

Report of	Record of	Date
Director (Communities) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Executive Member Decision	4 July 2022

Is this report confidential?	No
------------------------------	----

Is this decision key?	Yes
-----------------------	-----

<b>Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000</b>	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
--	---

## **Household Support Fund Extension 2022 - Proposed Delivery Plan**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To agree how the district element of the governments Household Support Fund Phase 2 (HSFP2), allocated to Chorley Council by Lancashire County Council, should be allocated to enable it to be issued to those recipients most in need by 30 September 2022.

### **Recommendations**

2. To allocate the grant amount of £320,000 as per the details within this report.
3. To use the specific criteria set out in the government guidance published to allocate and administer the grant.
4. To allow any adjustments to the proposed funding allocation to be agreed subsequently via delegated responsibility to the Executive Member of Resources.

### **Reasons for recommendations**

5. To ensure the funding is allocated to residents who are facing financial pressures by 30 September 2022.

### **Other options considered and rejected**

6. To not allocate the grant funding would mean that those residents that need the support would not receive it.
7. To aim to deliver this funding in isolation of the voluntary sector and other partners would not maximise the support that residents are able to access from this sector.

## **Executive summary**

8. The government announced in the Spring Statement that the HSF Phase 2 would be and as previously, a fund of £421 million will be made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need.
9. Upper tier authorities are required to work with districts and Third Parties Organisations (TPO), including the VCSE sector to ensure the funds reach those in most need.
10. Lancashire has been awarded £9,678,235.22 of which at least one third of the total funding must be spent on families with children and at least one third must be spent on pensioners.
11. Lancashire County Council have retained funding to allocate Free School Meal vouchers during summer holiday periods and provide support to other relevant services via this fund.
12. In terms of type of support, the expectation is that HSFP2 should be used in a similar way as the original HSF scheme, although, with a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills. Food and water bills also remain priorities. A further priority in phase 2 is that a third of the overall upper tier fund is spent on residents of pension age.

## **Corporate priorities**

13. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
Clean, safe and healthy communities	<b>An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area</b>

## **Background to the report**

14. Authorities are encouraged to adopt the same principles as in HSF Phase 1 following principles in administering this grant:
  - Use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, considering a wide range of information
  - Use the funding by the 30th September 2022 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials.
  - Use the funding to also support households who are struggling to afford other wider essentials.
  - In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, subject to the provisions highlighted within the guidance to avoid duplication of other housing related support which the beneficial may already be receiving.
  - Upper tier authorities work together with District Councils including, where necessary and appropriate, other local services, such as social and care workers to help identify and support households within the scope of the scheme.
  - There is no requirement to apply means testing as a way of determining eligibility

- A resident does not need to be on benefits or unemployed to receive this funding if they can demonstrate need.
- A resident can access the fund on more than one occasion if necessary
- This fund unlike previous funds is open to people with no recourse to public funds

### **Proposed approach**

15. The Communities team has again worked through the Chorley Together network to gain insight and collaboration in how to approach the distribution of this second phase of funding.
16. Feedback from delivery partners and those who access the fund confirmed that the delivery partner approach utilised in the initial delivery phase did provide greater opportunities for residents in difficulties to receive wider support, alongside the financial support both in the immediate and long term.
17. It was recommended to increase the number of partners delivering the funding to widen the reach and create additional processing and support capacity.
18. As per the initial phase, delivery partners will be able to make direct contact with residents known to their service and known to be in difficulty as well as receiving referrals from other delivery partners. Those involved in other support networks such as PIVOT and Social Prescribing will be able to receive direct referrals from members of the public not known to other services.
19. Officers will work through the school's networks to raise awareness of this funding with families who may not be receiving benefit or support already but are suffering financially.
20. Data gathered from the initial phase will be used to highlight those who were assessed and in need in the initial phase as well as reaching new applicants who are in need of support.
21. Details of the funding and how to access it will be widely shared with partners and community stakeholders and made available on the Councils website.
22. All referrals will go via the most suitable delivery partner and transfer of referral to a more appropriate delivery partner if needed will be conducted utilising an existing platform (Refernet) and associated data sharing agreement of which all delivery partners will have access.
23. The number of delivery partners have been increased based on feedback from delivery of Phase 1.
24. To meet the DWP requirement for a third of the overall budget to be allocated to those of pension age districts have agreed to make direct payments of £90 to pensioners receiving a benefit. In Chorley we have identified the cohort to receive the funding by selecting those receiving guaranteed credit.
25. There is a small contingency fund remaining which will be held until mid-way through delivery and then allocated to areas with greatest demand.
26. The summary of the methods proposed to allocate and distribute the funding is as follows:

- A directly issued voucher or payment to those in receipt of pension payment and receiving one passported benefit, for support towards energy costs. Forecast figures suggest there are 1403 residents who it is proposed would receive £90.00 each
  - A grant award to Citizens Advice to administer fuel payments
  - A grant award to several delivery partners from the VCFSE sector to administer payments for other essentials and provide other wider support with additional funding to cover delivery / administration costs
  - A grant award to Central Lancashire Homestart to support families
  - Supplementing food banks and an existing community-based voucher scheme
  - Retaining a proportion for Chorley Council Community CoVid Officer to allocate whilst the scheme is mobilising and to support general delivery
  - Retaining a contingency to allocate mid-way through the delivery period to increase areas where demand is higher
27. Appendix A details the proposed breakdown and allocation of the funding across the recommended categories and delivery partners

### **Grant agreements**

28. Several delivery partners have grant agreements already in place and will be amended to include this additional funding and agreements will be created for those who do not currently have one in place.

### **Funding control**

29. Funding is proposed to be allocated to delivery partners in the form of direct payments and supermarket voucher codes which are redeemable by the recipients at major local supermarkets.
30. Delivery partners will record funding issued in line with the management information template provided by DWP. Chorley Council will collate this information and submit this to LCC at the end of the scheme.
31. Whilst the fund is available to be accessed on more than one occasion applicants will be asked to declare if they are accessing the scheme through a different delivery partner and sense checks with other delivery partners will be conducted where a delivery partner feels it is appropriate.
32. A maximum value payment of £400 per applicant has been set as an initial guide. Payments above this limit will be assessed by a second party from another delivery partner organisation or Chorley Council.
33. Delivery partners will receive a fee for delivery / administration costs which is available through this fund based on a suggested target of 4% of the overall fund.
34. The delivery costs vary from partner to partner which take into consideration the overall value of the fund they are expected to award, expected complexities and the resources they have available. Where delivery costs are yet to be fully finalised due to being new processes, we will aim to keep the delivery costs within the 4% guide.

## **Eligibility and evidence**

35. As the intention of the fund is intended to reach a wider cohort of vulnerability and is not exclusive to those on benefits, the evidence of need will be controlled by the delivery partner in line with the guidance and will be appropriate based on a case by case scenario.
36. The risk of applying too many controls in determining eligibility and evidence could result in those in most need not having the ability to access the support.
37. Delivery partners will be required to determine that the resident is a Chorley resident.
38. Guidance material previously approved and used to deliver previous schemes will be provided to delivery partners to help guide them through assessment and checking processes.

## **Data control**

39. Delivery partners will use their own in-house policies and procedures to control data and will be required to maintain the requirements as set out in grant agreement documentation regarding applicable policies.

## **Information and support in delivering the scheme**

40. The Council created a post to support the delivery of Covid related Community based schemes and this post will support the coordination of this funding, support delivery partners and liaise with LCC and their partners in relation to coordinating the supermarket voucher processes. They will also be a point of contact for complex cases, internal communication and external enquiries.
41. Delivery partners will have access to weekly drop-in TEAMS sessions to review demands and discuss feedback from casework
42. Guidance documentation outlining the delivery approach and any specific details will be provided.
43. Any additional pathways or processes needed will be devised jointly with the Council and the delivery partner group.

## **Monitoring**

44. Delivery partners will be expected to record data in line with the requirement of the funding and provide this to the Council to collate and report to the DWP via LCC
45. Delivery partners will also record wider data to help gather insight on the root causes of the resident's difficulties.
46. We also aim to conduct follow up contact on a sample of the recipients to understand the impact of the funding.

## **Linking to other workstreams**

47. This delivery proposal will, through support from the Council Communities team, link the support provided by the delivery partners to several other existing and emerging workstreams such as projects being delivered through the Chorley Council Covid

Community recovery plans and existing early intervention and support pathways within the Council and with external partners,. This will ensure support options are maximised in an efficient way and demonstrates the ambition to co-deliver community impact projects directly with community partners.

### **Climate change and air quality**

48. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Council's Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place.

### **Equality and diversity**

49. The programme will be open to all Chorley residents who are eligible using the criteria provided by central government with a targeted approach to ensure all household make up can access support such as families, adult only, pensioners

### **Risk**

50. Risk associated with this funding is the ability to ensure the funding is allocated prior to the 31<sup>st</sup> September to ensure all the funding is used to support those in need.
51. Risk that external partners may have capacity issues and struggle to cope with demand/levels of outputs, but risk will be minimised as all partners for delivery have been scoped accordingly through previous working relationships and risks identified through appropriate policies and procedures. Regular contact will be maintained to manage issues and performance

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

52. This funding must be spent by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, or returned to Lancashire County Council, and ultimately the Government. This leaves only around 3 months to distribute funds to eligible residents.
53. Spend levels will be closely monitored to ensure funds are used to the best effect, and fully spent by 30th September 2022.
54. A partnership approach has been developed which will see existing partners utilising their established networks to distribute funds. A number of safeguards are in place;
  - a. Vouchers will be digital and have system generated reference numbers to avoid misuse.
  - b. Activity will be recorded on the Refernet system to mitigate the risk of duplicate applications to different Partners.
55. There are no wider budget / resource implications for the Council.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

56. Clearly it is imperative that the council allocates the grant monies expeditiously and in accordance with relevant Government guidance. Working through and with our partners clearly makes great sense in this regard. There are no legal concerns with what is proposed

## **Comments of the Chief Executive**

57. I certify this decision requires immediate implementation. Call-in is not to be available for this decision as reconsideration would be seriously prejudicial to the interests of the Council

## **Background documents**

Executive Cabinet Paper – June 2022

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: HSF Phase 2 - Breakdown of Funding

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Angela Barrago (Service Lead - Communities)	Angela.Barrago@chorley.gov.uk	5818	29/06/2022

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraphs 2 – 4 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Councillor Peter Wilson  
Executive Member for Resources      Dated 04/07/22

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

## Appendix A – HSF phase 2 funding breakdown

Category	Target Group	Amount	Details / Partners	Supports with	Admin
All	All	£16,055	Contingency	small contingency remaining to allocate to areas with greatest demand	£0
Energy	Families	£30,000	Citizens Advice (CAB)	Funds awards to residents to support fuel costs and direct to other support	£1,500
Energy	Other / Pensioners	£30,000	Citizens Advice (CAB)	Funds to make awards to residents and direct to other support	£1,500
Energy	Pensioners	£126,270	£90 x 1403	Direct payment to support increased costs	£2,500
Essentials	All	£15,000	Council - supermarket vouchers	Vouchers issued by Council to support residents	£0
Essentials	Families	£15,000	Homestart	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	£2,500
Essentials	Families	£5,000	EF Food Club - Clayton	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	na
Essentials	Other - at risk of homelessness	£5,000	Chorley Help the Homeless	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	na
Essentials	Other / Pensioners	£5,000	EF Food Club - Clayton	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	na
Essentials	Other / Pensioners	£5,000	Living Waters	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	na
Food	ALL	£0	Coordination costs	Overall co-ordination of programme	£2,500
Food	Families	£15,000	Homestart	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	na
Food	Families	£5,000	EF Food Club - Clayton	Funds to make awards to residents and support delivery costs of food club	£500
Food	Other	£2,500	United Reform Church	Funds to support delivery of meal provision	£200
Food	Other	£2,500	St Laurence's Church	Funds to support delivery of meal provision	£200
Food	Other - at risk of homelessness	£5,000	Chorley Help the Homeless	Funds to make awards to residents and support delivery cost of food schemes	£600
Food	Other / Pensioners	£15,000	Living Waters	Funds to make awards to residents and support delivery costs of food bank	£375
Food	Other / Pensioners	£10,000	Chorley Buddies Food Clubs	Funds to support delivery of food clubs	£300
<b>Total Delivery</b>		<b>£307,325</b>		<b>Total Admin</b>	<b>£12,675</b>
				Admin %	3.96%
Target Group	Food	Essentials	Energy	Total	% per target group
Over 65's	£0	£15,000	£126,270	£141,270	44.15%
Families	£20,000	£20,000	£30,000	£70,000	21.88%
Other (singles/couples)	£35,000	£15,000	£30,000	£80,000	25.00%
<b>Totals per category</b>	<b>£55,000</b>	<b>£50,000</b>	<b>£186,270</b>	<b>£291,270</b>	<b>91.02%</b>
<b>% per category</b>	17.19%	15.63%	58.21%		
			Contingency £	£16,055	
			Contingency % of spend	5.02%	
			Delivery Spend	£307,325	
			Admin Spend	£12,675	
			Full Total Spend £	£320,000	

