

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND PROPOSAL

URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISION BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



DATE	6 May 2022
PORTFOLIO	Leader/Resources
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PURPOSE

1. To propose a scheme to allocate additional household support funding.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the priority for Burnley Council's allocation of additional household support funding is older residents in low income households.
3. That the Head of Policy and Engagement is given delegated authority to finalise a delivery plan for the scheme agreed, in consultation with the Head of Finance and Property and the Executive Member for Resources and Performance.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

4. The proposed scheme is targeted towards a clearly defined need and is manageable given the size of the allocation and the time available to deliver it.
5. An urgent decision is requested as the funding must be committed by 30th September 2022, and to allow as much time as possible to design a scheme that will be easy to access for older people. However, the recommendation may be "called-in" if members require further scrutiny.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

6. Fund amount and overview of the scheme
 - The county council is set to receive additional household support funding from Government, following the Chancellor's March Statement.
 - The funding covers the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 inclusive. Burnley Council's allocation is expected to be £375,000. The council does not know when this will be paid, but it is expected in May.

- The Government's expectation is that the fund should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food and water bills.
- The guidance also says that authorities have the flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need: "In doing so they should particularly consider households who cannot increase their income through work. Authorities can request applications for support or can proactively identify households who may benefit or can take a mixture of the two approaches."
- The guidance also says that at least one third of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, at least one third of the total funding will be ring fenced to support pensioners, with up to one third of the total funding to other households genuinely in need of support. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits;
- Delivery can be through a variety of routes including direct payments into personal bank accounts, providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of grants to advice organisations).
- In delivering proposals the council has a responsibility to take account of and manage the risk of fraud.
- The council can claim reasonable administration costs. Following consultation on the most accessible and cost effective service design, the council is likely to partner with Liberata and/or the Council for Voluntary Services to deliver the scheme.

7. The proposed scheme for Burnley

- Lancashire County Council will use its share of the funding to issue free school meal vouchers. This will ensure that at least a third of the funding is ringfenced to support low income households with children.
- In order to support older residents, it is proposed that the Burnley Council scheme targets all residents over 60 in receipt of council tax support.
- Subject to confirmation of the number eligible and the amount allocated to the council, it is proposed that these households will be offered £85 in supermarket food vouchers or paid directly into their bank account or council tax account. The scheme will also target any residents claiming a disability reduction on their council tax.
- A grant to the third parties will also be awarded to help alleviate food poverty amongst any household in need. The total grant pot available will not exceed £35,000, again subject to confirmation of the amount allocated to the council and the total number of residents eligible under the targeted element of the scheme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

8. There are no new revenue budget implications arising from this report. The scheme is allocating a portion of funding given to the council by Lancashire County Council (LCC). LCC is the accountable body for household support fund.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 9. The Council will need to ensure fair access to the fund. Policy and Engagement will work with the CVS and other VCFS networks to get the word out.
- 10. Demand is expected to be high. Communications will be developed to manage applicants' expectation on decision timescales.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

- 11. Council for Voluntary Services.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/household-support-fund-doubled-to-help-most-vulnerable-tackle-cost-of-living>

FURTHER INFORMATION	
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