rate to the worker and/or the type of worker is difficult to source.

#### **4. Information Technology**

- 4.1 No large-scale IT changes are required to administer the fund.
- 4.2 A new online form for direct applications will be produced for the DDF/Household Support Fund as part of the system re-design to deliver DDF via the new Granicus CRM system. This will create legacy benefits for the Council for the future operation of DDF.
- 4.3 Processes relating to connections between Children's Professionals HSF applications and DDF to award funds will be managed using existing programs such as Microsoft and Mosaic.
- 4.3 Processes already developed with district and borough partners, and the Council's Client Financial Services Team relating to delivering Cost of Living Vouchers for pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support and ASCH Social Care clients will be continued.

#### **5. Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 The recommendations set out in this report have been fully considered in relation to equality. Given the changes in eligibility requirements, the HSF Equality Impact Assessment is being updated to ensure that due regard is given to the impact that the proposed arrangements might have on all protected groups of people in Derbyshire. This will enable the identification of any groups of people who may be adversely affected by the proposed distribution of HSF grant and in some cases, this will be mitigated through third sector grant awards.

#### **6. Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 6.1 One of the aims of Vision Derbyshire is to work collaboratively with district and borough councils. To do that well, it's important for the Council to have efficient and effective processes to both establish our lead role and to set up any collaborations with minimal disruption to efficiency.
- 6.2 The pandemic has had a significant impact on communities and key sectors of the economy. The Council is working with its partners to support community recovery across all areas of the county, ensuring equality of access to support.
- 6.3 This programme will address one of the Council's key priorities which is to provide effective early help for individuals and communities.