



FOR PUBLICATION
DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CABINET

Thursday, 25 July 2024

Report of the Executive Director – Adult Social Care and Health

**Outcome of consultation and proposals for the future of Derbyshire
Discretionary Fund**
(Cabinet Member for Health and Communities)

1 Divisions Affected

1.1 County wide

2 Key Decision

2.1 This is a key decision because 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 This report asks Cabinet to:

- i.* Note the findings of the recent consultation to re-shape the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) policy.
- ii.* Adopt the policy changes recommended in this report, to ensure that DDF can operate within agreed budget parameters from the 1 October 2024.

To include:

- a. Renaming payment types to crisis payment, re-settlement grant and essential item grant from 1 October 2024.
- b. Reducing the number of crisis payments awarded in any 12 month period to an individual to two and increasing the value of each payment to £65 plus £15 per additional household member.

- c. Simplifying the DDF policy by removing payments for rent in advance, travel and wind down the provision of some items in social housing.
 - d. Adopting a tiered prioritisation framework for the fund, incorporating vulnerability.
- iii.* Approve that the Director of Public Health will oversee any minor amendments to policy documents following the prototyping period from 1 October to 31 March 2024. The DDF policy will remain within the scope of the approvals set out in this report.

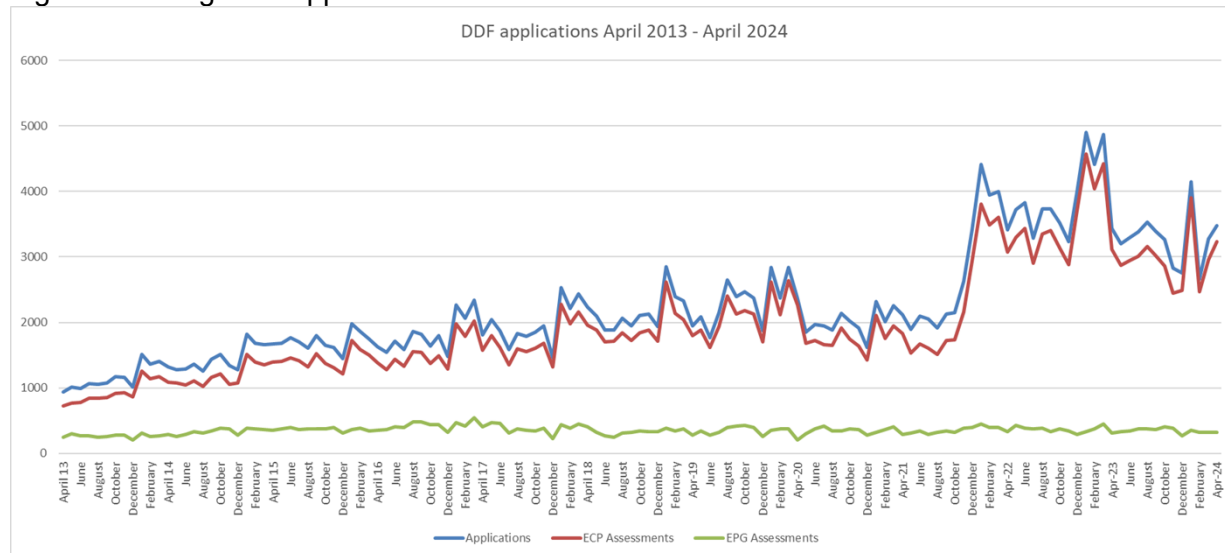
4 Information and Analysis

Background and context

- 4.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the discretionary element of the Department for Work and Pension's 'Social Fund' in April 2013. Funding was instead transferred to local authorities to deliver welfare provision tailored to meet local need. The Government's expectation was that funding was intended to offer flexible help to those in genuine need. The Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) was established by Derbyshire County Council in 2013 to fulfil this remit.
- 4.2 In legislation, schemes like the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) are referred to as 'Local Welfare Assistance Schemes'.
- 4.3 The DDF, with its established direct payment mechanism, is also deployed at times of crisis as a hardship fund, to support residents as part of the Council's Emergency Response – most recently for periods of flooding and to offer 'welcome payments' to those coming to the UK from Ukraine.
- 4.4 Since October 2021 (and including the period up to 30 September 2024) the Council has been allocated an additional £32.424m Household Support Grant funding (HSF) from the Government to support residents with cost-of-living pressures. It has been a Government requirement that an application-based scheme must operate within the Council's use of the HSF funding. A significant amount of this funding (£6.970m) has been discharged by the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund, as part of a wide range of measures to support residents. As a result, HSF has significantly raised the profile of DDF with Derbyshire residents which has increased demand on the service.
- 4.5 Quarter 4 of 2022/23 was the busiest ever recorded for DDF. Whilst Q4 is always the busiest in any given year, and applications during 2023/24

have dropped back a little, the following chart [Fig1] shows the trend of applications remains significantly above both pre-pandemic, and cost of living pressure levels.

Fig 1: DDF long term applications trend data



- 4.6 On 11 January 2024 Cabinet considered a report outlining the demand pressures faced by the DDF, the limitations of the current policy framework, and the uncertainty around future Government Household Support Grant funding (HSF)
- 4.7 The January 2024 Cabinet Report set out four proposals to amend the current DDF policy that would be consulted on. The report also recommended that alternative proposals raised during the consultation period by residents or stakeholders should also be considered.
- 4.8 To complement the consultation, a comprehensive literature review exploring good practice in the field of Local Welfare Assistance schemes was also conducted to inform future policy and direction of travel for the service and key elements are included in this report.

The consultation

- 4.9 The formal consultation on the future of the DDF policy took place between 22 January and 18 March 2024. The consultation aimed to reach a wide range of stakeholders and residents, including those who had experience of contact with the DDF.
- 4.10 An online survey was set up on the Council consultations webpage and promoted to stakeholders/partners and residents.

309 responses were received from a range of stakeholders, including those who have used DDF; people on low incomes; advice workers; housing workers (homeless teams & public facing staff); and Council staff.

4.11 21 focus groups and engagement activities for residents and professionals took place across this period, involving 180 people.

Consultation Analysis

4.12 The qualitative and quantitative responses from the consultation are summarised in Appendix 2.

4.13 The main outcomes and themes are highlighted below:

- 79.1% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree with the proposal to prioritise DDF applications based on the applicant's situation.
When asked to rank which factors are most important when deciding which applications to prioritise, the highest rank was given most frequently to "the circumstances of the applicant and/or their family, that might make them vulnerable". "The reason for the application" was ranked second most frequently, and "the items that are being applied for" was most frequently ranked third in importance.
- 52.3% of respondents overall said that they strongly agree or agree with the proposal to reduce the number of Emergency Cash Payments that can be made to two in a twelve-month period.
The response rate was variable amongst different characteristics of respondents.
- 75.6% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree with the proposal to increase the payment from £54 for a single person.
66.8% said they strongly agree or agree with the proposal to increase the payment for each extra family member.
A range of opinions were shared about the value that should be set, including a proposal to increase the value for extra household members to £15.
- 64.7% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree with the proposal to remove travel from the criteria.
51.6% of respondents said that they strongly disagree or disagree with the proposal to remove rent in advance from the criteria.
Comments demonstrated a recognition of the value of this support; however, district and borough council housing officers gave very

specific feedback that this provision is in place through their support, and they can deliver this quicker and more efficiently than DDF can. 62.7% of respondents said that they strongly agree or agree with the proposal to change the support offered with furniture and household items when moving into a socially let property.

Summary of drivers for change.

4.14 The context that has led to the need for change can be summarised as follows:

- The current DDF policy is substantially unchanged since 2013. Over that time there have been significant changes to the welfare benefit system, cost of living pressures, and periods of significant additional funding from the UK Government.
- Requests to the DDF for support have increased considerably compared to pre pandemic levels. This is consistent with wider national trends.
- The base budget identified by the Council for delivering the fund remains unchanged since 2013.
- The DDF policy framework needs to set out a clear approach to enable the council to support residents throughout the year on a consistent basis, within the current funding envelope.
- The policy also needs to set out how any further additional national funding (such as HSF) could be used to complement the Council's core provision.

Rationale for proposals to be implemented

Rationale - Renaming payment types

4.15 Consultation responses from partners and applicants referred to having a clear approach to the revised offer from the DDF to aid understanding, support informed advice-giving, and avoid applications being submitted that are clearly out of scope. To make a clear transition from the 'old' policy to the new framework it is recommended that the titles of the payments offered by the DDF are updated to better reflect the purpose and scope of each payment.

Summary of revised approach to implement Renamed payment types.

Current DDF provision title	Proposed new title
Emergency Cash Payments	Crisis Payment
Exceptional Pressure Grants (Fast track)	Re-settlement Grant

Exceptional Pressure Grants (Standard)	Essential Items Grant
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Rationale - Level and number of payments

- 4.16 The consultation responses recognised the need to balance the number of payments and the value of the payment. There was a strong positive response to increasing the value of payments, as the current value was last reviewed in 2014. The proposals consulted on either increasing in line with inflation, or in line with increased benefit rates. There was a balance of positive responses for both of these two options.
- 4.17 Further modelling undertaken has evaluated the impact of raising the payment value to either £80 in line with inflation, or £64 in line with benefit increases). This has demonstrated that increasing the value to £80 would impact significantly on the number of awards that could be made, so less people would be supported.

The increase in benefit rates figure cited in the proposals was £64 but recent increases mean that the relevant figure is now actually closer to £65. This report recommends that a figure of £65 is therefore adopted.

Rationale - Additional household member payments.

- 4.18 The consultation also sought feedback about the value of the additional household member payment. Current standard policy is £10 per additional member, HSF funding enables £20 per additional household member. An alternative proposal was made during the consultation at £15. This has been modelled and evaluated and incorporated into the recommendations.

Summary of revised approach to implement level and number of awards

Award	New policy approach
Number of payments	Limit the number of Crisis Payments for food/heating to two in any 12-month rolling period. Incorporate emergency clothing into this provision instead of via the Exceptional Pressure Grant route, to enable a swifter response to need in times of crisis.
Value of payments	Increase the value of Crisis Payments to £65 for an individual,

	plus an additional £15 per partner and/or dependent child in the household.
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Rationale - Policy Simplification

4.19 Three further areas to simplify the policy were considered in the consultation.

- **Rent in advance.**

Whilst some responses to the consultation stated that this was an important element and should be preserved, key housing officers across Derbyshire's district and borough councils reported that they have the ability and resources to meet this quicker and more effectively than DDF, so this provision is not needed. The housing officers also concluded that the resources of the DDF should be focussed in on other areas that they could not deliver against.

- **Travel**

There was consensus that this was not a priority to the same extent as other items discussed, and an acceptance that it was not currently awarded for. Other schemes are also available to support this need.

- **Wind down the provision of some items in social housing contexts.**

The consultation responses were generally positive about the option for the Council to work with partners across Derbyshire to reform our systemwide approach to furnishing social housing tenancies. There are alternative examples of good practice to draw on from other areas to fund these items. If alternatives are stood up, DDF would not be needed for this area of work. Public health officers will work with social landlords to explore the opportunity further and move towards this as a proposed direction of travel rather than it being an immediate change.

Summary of revised approach to implement – Policy simplification

Activity	New framework recommendation
Rent in advance	Remove reference to rent in advance support. Refer to district and borough Housing Officers as appropriate.
Travel	Remove reference to travel costs. Signpost to existing

	source of support should requests be made.
Wind down the provision of some items in social housing contexts	Council Officers explore a mechanism to act as 'system leaders' for a reformed approach to furnishing social housing tenancies in Derbyshire in partnership with district and borough Housing Officers who have expressed a willingness to work together on this issue.

Rationale - Vulnerability prioritisation framework - prioritising and managing demand

- 4.20 It is clear from the consultation that there is agreement on the importance of considering the vulnerability of an applicant when deciding if an award can be made. Work undertaken to conduct the Equality Impact Analysis, contained in Appendix 5, alongside consultation and policy analysis have informed the guidance that staff will use to consider vulnerability. This guidance will be reviewed during the early stages of delivering the revised DDF offer and adjusted as required.
- 4.21 The consultation responses also supported the Council's approach to developing a clear framework for prioritising applications which could lead to an award, and how the Council would manage demand should applications be likely to exceed the budget available. Reference was made in consultation responses to applicants and partners wanting to be clear about the criteria so that un-necessary applications are avoided.
- 4.22 As a result of this feedback a tiered prioritisation framework has been developed using the concepts of 'vulnerability', 'reasons for application' and 'items being applied for'. This framework has been modelled on 700 benchmarked applications and assessments and sets out the projected grant funding amount needed to deliver each tier.
- 4.23 The criteria for each of the newly named payments is set out in Appendix 3 and the framework for prioritising applications using the tiered system, including consideration of vulnerability, is set out in Appendix 4.
- 4.24 This framework prioritises applications from vulnerable residents and sets out categories of primary and secondary items within Re-settlement Grants and Essential Items Grants. The framework would be used to ensure that vulnerable applicants, and priority items would continue to be

prioritised throughout the year even if demand is high, potentially at the expense of some of other types of support that would be offered if there was less demand on the scheme.

- 4.25 There are a number of factors and circumstances that may lead to an applicant being vulnerable (see Appendix 4). Applicants may experience one or more of these. Whilst vulnerability does not in itself determine if an applicant will, or will not, be made an award, it is a factor that will be considered in the assessment process and is reflected in the prioritisation framework. Other factors will include the basic principles set out in the DDF policy, including the reason the application is being made, whether an applicant has received an award previously, and whether alternative provision is available that would meet this need.
- 4.26 Modelling has established that the fund is able to begin operation in October 2024 at “tier three” as the HSF Grant funding comes to an end. Assessment decisions made during the four months October 24 – January 25 (approx. 4,500 decisions) will be used to proto-type the framework and refine it for use from April 25 onwards.
- 4.27 Monthly monitoring of awards made and remaining budget position of the fund will be undertaken to track expenditure against the framework and adjust the tier under which awards can be made. This will be managed to ensure awards will remain available throughout the year (as far as possible). Should there be a need to change the tier, an Assistant Director in Public Health will make a recommendation to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health as to the next step (such as moving to a different tier). Information will be made available to applicants and partners on a regular basis regarding the current tier of awards being allocated, to ensure this is clear and transparent.
- 4.28 In the unlikely event that the allocated annual budget of the fund is exhausted despite the prioritisation framework and demand-management measures set out, an appropriate authorisation mechanism will be established to cease making awards from the DDF for the remainder of the financial year. The revised policy will outline how this will happen should the fund run out of money, and no further payments can be made in that financial year. If the fund needs to close, the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health will make the decision.
- 4.29 The criteria for payments and tiers in the recommended model articulate some requests for support that would fall outside the scope of the fund to deliver within budget, based on current modelling. These requests and circumstances align with the nature of support that the Fund has been able to deliver over recent years because of the UK Government

Household Support Grant funding. However, this has led to the scope of DDF policy becoming blurred for applicants and partners. As such it is recommended that future delivery of additional grants is clearly differentiated from the main DDF scheme.

Summary of revised approach to implement – Prioritisation framework (including consideration of vulnerability)

Activity	Recommended approach
Prototyping and baselining of the model	Officers undertake four months of prototyping of the draft framework and use the October 2024 – January 2025 case assessing and decision making (approx 4,500 applications) to fully test the basis of the model and refine it for use from April 2025 onwards.
Differentiate any further additional Government funding from core DDF payments	Should further funding e.g HSF be made available by the Government, payments under this provision are clearly titled and distinguished from ‘core’ DDF payments – for example by being referred to as a ‘Household Support Fund Grant’

Final Summary

4.30 A strength of the work of the DDF assessment team that is recognised by applicants and partners, and was cited in consultation responses, was the exploration of underlying issues and the identification of possible additional support within the assessment conversations.

“I just wanted to thank you again for all your support with R’s case. Thank you for communicating so clearly and arranging to phone R when she had support with her. You have made the whole application process so supportive and on behalf of R and myself, I am really grateful to you.

You have a wonderful manner, so professional, warm and understanding. Thanks a million.”

VCS partner

“TS was my case manager, and she was extremely helpful, and I also think went beyond what she should have done. That extra step has meant such a lot to us by her and the team.”

DDF applicant

“....said it was lovely that we all cared and ...made time to tell her where she can go for further help if required in future”

DDF applicant feedback

- 4.31 This important feedback further underpins the value of these assessment conversations to residents who are experiencing difficult times. Relevant signposting and referrals to wider support will continue to be central to the approach of the team.
- 4.32 The DDF both makes and receives referrals and signposting, which is in line with best practice. In 2023/2024 clear pathways between providers resulted in 589 referrals to the Welfare Rights Service for benefits advice, 424 referrals to the Affordable Credit Project¹, and 739 referrals to Citizen’s Advice for debt and financial advice.
- 4.33 The Council recognises and appreciates the assistance that wider system partners give to residents to support them in making their applications to DDF when this is needed.

Next steps

- 4.34 Subject to Cabinet approval, information and resources will be shared with partners about the revised policy and implementation date of 1 October 2024. Training will be undertaken with relevant staff in the DDF assessment team and Call Derbyshire.
- 4.35 A detailed policy document, containing the prioritisation framework, will be made available to applicants and partners, including via the Council’s website.
- 4.36 Changes to the case recording workflows and data reporting will be required, and the ASCH Mosaic Team and Management Information Team will support with this.
- 4.37 Applications received between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025 will be assessed under the proto-typed framework set out in this report. In February 2025, applications assessed between 1 October 24 and 31 January 2025 will be analysed and the tiered prioritisation framework and detailed policy document refined as appropriate. This report also requests that the Director of Public Health provide oversight of this process, which will be informed by this baselining exercise. Any revisions to the policy will remain within the scope of the approvals set out in this report.

¹ [Community banks and access to credit - Derbyshire County Council](#)

4.38 For the avoidance of doubt, applications received before 1 October 2024 will continue to be assessed under the current DDF policy until they are completed.

5 Consultation

5.1 The Council conducted a public consultation exercise, including consultation with members of the public, people currently receiving Adult Social Care support in the community and / or their financial representative and / or any other interested parties. The consultation has enabled the Council to:

- Provide information on the options and seek views and concerns, and
- Understand whether there are any other viable options the Council has not considered.

5.2 An Executive Summary of the consultation outcomes can be found in Appendix 2.

6 Alternative Options Considered

A number of alternative options were considered when drawing up these recommendations, including a number of suggestions raised during the consultation.

6.1 Make no changes to the current DDF policy (Not preferred)

This is not a preferred option, as it would leave the Council in a position where there was insufficient allocated budget to meet demand. This could result in the DDF budget being exhausted within months, leading to unmet demand, detrimental impact on other services, and would not be financially responsible.

6.2 Adopt the recommendations outlined in this report (Preferred)

Recommendations included in this report have been supported in principle by the consultation process. They have also been further informed by reviewing appropriate evidence and examples of good practice nationally. Extensive financial modelling of the proposed changes has also established that the recommendations can be delivered and managed within existing budgets.

6.3 The Council should increase the DDF core budget (Not preferred)

Although articulated in consultation responses, given the current financial situation of the Council this would not be a preferred option.

6.4 **Consider incorporating other elements that were highlighted through the consultation process. (Not preferred)**

Each of these elements has been considered as part of the process. The rationale for why they have not been directly referred to in the new policy arrangements are summarised in the table below:

Area suggested	Reason not directly included
There should be more rigorous checks on an applicant's situation	Decision to award is already based on robust eligibility checks.
The Council should offer supermarket vouchers or foodbank vouchers instead of cash payments	Evidence suggests that a cash first approach is most effective.
The Council should offer loans instead of grants	Where appropriate DDF already refers to Credit Unions via our Affordable Credit Project. The Council does not have the facility to offer loans directly.
Support to those in social housing should stop now rather than in the future	As outlined in this report, we will work with district/borough partners to move towards a new model to deliver this element.
The DDF should carry on supporting people with rent in advance	As outlined in this report district/borough housing officers have confirmed that alternative support is available to cover rent in advance.
Not to define a clear scope for primary and secondary items for Essential Items Grants	We are going to have a defined list of eligible items in the policy. This will be clearer for applicants and stakeholders.
Second hand furniture should be offered, and better use made of furniture re-use schemes	Not proposed for electrical items due to safety considerations. It is also more economical to award a new item that is covered by a guarantee. Re-use schemes are limited across Derbyshire; however they are already used where appropriate e.g. sofas.
The value of cash payments should be increased in line with inflation rather than increased in line with benefits	Extensive financial modelling has informed the decision to increase in line with benefits to ensure support can be delivered within budget.

People should be able to apply online more easily	We recognise that digital exclusion can be a significant issue for residents that access DDF. We will continue to work to improve digital access where possible.
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7 Implications

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

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 Cabinet Paper 11 January 2024 – Reviewing the scope of the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund
<https://democracy.derbyshire.gov.uk/documents/s23291/Review%20of%20the%20scope%20of%20the%20Derbyshire%20Discretionary%20Fund.pdf>

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Implications
9.2 Appendix 2 - Consultation Executive Summary
9.3 Appendix 3 - Draft criteria for newly titled payments
9.4 Appendix 4 - Draft prioritisation framework (tiers) and consideration of vulnerability.
9.5 Appendix 5 - Equality Impact Analysis

10 Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- i.* Note the findings of the recent consultation to re-shape the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF) policy.
- ii.* Adopt the policy changes recommended in this report, to ensure that DDF can operate within agreed budget parameters from the 1 October 2024.

To include:

- a. Renaming payment types to crisis payment, re-settlement grant and essential item grant.
- b. Reducing the number of crisis payments awarded in any 12 month period to two and increasing the value of each payment to £65 plus £15 per additional household member.

- c. Simplifying the policy by removing payments for rent in advance, travel and wind down the provision of some items in social housing.
 - d. Adoption of a tiered prioritisation framework for the fund, incorporating vulnerability.
- iii. Approve that the Director of Public Health will oversee any minor amendments to policy documents following the prototyping period from 1 October to 31 March 2024. The policy will remain within the scope of the approvals set out in this report.

11 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 11.1 Recommendations in this report have been informed by extensive consultation, a robust review of the evidence base and financial modelling. The policy changes outlined, and the proposed prototyping period will enable the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund to continue to operate within agreed budget parameters moving forward.

12 Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- 12.1 No

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Implications**Financial**

- 1.1 The base budget for the DDF grant fund is £1.315m.

The staffing budget of the DDF assessment team is £0.564m and the staffing costs of associated posts at Call Derbyshire are £0.218m.

In the past two and a half years significant amounts of the Household Support Fund grant to the Council have supported demand, while Contain Outbreak Management Funds (COMF) have supported associated staffing costs in order to maximise the HSF and Council funds directly supporting residents.

- 1.2 SAP records show the gross expenditure through the DDF Grant cost centre over the past three years to be as follows:

Table 3 – SAP gross expenditure

2021-22	£2.539m
2022-23	£4.174m
2023-24	£2.926m

- 1.3 However, a significant amount of this expenditure is transacted by DDF on behalf of other aspects of the Council (eg Support to the Ukrainian resettlement programme; flooding hardship; and Children's Services support within the Household Support Fund) and is recharged to those departmental cost centres.
- 1.4 Local financial management records show financial spend across DDF specific activity as follows:

Table 4 – Expenditure on DDF specific activity

2021-22	£2.301m
2022-23	£3.390m
2023-24	£2.851m

- 1.5 Staffing costs for this period have been as follows:

Table 5 – Staffing costs

2021-22	£0.852m
2022-23	£0.768m
2023-24	£0.900m

- 1.6 Contain Outbreak Management Funds of £0.223m have been identified to continue to cover the additional staffing costs for DDF for the period

April – September 2024 when the COMF funding ends.

- 1.7 If HSF funding is made available by the Government beyond October 2024 the Council will have the option to utilise some of this to support delivery of DDF (subject to guidance issued by the Department for Work and Pensions). The recommendations set out in this report detail how this would be used alongside core budget.
- 1.8 Under the prioritisation framework proposed for operation from October 2024 onwards, monthly monitoring will be undertaken to track expenditure and adjust the service offer where necessary to reflect the budgetary position of the Fund.

Legal

- 2.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished the discretionary element of the Department for Work and Pensions Social Fund in April 2013. This funding was instead transferred to local authorities to deliver welfare provision tailored to local needs. The funding was not ring-fenced, and local authorities are able to determine how funding should be used to meet the needs in their areas. The Government's expectation is that funding is intended to offer flexible help to those in genuine need.
- 2.2 Since 2021 the Government has made further local welfare assistance funding available to councils in the form of the Household Support Grant, and the DDF has been instrumental in the Council's response to delivering that support to local residents.
- 2.3 The Localism Act of 2011 created the power of general competence. This gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. The proposed payments fulfil a discretionary and not a statutory duty.
- 2.4 The DDF was implemented by Derbyshire County Council in 2013 and has been available to Derbyshire residents since that date. Given the demand, the types of needs being addressed, the fund's role in mitigating demand for other services, and the limited alternative provision in Derbyshire, proper consultation is required of residents and stakeholders. Consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are at a formative stage. This report details the consultation undertaken and the outcomes. (Appendix 2) and the consideration of these outcomes are cited throughout.

- 2.5 An Equality Impact Analysis has been prepared, as required, to consider the implications of any changes being proposed. People from different ethnicities, disabled people, younger people and women are most likely to be impacted to changes to local welfare provision which can increase poverty and financial precarity of these groups.

Human Resources

- 3.1 Staff required to deliver the core DDF offer are on permanent substantive contracts.
- 3.2 Additional staffing required to supplement capacity and funded by Contain Outbreak Management Funds (COMF), or from Household Support Grant Funding are on fixed term contracts and these will be managed / wound down in accordance with relevant Council policies and procedures as necessary.
- 3.3 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.

Information Technology

- 4.1 Support from the ASCH Mosaic Team will be required in readiness for a change in assessment and recording processes from 1st October 2024, and from the ASCH Management Information Team to ensure reporting requirements are updated and readily available from 1st October 2024.
- 4.2 Work is underway to facilitate direct application via an online Mosaic portal. Timescales for this work are not yet confirmed and depend on a third party provider. (Access Group)

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is included in this report at Appendix 5.

This has provided context for consideration of the proposed revised policy framework, in particular about the cohorts and residents in Derbyshire who may be regarded as vulnerable and in need of priority support. Reflections from the EIA have been incorporated into the prototype vulnerability criteria incorporated into the framework and included in Appendix 4.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 In the refreshed Council Plan (2024-2025) in relation to ‘Resilient, thriving and green communities’[p22] the Council sets out intentions to

“Support people of all ages and communities in need, including financial help from our Discretionary Fund and other activities that promote financial inclusion and tackle cost of living pressures”²

and performance in relation to this is reported quarterly in the Council Plan monitoring.

- 6.2 The Values of the Council, as set out in the Council Plan include that the Council will “listen to, engage, and involve local people in ensuring we are responsive and take account of the things that matter most to them”. [p8]

- 6.3 The Council also commits to work together with partners and local communities to tackle complex problems, to be an enterprising council delivering value for money and enabling local people and places to thrive, and to spend money wisely making best use of the resources that it has.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 Consideration should be given to the role of the DDF in supporting health and wellbeing in communities across Derbyshire, and in reducing the impact of health inequalities for disadvantaged individuals, particularly in relation to food poverty and housing.

These basic physiological needs for ‘food water warmth shelter and rest’³ underpin the ability of an individual to function well and be able to focus on other areas of their life and wellbeing.

² [Council Plan refresh 2024 to 2025 \(derbyshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council-plan/refresh-2024-to-2025)

³ As described in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – see for example <https://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/maslow.htm#nav>

Cost of Living pressures have resulted in more people becoming financially precarious or becoming destitute. These people are more likely to experience mental health issues, communicable diseases, hunger and under-nutrition and respiratory illness.

The literature review undertaken to support these proposals demonstrated that a decline in Local Welfare Assistance support is associated with greater food insecurity, with an associated physical and mental health impact; increased foodbank use; a greater vulnerability to homelessness; increased debt (especially high cost credit); and poor family relationships, often resulting in more demand on statutory services.