

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND PROPOSAL

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE



DATE	30th November 2022
PORTFOLIO	Finance/Health and Wellbeing
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PURPOSE

1. To seek approval to deliver the Household Support Fund.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the priority for Burnley Council’s allocation of Household Support funding is reducing food poverty and support for residents who may not have benefited from other cost of living payments from central or local government.
3. That the Head of Policy and Engagement is given delegated authority to finalise a delivery plan for the scheme, in consultation with the Head of Finance and Property and the Executive Member for Finance 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.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- 5. Fund amount and overview of the scheme**
The Council has been awarded £475,000 from a total allocation to the county council of £9.7million. Around half the total allocation is being used by the county council to provide food vouchers during the school holidays to households eligible for free school meals. The remainder is being administered by district councils.

The funding must be committed by the end of March 2023.

The Government’s guidance sets out the expectation that the fund should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for the

other support government has recently made available. The council can issue payments directly to residents. It can also fund registered charities to provide support, such as food banks.

The council can claim reasonable administration costs.

6. The Burnley scheme

Burnley Council used its first grant of household support fund to help families eligible for free school meals offering a £85 food voucher. That scheme closed in March 2022. A second grant funded a scheme which closed in October 2022. This provided a £90 voucher to low-income pensioners, and residents that have a disability band reduction or severe mental impairment or carers discount on their council tax. The council has also funded the food bank to ensure it has continuous adequate supply.

It is proposed that the council continues to fund the food bank and other charities providing food and other essential supplies to residents. Any resident can apply to the food bank for support, and may be offered extra help through Burnley Together. However, the majority of the funding will be made in targeted direct payments to residents in the form of a post office payout voucher. The voucher can be used to pay off a bill, or can be paid into a bank account or collected as cash from a post office. Residents that are housebound will be paid directly into bank accounts. In line with the previous scheme, a £90 payment is proposed.

The scheme will follow the Government's guidance, and subject to budget constraints and data sharing with the DWP, the following groups could be targeted:

- those whose income would make them eligible for free school meals but whose children aren't yet in school.
- those in receipt of HB only. Individuals in this group are not eligible for a means-tested Cost of Living Payment
- those that have applied but are not eligible for council tax support within a reasonable income or capital limit.
- those that are known by the council to be living in a low energy efficiency property and that are waiting on an efficiency improvement to be installed by the council.
- those applying for a discretionary hardship payment. This scheme has received a reduction in funding from central government but the council is able to use household support fund to partially close the gap.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

7. There are no new budget implications arising from this report.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8. Administration of the scheme is a key part of the council's response to the cost of living crisis.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

9. None applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils>

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT

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