

# SHARED SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



WORKING TOGETHER

## Household Support Fund Phase 5 Delivery

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### Implications of report: (Please tick relevant item)

	CBC	SRBC	Shared
Directorate level delivery changes	Y		
Significant MTFS implications			
Significant staffing impact			
Strategic risk			
Escalated from Shared Senior Leadership Team for decision			
Corporate strategy delivery			

**Issues for discussion:** (List the key areas for discussion at the shared senior management team)

1. Scope of the Household Support Fund proposed delivery plan.
2. Clarification on which approval route is required to proceed with delivery.

### Recommended decision (List the recommendations)

3. To take report to Full Council in May 14<sup>th</sup> to receive the money and create a new budget for spend.
4. To approve the delivery plan
5. That when deciding approval route that consideration is given to choose the quickest option available due to the time sensitive nature of getting support to residents. (To note, it was not possible to present this information earlier due to waiting for final confirmation of funding from LCC). If executive sign off is required, to seek approval via Executive Member Decision or Emergency Executive Decision
6. To seek approval to delegate any decisions to make any changes to the plan to the Executive Member for Communities

### Background:

7. In the Spring Statement 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<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024

8. As has been done for previous schemes, the fund will be made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need due to rising cost of living until September 2024.
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 of which Chorley Council have been allocated £310,345. The span for the fund is six months for spending to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
11. Lancashire County Council have retained funding to allocate Free School Meal vouchers during May and Summer holiday periods and provide support to other relevant services via this fund such as Selnet Under one Roof Scheme.
12. New guidance for Phase 5 has been sent to Local Authorities and in terms of type of support, the expectation is that the HSF extension should be used in a similar way as the previous HSF scheme.
13. The main areas that the guidance would like delivery to focus include,
  - Focus on groups who have not benefitted from any recent cost of living support payments.
  - There is no ringfence of any proportion of the funding for any cohort of people/households (within HSF 2 there was targets on families and pensioners)
  - Must operate an element of the scheme on an application process.
  - Emphasis on supporting low-income households with cost of energy.
  - Provide support with food and wider essentials.
  - Support with housing costs in exceptional cases of genuine emergency and where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.
  - The scheme is clearly advertised and is available throughout the majority of the fund period, either continuously or in regular intervals over the course 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 the need.
  - A resident can access the fund on more than one occasion if necessary.
  - This fund is open to people with no recourse to public funds.
14. One of the significant changes within HSF4 was this ability to fund supplementary advice services, including debt and benefit advice. This will continue to be considered eligible spend within the HSF scheme. As the primary focus of this grant is on practical support, expenditure on such services is expected to be limited and linked to the provision of practical support.

## **Initial Scoping**

15. The Councils Communities team have been working in partnership with community partners to develop a delivery plan that responds to current issues but also encourages those who are in difficulty to access wider and more impactful support.
16. This approach is achieved by directing applicants through community organisations, social prescribing and other health pathways to provide a more holistic approach to resolving issues and encourage the development of skills and social contacts that will increase resilience and wellbeing as well as providing financial support.
17. The Communities team has worked through the Chorley Together network to gain insight and collaboration in how to approach the distribution of the funding.
18. Feedback from delivery partners and those who access the fund confirmed that the delivery partner approach provides greater opportunities for residents in difficulties to receive wider support, alongside financial support both in the immediate and long term.

### **Proposed approach**

19. This report sets out recommendations for how the funding could be allocated with the objectives of directing the funding towards those in most need and meeting the guidance provided.
20. The fund will help with short-term living costs such as food, energy and essential items. The scheme will also signpost to other sources of advice and assistance.
21. Types of requests which will not be covered by the Household Support Fund are:
  - any requests for items that are not essential.
  - applications from those with sufficient income or savings
  - requests for support where this is the responsibility of the landlord.
  - priority will be given to those who have not been eligible for income related benefits and who have not had any other government cost of living support.
22. 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 and will be able to receive direct referrals from members of the public not known to other services.
23. Data gathered from the previous phases will be used to highlight those who were assessed and in need as well as reaching new applicants who need support.
24. 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. 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.
25. All referrals will go via the most suitable delivery partner and transfer of referral to a more appropriate delivery partner will be conducted if needed utilising an existing platform (Refernet) and associated data sharing agreement of which all delivery partners will have access.

26. The summary of the methods to allocate and distribute the funding is as below. Appendix 1 provides a further breakdown of proposed spend.

### **Energy**

27. Citizens Advice will deliver energy support and provide residents with vouchers towards cover cost of energy bills. An initial rate will be set which residents can apply. In line with the funding criteria, it will prioritise those who have not received other cost of living payments.

### **Food**

28. Funding will be provided to our emergency food network partners to sustain delivery of Chorley food clubs/banks to address food poverty within communities and ensure they have sufficient food supplies to support residents.
29. Communities team will hold a supply of supermarket vouchers supplied through LCC Edenred system which will enable quick support to residents who contact the council in an emergency. These vouchers have been selected as they do not allow the purchase of alcohol, tobacco, or lottery products.
30. Warm welcoming spaces initiative to be sustained where there is a provision of hot food which vulnerable residents can access along with wider advice on support.

### **Housing**

31. Work closely with our Affordable Warmth Scheme to ensure we can continue to support vulnerable residents with interventions which has a sustainable impact on energy costs, for example, boiler repairs/replacements, fitting draft excluders, glazing improvements.
32. To support those residents that present via the councils discretionary housing payment scheme and ensure that the required needs can be met where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.

### **Essentials linked to energy.**

33. Selected partner agencies will provide white goods such as fridges to support households alongside provision of smaller electrical essentials such as kettles, toasters.

### **Other essential items**

34. Partners will also be able to utilise the fund to support residents to other living essentials such as clothing, footwear, school uniform, bedding, curtains, carpets.

### **Advice**

35. All partners are made aware of essential support available across the borough and work closely together to provide signposting to residents, which ensures a wider range of support can be given.

### **Targeted Approach**

36. A grant award to Central Lancashire Homestart will be allocated to provide targeted support to families. This will be used to support with food, essential items, clothing, and wider essentials which are identified to help the family.
37. There is a small contingency fund remaining which will be held until mid-way through deliver and then allocated to areas with greatest demand.

38. Consideration will be given how we best ensure that those with disabilities are aware of the fund and help that can be accessed. Utilising our knowledge and existing services such as HIA team and Handyperson scheme we will reach a proportion of disabled people to make aware of the fund and support to access.
39. Work to identify how we should consider providing support to people with caring responsibilities. The fund should look to ensure that unpaid carers and care leavers are aware of support and can easily access.

#### **Grant agreements**

40. Of the list of delivery partners grant agreements are already in place for most partners, agreement 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**

41. Funding is proposed to be allocated to delivery partners in the form of direct payments and voucher codes which are redeemable by the recipients at major local supermarkets.
42. 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 prescribed intervals during delivery and final submission at the end of the scheme.
43. 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.
44. A maximum value payment of £500 per applicant has been set as an initial guide. Payments above this limit will be assessed via our delivery partner steering group before being approved by Chorley Council.
45. Delivery partners will receive a fee for delivery/administration costs which is available through this fund. The fee received has been agreed in discussion with delivery partners but based on a suggested target of 8% of the overall fund.

#### **Eligibility and evidence**

46. 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 and in line with the guidance, will be appropriate based on a case-by-case scenario. 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.
47. Delivery partners will be required to determine that the resident is a Chorley resident.
48. Guidance material used to deliver the scheme will be provided to delivery partners to help guide them through assessment and checking processes.

#### **Data control**

49. 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.**

50. Communities Team will oversee coordination of funding, support delivery partners and liaise with LCC. They will be the point of contact for complex cases, internal communication, and external enquiries.
51. Guidance documentation outlining the delivery approach and any specific details will be provided to delivery partners.
52. Delivery partners will have access to regular steering group TEAMS sessions to review demands and discuss feedback from casework. Any additional pathways or processes needed will be devised jointly with the Council and the delivery partner group.

### **Monitoring**

53. Delivery partners will be expected to record data in accordance with the requirement of the funding and provide this to the Council to collate and report to the DWP via LCC.
54. Delivery partners will also record wider data to help gather insight on the root causes of the resident's difficulties.

### **Linking to other workstreams**

55. This delivery proposal will link the support provided by the delivery partners to several other existing and emerging workstreams and existing early intervention and support pathways within the Council and other external partners.
56. 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.

### **Risk**

57. Risk associated with this funding is the ability to ensure the funding is allocated prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 to ensure all the funding is used to support those in need.
58. However, if there is significant demand there is the risk that not all applicants will be supported. Therefore, it will be communicated that the scheme will operate on a first come, first served basis until no more funds remain. This would only be for energy support payments, most food related support will still be able to be accessed due to working with sustainable organisations.
59. Risk that external partners may have capacity issues and struggle to cope with demand/levels of outputs. 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.

### **Equality and Diversity**

60. 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.
61. An Impact Assessment has been created for previous phases and will be reviewed prior to starting delivery.

## Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Delivery Plan Spend

Category	Target Group	Amount	Details / Partners	Supports with	Admin
Housing	All	£20,000	Council - Discretionary housing payment	Existing scheme to give short term financial support	
Housing	All	£20,000	Affordable Warmth	Essential improvement/repairs to living conditions (Boilers, glazing)	
Housing	Pensioners	£20,000	Affordable Warmth	Essential improvement/repairs to living conditions (Boilers, glazing)	
Food	All	£6,000	Council - supermarket vouchers	Vouchers issued by Council to support residents	
Essentials	All	£3,000	Council - supermarket vouchers	Vouchers issued by Council to support residents	
Food	Pensioners	£1,000	Meals on Wheels	Subsidising Meals on Wheels Service	
Essentials	Families	£8,000	Communities and Housing Teams	Discretionary support with flooring, essential items etc.	
Food	All	£10,000	Welcoming Spaces Project	provision of food and advice	
<b>Partners</b>					
Energy	Families	£40,000	Citizens Advice (CAB)	Funds awards to residents to support fuel costs and direct to other support	
Energy	Other	£40,000	Citizens Advice (CAB)	Funds awards to residents to support fuel costs and direct to other support	
Energy	Pensioners	£15,000	Citizens Advice (CAB)	Funds awards to residents to support fuel costs and direct to other support	
Essentials	Families	£12,500	Homestart	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	
Essentials	Other - at risk of homelessness	£5,000	Chorley Help the Homeless	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	
Essentials	Other	£2,000	Living Waters	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	
Essentials	other	£5,000	Chorley Refugee / Key Charity	funds to support with essential living items moving out of refugee	
Essentials	Other	£1,500	Chorley Buddies Food Clubs	funds to support with essential living items	
Essentials	Pensioners	£3,000	Chorley Buddies Food Clubs	funds to support with essential living items	
Essentials	Families	£2,000	Tippy Toes	Funding for childrens clothing / school uniform (took from contingency)	
Food	other	£5,000	Chorley Refugee / Key Charity	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	
Food	Families	£7,500	Homestart	Funds to make awards to residents and provide support	
Food	Other	£2,500	United Reform Church	Funds to support delivery of meal provision	
Food	Other	£5,000	St Laurence's Church	Funds to support delivery of meal provision	
Food	Other - at risk of homelessness	£5,000	Chorley Help the Homeless	To make awards to residents and support delivery cost of food schemes	
Food	Other	£5,000	Living Waters	Funds to make awards to residents and support delivery costs of food bank	
Food	Other	£2,500	Chorley Buddies Food Clubs	Funds to support delivery of food clubs	
Food	Pensioners	£2,500	Chorley Buddies Food Clubs	Funds to support delivery of food clubs	
Food	Families	£2,500	Chorley Buddies Food Clubs	Funds to support delivery of food clubs	
Advice Services	ALL	£30,000	Advice Services - Energy and debt advice		Advice % 9.67%
Admin	ALL	£9,000	Council - Admin / Coordination costs		All Admin % 5.80%
Admin	ALL	£9,000	Partners - Admin / Coordination costs		
All	All	£10,845	Contingency	small contingency remaining to allocate to areas with greatest demand	3.49%
<b>Full Total Delivery</b>		<b>£310,345</b>			
<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Essentials</b>	<b>Energy / Housing</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% per target group</b>
Families	£10,000	£22,500	£40,000	£72,500	23.36%
Other (singles/couples)	£25,000	£13,500	£40,000	£78,500	25.29%
Pensioners	£3,500	£3,000	£35,000	£41,500	13.37%
All target groups	£16,000	£3,000	£40,000	£59,000	19.01%
Advice				£30,000	9.67%
Admin				£18,000	5.80%
Contingency spend				£10,845	3.49%
<b>Totals per category</b>	<b>£54,500</b>	<b>£42,000</b>	<b>£155,000</b>	<b>£310,345</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>% per category</b>	<b>17.56%</b>	<b>13.53%</b>	<b>49.94%</b>	<b>£310,345</b>	