

# Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee

Date: **4 November 2021**

Time: **4.00pm**

Venue **Hove Town Hall - Council Chamber**

Members: **Councillors:** Mac Cafferty (Chair), Allcock (Opposition Spokesperson), Miller (Group Spokesperson), Appich and Clare

Contact: **Lisa Johnson**  
Democratic Services Manager  
01273 291228  
lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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# AGENDA

## 13 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- (a) **Declarations of Substitutes:** Where councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same political group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) **Declarations of Interest:**
  - (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests;
  - (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
  - (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the committee lawyer or administrator preferably before the meeting.

- (c) **Exclusion of Press and Public:** To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

*Note: Any item appearing in Part Two of the agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the press and public. A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls and on-line in the Constitution at part 7.1.*

## 14 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

## 15 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by members of the public:

- (a) **Petitions:** To receive any petitions presented by members of the

public;

- (b) **Written Questions:** To receive any questions submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 29 October 2021;
- (c) **Deputations:** To receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 29 October 2021.

## 16 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by councillors:

- (a) **Petitions:** to receive any petitions submitted to the full Council or at the meeting itself;
- (b) **Written Questions:** to consider any written questions;
- (c) **Letters:** to consider any letters;
- (d) **Notices of Motion:** to consider any Notices of Motion referred from Council or submitted directly to the Committee.

## 17 COVID-19 RECOVERY & RENEWAL UPDATE

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Report of the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture

*Contact Officer: Lilla Cartwright*

*Ward Affected: All Wards*

## 18 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY UPDATE: FOOD

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Report of the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture

*Contact Officer: Angela Blair*

*Ward Affected: All Wards*

## 19 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

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Report of the Acting Chief Finance Officer

*Contact Officer: Paul Ross-Dale*

*Tel: 01273 291969*

Date of Publication - Wednesday, 27 October 2021

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## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Lisa Johnson, (01273 291228, email [lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.johnson@brighton-hove.gov.uk)) or email [democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Covid-19 Recovery &amp; Renewal Update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>4 November 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Nick Hibberd, Executive Director (Economy, Environment &amp; Culture)</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Julie Nichols, Corporate Portfolio Lead</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 291656</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:julie.nichols@brighton-hove.gov.uk">julie.nichols@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Programme, following a previous update to the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee on 22 July 2021.

1.2 It should be noted that the report provides an update on progress to early/mid October and given the fast moving nature of the pandemic, aspects of the report may have been superseded by events by the date of the committee meeting.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the committee:

2.1 Note the work being done to help businesses mitigate the economic impact of Covid 19, and the use of funds from the Additional Restrictions Grant to provide targeted business support through the Business & Intellectual Property Centre Sussex (see Section 3.8.6 of this report for details).

2.2 Notes the progress updates in this report.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 The Recovery & Renewal Programme was established in May 2020 to help prepare and steer the council and city through the transition from emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic towards recovery. The programme seeks opportunities for the city to emerge from the pandemic as fairer, greener and healthier.

3.2 Circumstances with regard to the pandemic have shifted throughout this period. Whilst the focus on recovery is being maintained, it has been managed alongside ongoing response activity, throughout lockdowns and restart following lockdown, and business as usual/statutory responsibilities. Since the initiation of the Recovery & Renewal programme, its working groups have been balancing work on response, restart and recovery simultaneously.

- 3.3 In recent months, the city has unlocked in line with the Central Government roadmap. It has seen a resurgence in visitor numbers, and in activity across the cultural and hospitality sectors, and a spike in retail following pent up demand. There has been a multi-agency approach to the reopening of the city and weekly meetings have been held to plan for the week ahead. With the reopening of the city, there have been some challenges, which have been worked through with partner organisations. Whilst Brighton & Hove, like other seaside destinations, is experiencing a higher than average rebound in its visitor economy, this must be viewed alongside other factors, such as national labour and materials shortages, recent issues concerning fuel and the need for businesses to start repaying their debts. Also, furlough ending, the removal of the Universal Credit uplift, and likely increases in welfare and Housing Benefit claims, make for a challenging winter period for many. This is also within the context of seasonal winter planning activities. The council is awaiting confirmation of its allocation of the recently announced £500m Local Support Grant.
- 3.4 The Community Hub will be in place for Winter 2021/22 for people who need additional support due to the impact of Covid-19. The Community Hub will be in addition to existing council support services, funded by dedicated Central Government funding for Covid-19. The Community Hub is also delivering Local Tracing Partnership working with NHS Track & Trace to contact confirmed Covid-19 cases and support self-isolation. The Community Hub is currently reviewing the Welfare Support offer in place for Winter 2021/22 to ensure it meets the current needs of residents and anticipated upcoming challenges.
- 3.5 The National Health Service (NHS) and council system are working closely, as happens each year, in preparation for winter and the anticipated impact upon the hospital. This year, particular challenges are being anticipated not only directly from Covid related admissions but also, the potential increase in flu and respiratory related infections, the increasing demands on the NHS and the NHS sustaining its focus on recovery and reducing the long waiting lists resulting from the pandemic. A Winter Plan has been prepared and will be submitted to NHS England by 22 October. This was due to be presented to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 13 October and as this meeting was cancelled, will be discussed at the reconvened meeting and will also be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board on 2 November. This has been prepared in partnership across the system and is supported by an eighteen month Hospital Discharge programme intended to optimise utilisation of NHS funding, and support both the health and social care market to meet the desired outcomes of patients and service users through what will be a very challenging period.
- 3.6 There is a Cold Weather Plan for Brighton & Hove. The plan is a statutory requirement and has been produced in support of Covid-19 recovery. It sets out what needs to be done by different organisations across the city to help keep people safe and well during cold weather, and is in line with the national Cold Weather Plan for England. It aims to reduce pressure on the health and social care system during winter through improved anticipatory actions with vulnerable people and complements the NHS Winter Plan. The plan ensures the following are in place:
- Systems for alerts and severe weather warnings to be routinely shared and organisations are aware of actions to take;

- organisations are aware of their responsibilities for risk assessments and putting in place support for the most vulnerable;
- partnership approach to preparedness and response; and
- work on the reduction of Excess Winter Deaths, cold homes and fuel poverty.

3.7 The council has a range of additional winter preparedness plans in place, including a Highways Winter Service Plan and Flood Plan. These are supported by multi-agency plans, such as the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) Adverse Weather Plan and SRF Multi-agency Flood Plan. Each council service has a Business Continuity Plan in place, which highlights contingencies and these are reviewed annually each September/October. The council's Emergency Planning Team is part of the SRF, which includes the NHS.

3.8 Supporting roll out and increasing uptake of Covid-19 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose and boosters as well as flu vaccinations is a priority for the NHS and the council. There is a comprehensive programme of work to increase uptake of vaccinations for different eligible cohorts supported by enhanced communications and engagement and delivery by the Mobile Vaccination Unit, as well as in care homes, schools and vaccination sites across the city.

### 3.9 **Recovery & Renewal programme**

The following items provide updates on each of the council's Recovery & Renewal working groups:

#### 3.9.1 **Customers**

##### **Aim of working group**

- Develop and deliver the Customer Experience Strategy, which includes the Customer Promise and Customer Experience Vision.
- Monitor progress in relation to the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy.
- Promote best practice in delivering services in a fair and inclusive way.
- Consider and respond to the impact on customers of the changed customer service delivery of the council due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

##### **Key recent activities**

- Updated information, posters and handouts produced for Hove Town Hall Civic Reception to better signpost customers who present in person (August 2021).
- Briefings for Councillors and press releases for the public to communicate changes to the customer offer (September 2021).
- Improved telephone offer for customers went live (September 2021).
- Drop in self-help facilities at the Brighton Customer Service Centre (CSC) went live (September 2021).

##### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Work with Communications and Graphic Design on improved signage for Hove Town Hall and Brighton CSC (October 2021).
- Prepare and deliver briefings and communications to Councillors (August-October 2021).

- Freephone for contacting council services to be installed at Hove Town Hall (October 2021).
- Data gathering at all Reception points to inform next phase (October 2021 – January 2021/22).

### 3.9.2 Children & Young People

#### **Aim of working group**

- Provide strategic leadership to the recovery and renewal work for children and young people's services in the city.
- Focus on Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME), disadvantaged, education and early years, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), emotional wellbeing and mental health, safeguarding and youth.
- Be a point of escalation for the task and finish groups linked to the working group.
- Represent children and young people's matters in within the Recovery & Renewal programme.
- Link into partnerships and commissioning groups in the city.
- Highlight and mitigate risks.
- Consider equalities impacts of decisions made.

#### **Key recent activities**

- The Children & Young People Working Group held a discussion around Covid rates being very high still in young people, especially with the return to education.
- Supporting education settings – Public Health and Families, Children & Learning continue to support settings with higher numbers, offering bespoke advice and supporting decision making at the school. Autumn term activities, such as open evenings for prospective parents, are taking place, albeit with some additional precautionary measures. Healthy 12–15 year-old vaccination programme now announced and lots of planning taken place with city education providers including independent sector. CO2 monitors announced by the Department for Education for all schools and delivery has commenced in Brighton & Hove to the special schools. Guidance is shared with the monitors on their use and the council's risk assessment template for schools gives a range of advice about ventilating spaces.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Further return to face-to-face work for social care during this period. Staff being well supported to make those changes and greater numbers working back in the offices helping deliver the full relationship-based practice model. Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) children being well supported in their return to education after the summer break, with some distancing remaining in home to school transport arrangements. Clinically Extremely Vulnerable children being supported to get their Covid vaccines.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy - work on the Early Help review continues and workshops have taken place with a range of stakeholders to identify gaps in the current system, mapping and talking through potential new ways of working. A Project Manager has been appointed to support this work and starts in early October.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Children & Young People working group - Discussions will continue about vaccinations for children and young people and monitoring the schools programme. A detailed discussion is due at an upcoming meeting on the Foundations for our Future programme to improve mental health support for children and young people across Sussex.
- Supporting education settings - Headteacher drop-in surgeries are being held throughout September in order to respond to any issues or concerns raised in schools. Guidance about the use of CO2 monitors will be shared as it comes out.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy – Project Manager starts who can support the full mapping of the next steps in the review and the engagement programme for the development of the Disadvantage Strategy.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Full return to face-to-face visits for social work. Concerns continue on the availability of social care placements, with the long term impact of Covid starting to be felt more with carers retiring or unable to offer placements to children with more complex needs. Year 1 of SEND Strategy implementation with regular progress reports being shared with the SEND Partnership Board.

### **3.9.3 Food Policy**

#### **Aim of working group**

Provide an all-age citywide response to issues relating to food arising from the Covid-19 crisis emergency phase, through recovery and in readiness and response to local outbreaks/other waves. There is a separate, detailed report on Food Policy being presented to this committee meeting.

#### **Key recent activities**

- Emergency Food Network (EFN) annual report completed.
- Work on the strategic direction of council support to Emergency Food Providers.
- Premises search to identify potential sites for use.
- Work outlined for the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) monies has started, including allocations to organisations. The Trust for Developing Communities and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership have started new food development work, including one-to-one support for capacity and resilience for EFN providers.
- Meeting held to decide Local Outbreak Plan (LOP) funding for food allocation to be split equitably between Emergency food providers who are short of food supplies.
- Food cell interim meeting held to discuss food supply chain shortages (lack of HGV drivers, lack of migrant workers and lack of surplus for food banks) and any strategic ideas.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Report to help look at a more sustainable Emergency Food response going forward. Community meal research still ongoing.
- LOP funding for food allocation and COMF funding for capacity and resilience small grants to go to organisations.

- Developing a plan for running shared premises for storage and recruiting staff. Looking for further premises beyond January.
- Developing a Healthy Start campaign and developing a donations campaign.
- Continuing strategic work on food supply chain shortages.

### 3.9.4 Vulnerable People

#### **Aim of working group**

Work collaboratively across the public and voluntary sector to reduce the spread and limit the morbidity and mortality from the Covid-19 pandemic in Brighton & Hove and ensure the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people. This working group has an assurance role.

#### **Key recent activities**

##### **Community Hub:**

- Public Health are managing and leading the Test & Trace/Community Hub team, and Public Health are progressing with a service redesign in partnership with colleagues from Revenues & Benefits.
- Activity is broken down into two primary areas: Test & Trace managed by Public Health and Finance & Welfare managed by Revenues & Benefits.
- All activity has been in relation to Test & Trace and self-isolation support due to large up-tick in people testing positive locally or those being asked to isolate. The volume had been a challenge for the Community Hub to manage within its existing resource, so recruitment was undertaken. There is the need to ensure that the positives from the way the Community Hub has operated, ie. staff triaging customers' needs and partnership working with Community & Voluntary Sector and other council services, is not lost.

##### **Mental Health:**

- Refreshed Suicide Prevention Strategy currently on track for delivery October 2021.
- World Suicide Day on 10 September was online and successfully delivered by Grassroots, including an online panel session and launch of the new resource *First Hand* for those who have witnessed incidents of suicide.
- World Mental Health Day on 10 October was also the day of the half marathon and a skate ramp was installed outside of Jubilee Library.
- Re-recruiting to the Mental Health Promotion Worker post.
- A mental health and debt webinar was held on 29 September with over eighty registered to attend.
- New *Five Ways to Well-being* booklet launched. It is accessible via the council's website and there are a limited number of printed copies also available.

##### **Communications:**

- "We are a mask friendly city" campaign continues in the city centre and on social media, alongside conversations with local business about next steps and support.
- Working with the NHS to share the #MaxTheVax vaccination messages and details of walk-in sessions, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups with low take up, younger people, migrants and advertising the mobile testing units.

Messages are being shared in public spaces across the city, in printed advertisements, local media, through radio and targeted social media.

- Weekly Public Health statement sharing simple details on cases, vaccinations, testing and key messages or advice. The statement is published on the council's website and on social media, and shared with local media, staff and via networks. Translations are also shared in Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese and Spanish.

### **Volunteering**

- Development of a volunteer model of 'welcomers' for mobile vaccination units and associated best practice support.
- Standing up of the Sussex-wide Volunteering Cell to support testing and vaccination.
- Recruitment of volunteers is becoming increasingly difficult.
- All services to consider the use of, and support to, their volunteers to prevent burn out.

### **Equalities & Access:**

- The Equalities & Access Workstream (EAW) met and agreed to close down after its September meeting. Going forward, EAW discussions will take place within business as usual.
- Continued meeting with all groups to capture intelligence. Have been prioritising vaccination amongst Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) and Faith, and working in geographical areas as business as usual (online, phone calls and some face to face (small groups and 121s). Carried out engagement work with all groups above. Results of the LGBTQ survey on the Impact of Covid have been shared, see [Switchboard's Health & Inclusion Project report](#).

### **Key forthcoming activities**

#### **Community Hub:**

- The review is ongoing to look at how the activities align with business as usual and directorate redesigns. This includes ensuring it can stand up again offering the full support service, if needed.

#### **Mental Health:**

- Refreshed Suicide Prevention Strategy to be delivered in October 2021.

#### **Communications:**

- Provide updates on national guidance and local advice. Key priority continues to be the uptake of vaccines especially 16-18 year olds and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable 12-15 year olds. Information shared across a variety of channels including radio, bus stop advertisements, targeted social media advertisements and young social influencers, printed advertisements in local magazines and via local media.

#### **Volunteering:**

- Co-ordination between the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, the council and Community Works to ensure effective recruitment and management of increased volunteering opportunities and being mindful of preventing burnout in this key workforce.

### **Equalities & Access:**

- Final EAW update report being prepared.

### **3.9.5 Employment & Skills**

#### **Aim of working group**

To come together to discuss matters relating to economy, skills and employment that cut across the Recovery & Renewal programme.

#### **Key recent activities**

- Internal Kickstart scheme launched. Ten vacancies launched so far and recruitment is underway.
- Employer and provider events have taken place during the month at the Employment Hub, including TIM talks (This is Me Talks) with employability professionals in the city.
- Adult Learning Skills Partnership met on 8 September 2021 with external guest Ana Christie (Chief Executive, Sussex Chamber of Commerce) to discuss the Skills Accelerator Programme to create a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). Vacancy statistics by sector were discussed with partners and more Sector Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs) are planned by providers to support gaps.
- Young people, employer and provider participation at the Youth Employment Hub has been increased.
- Promoted the Employment Hub through a bus stop campaign, films and social media.
- Recruited to Adult Learning tutor roles and Business Support. The Adult Education Hub opened in September.
- Promotion of the Adult Education Hub courses via Newsquest Media.
- The Task and Finish Group to review the use of Section 106 for the Employment Scheme met on 23 September 2021.
- Apprenticeship Levy applications have been processed with two successful applications to support Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Transfer opportunities re-advertised.
- Note the Government has extended some of the plan for jobs schemes:
  - Kickstart extended by three months to March 2022.
  - Bonuses of £3,000 for every apprentice a business hires ended in September but now to be prolonged by four months until the end of January.
  - One-year extension to the Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) scheme for those who have been unemployed for more than three months.
  - Extending a Youth Offer of guaranteed support for all young people on Universal Credit until the end of 2025.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Continue promotion of the Employment Hub through a bus stop campaign, films and social media.
- Establish an extension of the Think Futures European Social Fund project with West Sussex County Council to 2023.
- Launch of key internal partnerships for the Adult Education team, commencing with CityClean - running courses in Functional Skill Maths, English, Digital and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) onsite at the Brighton Depot to help upskill staff. Start a pre-employment training

course for adults in the city to help them get into jobs at the council - 'Get Started in the council' for various services, which will include how to complete applications and interview skills.

- Blueprint project training launch – the Adult Education team will deliver training as part of the Blueprint circular economy project with the key objective of supporting people into more circular economy jobs. From the autumn term, will be looking to run a level 2 qualification in Climate Change & Environmental Awareness with progression pathways into working with local social enterprises and organisations within the circular economy.
- Publish a six month report back on City Employment and Skills Recovery Plan Actions (CESRP) in October.
- Adult Learning & Skills Partnership to meet. Key areas of discussion will be the six month report back on CESRP and future actions where there are gaps or further work is required.
- 16-19 Curriculum & Standards Group, Special Education Needs Young People's Network and Education & Skills Funding Agency Group due to meet.
- Re-launch Apprenticeship Levy Transfers Application in mid October to November to support SME's £150k.
- Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) first stakeholder meeting will take place. Head of Service in conversation with the Sussex Chamber LSIP Project Director to ensure city partners are involved in their stakeholder process that ends in February 2022.
- Commence priority recruitment to the Local Employment Scheme.

### 3.9.6 Events & Economy

#### **Aim of working group**

- Understand and quantify the impact of the spread of Covid-19 on the city's events, culture programme and visitor numbers, which leads to a wider impact on the city's economy.
- Align the city's businesses and event organisations around a common set of messages and actions, minimising (where possible) the impact upon the city, in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidance.
- Ensure government and council support gets to as many organisations as possible so that key sectors in our economy are able to survive, retain employment and recover.

#### **Key recent activities**

##### **Grant to business**

- 10,878,798.37 of Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funds have been awarded to 5,651 businesses (September 2021).
- £57,000 of the residual ARG will be used to fund a dedicated Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) manager post to oversee the delivery of targeted business support, the BIPC expansion and help secure longer term funds for the service.
- The balance of funding from the ARG will be used to support the Events and Live Music venues that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic mitigation measures.
- Businesses and residents continue to seek business support for start-up and to pivot their business post Covid.

- The BIPC Brighton based at Jubilee Library has proved to be very popular and the programme of targeted support through the 'Reset Restart' programme has been extended due to popular demand.
- The centre provided advice and support to 500 people in the first two quarters of this year, (despite the lockdowns) which equals the full year target; of those supported 50% were women, 11% Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) and 5% were disabled.
- The BIPC is a positive example of community wealth building; using the library (a community asset) to build local entrepreneurship, with particular success in opening up opportunities for women, BAME communities and disabled people.
- The British Library, which leads the BIPC National network, has asked Brighton to be the Sussex Hub with spokes in East and West Sussex County Councils; the first of these has been launched in Crawley Library. BIPC Brighton is now known as BIPC Sussex.

#### **Tourism and hospitality:**

- Hotels at 84% occupancy, average cost per room per night £136 (jump from £100 previously). Huge demand for September/October.
- Much positive press coverage.
- The Brighton Centre has reopened and is very busy with displaced business and the Labour Conference. It does, however, have significant staff shortages.

#### **Events on council land**

- Three very busy weekends in September, catching up with displaced business.
- Foodies Fest and Boundary will be well attended.
- Big marathon number drop – 7,000 down from the 12,000 expected.
- Event bookings strong long-term, with a great deal of new and returning business.
- Key shortage in security staff.

#### **Third sector**

- Skills shortage is still a big issue and needs a citywide conversation involving multiple sectors and forward planning.

#### **Skills and recovery**

- New Adult Education Hub supporting skills issues through their budget and Department for Work & Pensions working with the Employment & Skills working group to address what is a UK-wide issue.

#### **Arts and culture**

- Continued support of ABCD for Cultural Recovery project.
- Welcome Back Fund projects - Wayfaring and 1st Thursday, a collaboration with the Business Improvement District, including projections in public spaces and shop windows.
- Culture Recovery Fund – short turnaround to apply.
- Digital Festival will go ahead in October.

### **Wider city view**

- Hatch report currently being followed up with an action plan to set out new priorities for the Greater Brighton Economic Board.
- Greater Brighton Economic Board Climate Summit on 12 October
- Push on business grants (more information on the council's website). Campaign running from the autumn.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- The working group will turn its attention to business financing, skills and tourism as winter approaches, given the multiple challenges of, for example, supply and labour shortages and price pressures. It will consider the possibility of inviting others to the group and will review analysis undertaken by Hatch Regeneris on economic impacts to inform planning.

## **3.9.7 Homelessness & Housing**

### **Aim of working group**

- Covid Response amongst the homeless and rough sleeping population.
- Prevention and management of cases and outbreaks in homelessness and rough sleeping settings.
- Enabling individuals accommodated in emergency accommodation during the Covid Response ('Everyone In') to move on from rough sleeping into sustainable accommodation.
- Achieve a sustainable reduction in rough sleeping.
- Collaboration between housing, finance, planning, development, health protection, social care and local stakeholders and partners, in the development of submissions for the funding included in the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).
- Delivery of both MHCLG Programmes - Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) and RSAP.

### **Key recent activities**

#### **Move on plan, including Next Steps Accommodation Programme for people accommodated under Covid-19 Emergency Accommodation (hotels)**

- Eligible cohort for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) rooms identified.
- Transformation of Housing Needs service underway with Transformation Manager appointed.
- Additional bid submitted under RSAP for three schemes on 2 September 2021.
- Two additional Reconnection Workers have been recruited.

### **Open Offer**

- Approved by Housing Committee, the 'open offer' to those assessed as at risk of rough sleeping where no accommodation duty is owed by the council has ended, in line with opening up council prevention and housing option services, along with the national roadmap post-lockdown. Verified rough sleepers are continuing to be accommodated where there is no capacity in commissioned services.

### **Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)**

- The bid for the first cycle of funding has been awarded.
- The second cycle to deliver thirty properties under ten year leases is being scoped.
- The next official street count is on 2 November 2021.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Move-on planning for Covid 1 and 2 clients in Emergency Accommodation is the key focus. The plan will enable the remaining people to move from emergency provision to sustainable accommodation by mid November 2021.
- The outcome of the RSAP bid will be known in late October 2021.
- Developing more comprehensive project plans as part of Move-on.
- Continued oversight of the Homeless Reduction Board.
- Central Government has announced an aim to reduce the need for anyone to rough sleep by the end of this Parliament. The action plan aligned to the Homeless & Rough Sleepers Strategy will be refreshed to support achievement of this goal.
- Develop access to a number of private rented properties to deliver the Ex-Offender Accommodation Scheme.

## **3.9.8 Supporting Members**

### **Aim of working group**

To explore with Members:

- the role of a Member, how that is changing and what it looks like going forward;
- the relationship between a Member and their ward/communities and with officers; and
- how Members want to work;

informed by experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will lead to a series of actions, including the creation of a Training, Development & Improvement Plan for Members.

### **Key recent activities**

- Draft Member Training & Development (T&D) Plan and Member Performance & Development Plan (PDP) template presented to Leaders' Group on 8 September.
- Member Training & Development Plan and Member PDP template finalised. Both documents agreed by the Member Development Working Group (MDWG) on 5 October and Leaders' Group on 6 October.
- Standard objectives created for use in Member PDPs.
- Costs of Member training researched.
- Launch plan for Member training and PDPs developed and shared with Democratic Services. Meeting held with ELT Sponsor and Democratic Services regarding the practicalities of implementing the T&D Plan.
- Meeting held with Workforce Development regarding using the Learning Gateway for Member training.
- Update presented to Supporting Members Officer Working Group on 30 September.
- Meeting held with Democratic Services regarding Charter Plus. Charter Plus accreditation booked.
- Discussion facilitated at MDWG regarding Future Ways of Working.

- Improvement Plan reviewed and updated.
- Member T&D Plan and PDP template launched on 11 October.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Outline process of evaluating and quality assuring Member training.
- Scope work on attracting Members to the role and increasing diversity.
- Promote Member T&D Plan and PDPs.
- Continue planning for Charter Plus accreditation.
- Moving forward work on Future Ways of Working for Members.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 As the democratic body of the city, the council has a role in leading the governance and delivery of the recovery phase of the pandemic. The consequences of this public health crisis force the city to respond in ways that are different from what has been considered normal. The recovery programme is designed to ensure that the city is able to respond in an agile way as it transitions through different phases of the pandemic and moves in and out of response.
- 4.2 The pandemic represents an unprecedented challenge for Brighton & Hove and a major shock to the city's economy and communities. It also presents the city with an opportunity to shape its future. The recovery programme is designed to provide the governance structure for initiating and organising a series of co-ordinated, multi-agency actions during the recovery stage(s) following the pandemic affecting the communities and/or environment of Brighton & Hove. Those leading Recovery & Renewal have worked closely throughout with colleagues supporting outbreak control and emergency response to ensure a co-ordinated approach .

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The programme is engaging with the city's partnerships and governing bodies, and the Community & Voluntary Sector (CVS) as part of the recovery process. The city's partnerships were consulted as part of the programme's initiation via a scenario planning exercise where they were asked to consider the implications of the pandemic on their sectors and a response. The CVS and Clinical Commissioning Group are represented on the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Group, where the leads of each working group share progress in order to identify issues, links and dependencies, and cross-cutting areas of work. Each working group has also been reviewed to determine whether it has appropriate CVS representation. The working groups undertake engagement and consultations specific to their theme, as appropriate.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the council's response to it have been fast paced, agile and in partnership with others, and this ethos is being carried forward into recovery. The programme will plan ahead as far as it is able, adapt in line with outbreak control, emergency response and restart of the city, and each working group will review its approach as circumstances change. The organisational capacity required to respond to the crisis, restart the city, begin recovery from it, and manage business as usual and statutory responsibilities cannot be under-

estimated. Officers remain committed to delivering for the city, and the council and its staff, and will continue to update Members as the programme progresses.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The governance structure of the Recovery & Renewal Programme is provided for within the council's existing resources. Except where specific delegations have been approved by committee, actions or recommendations arising from the programme that have financial implications are reported through the council's recognised governance and decision-making routes, normally Policy & Resources Committee, or its Recovery Sub-Committee, and in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Clause 20 of the Additional Restriction Grant guidance for Local Authorities, 22 March 2021 states that, "Local Authorities can use ARG funding for business support activities. This may primarily take the form of discretionary grants, but Local Authorities could also use this funding for wider business support activities." The sum of £57,000 will be taken from the residual ARG to fund a dedicated BIPC manager post and oversee the provision of targeted business support services.

*Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld*

*Date: 21/10/21*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 This report is for information only. There are therefore no legal implications arising directly from it. The Recovery and Renewal Programme is entirely consistent with the Council's powers and duties under the Local Government Act 2000, the Coronavirus Act 2020 and function-specific laws.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 21/10/21*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Equality is fundamental to the city's and council's recovery from the pandemic, along with addressing the inequalities that it may have worsened. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been completed, as required, by the working groups and include actions to gain the best outcomes for all service users and staff. Each working group is considering what existing inequalities have been revealed by the pandemic and social restrictions, what inequalities have been created or worsened, and what can be done to tackle these by the council, its partners and communities. In addition, the groups are also considering whether recovery from the pandemic creates any opportunities to narrow pre-existing inequalities. Progress towards delivery of each EIA is checked regularly as part of the governance of the programme.

The Equalities & Access Workstream (EAW) is being stood down as work is embedded in wider equalities mechanisms. The EAW has built really positive collaborative relationships, will remain as a virtual network and can be stood up again, if needed. At its last meeting, community representatives raised questions

around vaccines and the winter period - these have been raised with the Vulnerable People Working Group for inclusion in communications and winter planning, and flagged to other relevant Recovery & Renewal working groups. Learning from the EAW has been discussed and there was very positive feedback regarding the collaborative approach, links made with community groups and strong inclusion of community voice. A closedown report for the workstream is being drafted, which will update on progress towards the EAW's Interim Report.

#### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The sustainability of its recovery plans is a key aspect of the programme's approach. This ranges from the plans to facilitate the movement of people around the city, to the sustainability of food provision, to the sustainability of the council's finances. As well as responding to the challenges thrown up by the pandemic, the programme will similarly seek to optimise any opportunities that are presented to support delivery of the council's priorities. The council's Carbon Neutral programme is one of the underpinning activities of Recovery & Renewal.

#### Brexit Implications:

- 7.5 The challenges of city and council recovery from the pandemic were considered alongside the implications of Brexit. Services were encouraged to plan their delivery in light of both Covid-19 and Brexit, and business continuity plans were refreshed with a similar focus. Opportunities to join up messaging and actions around Covid-19 and Brexit were identified, including the identification and management of risks. Issues now arising, potentially as a result of Brexit, such as labour shortages and the impact upon recovery, are being explored.

#### Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.6 The implications for crime and community safety/cohesion in relation to the pandemic are embedded within the work of the Community Safety Partnership and Strategy.

#### Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.7 Risk management is an integral part of programme management and is being considered throughout the recovery process. The working groups have conducted risk analyses to identify the risks relevant to their area of focus and have captured these in risk logs, which are regularly monitored. Working group risks are managed by the relevant working group and only reported to the Programme Board if they need to be escalated. Strategic risks to recovery are being discussed alongside business continuity and winter planning. The Programme Board will escalate risks to the Sussex Resilience Forum, as appropriate. Opportunities that arise in the course of the city and council's recovery from the pandemic will be explored and pursued, as appropriate.

#### Public Health Implications:

- 7.8 Public Health is at the heart of the council's response to, and recovery from, the pandemic and is mainstreamed throughout the Recovery & Renewal programme. Colleagues from Public Health and the Recovery & Renewal programme are co-

ordinating their responses to the pandemic and meet regularly to discuss progress and any issues.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.9 The programme is structured around the council and city's recovery from the pandemic and the implications to both are integral to the plans of the respective working groups.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Documents**

None

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Response and Recovery Update: Food</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Helen Starr-Kedde</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 291026</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Helen.starrkedde@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 This report updates members on the work that is being done around provision of food during COVID-19, in terms of emergency provision and consideration of a longer-term strategic approach to food.
- 1.2 The report also responds to a request from members that the Food Policy Officer continues to work with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and the wider emergency food network on developing stronger analysis of options for moving to a more sustainable emergency food network, which builds upon the initial analysis outlined in paras 3.7 to 3.28 of the report dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the members of the committee note the work happening around the city to provide residents with food and put on record their thanks to all the volunteers and the staff involved.
- 2.2 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee agrees that as a city Brighton and Hove should continue to take a vouchers/cash first approach supported by food/essential items provision.
- 2.3 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee notes the ongoing needs of the Emergency Food Sector in para's 3.17 – 3.50 which currently costs over £0.931m per annum and the unfunded budget of support needs in financial year 2022/23 as laid out in the table 3.51 of £0.302m.
- 2.4 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee consider Emergency Food needs in future budget setting decisions to prioritise and redirect funding to the 'Food Cell' approach. This will develop the mechanism to underpin recovery, renewal and will lead to long-term resilience.
- 2.5 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee agrees the following commitments:

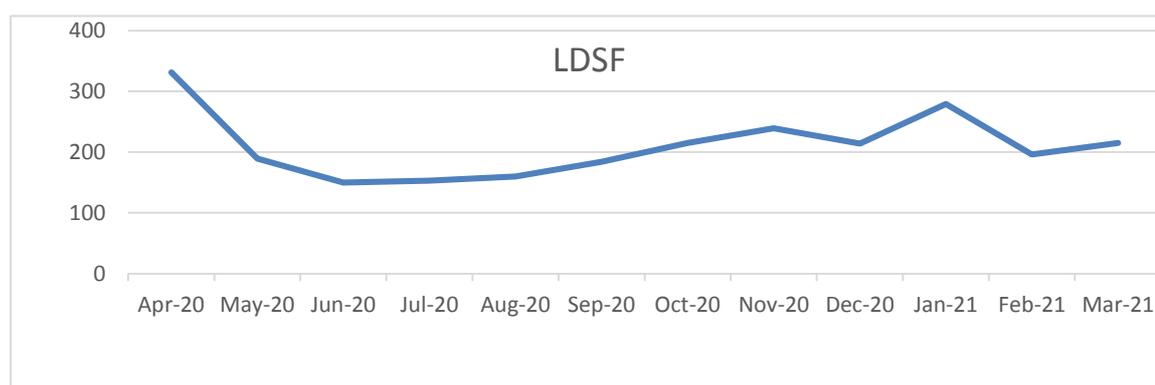
- 2.5.1 That the annual cost of £3,400 for parking dispensations and staff time to administer the scheme be incorporated in the 2022/23 General Fund Revenue Budget including through the use of one-off resources if necessary.
- 2.5.2 That the underwriting of a 3-year lease and associated staff to coordinate premises to provide storage and processing space for emergency food (as described in paragraph 3.21 – 3.23) at an annual cost of £65,142 be incorporated in the 2022/23 General Fund Revenue Budget including through the use of one-off resources if necessary.
- 2.5.3 That options for addressing the remaining funding shortfalls in 2022/23, laid out in the table 3.51, of £233,399 are kept under review as the strategy developments and, if necessary, consideration is given to making allocations to address the shortfall if one-off resources or grant funding become available in 2022/23.
- 2.5.4 That options for addressing the potential £24,582 funding shortfall for the purchase of food for this Winter 2021/22 are kept under review and allocations from existing resources and/or grants made subject to availability.
- 2.6 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee are requested to instruct Officers to amplify and support a food & essential items donations campaign through the communications team at the council, to bring public attention to this issue, which, if feasible, should include instating donation points at Brighton & Hove City Council public buildings.
- 2.7 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee instructs officers to commission an exploratory piece of work to look at strengthening organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee & Asylum Seekers to provide food access, by working together and providing staff capacity and reporting back to the appropriate committee.
- 2.8 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee instructs officers to undertake further work to explore commissioning a city-wide delivered community meals service for residents who cannot afford to pay for existing providers, to understand need and likely financial implications and report back to the appropriate committee.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 As part of the city's community response to supporting vulnerable households and those that were shielding during the Covid-19 Pandemic, a citywide network of 50 neighbourhood food hubs was co-ordinated by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership. Several of the temporary food hubs have since closed, there are 36 organisations in the Emergency Food Network likely to remain open.
- 3.2 The need for emergency food provision has fluctuated over the last year. In April 2020, 3001 food parcels were being given out per week and 3966 meals. This reduced to 1991 weekly parcels in July 2020 and has reduced to 1430 weekly

parcels in July 2021 and 2650 meals. The Emergency Food Network is still operating at a 240% increase from pre-pandemic levels (please see Appendix 1 for the Emergency Food Network report). The expectation is that this number will increase in Autumn 2021 when furlough ends and the £20 Universal Credit uplift is removed. Numbers of people needing food support are always higher in winter because of the explicit link between fuel and food poverty. Older residents and those with long term disabilities are particularly vulnerable at this time of year.

- 3.3 Local Discretionary Social Fund claims have fluctuated throughout the year but are still averaging significantly high numbers. Food expenses from April 20 – Mar 21 were £54,610 (24 % of claims), with other kitchen equipment £67,083 (30% of claims)



- 3.4 The School Meal voucher scheme has successfully prevented many families from needing to access Emergency Food support. BHCC school meals service has previously offered vouchers and is currently developing a national approach to providing support through supermarket and shop vouchers. Vouchers give more dignity to the families to access food (food preferences, cultural and dietary needs).
- 3.5 In 2020/21 Children’s Centres report 274 families were supported for food access. A total of 2964 supermarket vouchers were issued with a value of £95,485 during this period to families with children aged under five years eligible for the Government’s Winter Grant payments. 587 of those vouchers were for families accessing the Children’s Centre Foodbank.
- 3.6 A total of 6505 food parcels were delivered via the Children Centre’s foodbank, with many more additional deliveries for emergency supplies for the home such as kitchen utensils, bedding, clothes, toys and books, nappies, sanitary products, and toiletries.
- 3.7 The council funded an initial £45,000 in March 2020 and a further £124,500 for the period June – August 2020 to cover Emergency Food provision. The COVID19 Winter Grant money allocation was £116,000 to support the community and voluntary sector in Winter 2020/21 given out in small grants and £40,000 for youth providers. This financial year there is a further £90,000 within the Winter Grant allocation for 2021/22 for groups to buy in food & essentials.

Local Outbreak Plan funding (LOP) £215,000 & Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) of £100,000 are outlined in tables 3.8 and 3.9.

3.8 Breakdown of proposed spend on the Local Outbreak Plan funding (LOP) budget:

Organisation	What	How much	Spent/ Allocated
BHCC Children's Centres	Buying in food for food bank 1st April 21 - 31st March 22	£28,000	£28,000
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	Support for Emergency Food Network 1st April – 31st March 22 Central processing hub Hub closed in June 21	£30,000	£30,000
Impact Initiatives	Food Access Support Worker and Volunteer Coordinator (to help with residents who can afford to pay, but can't access food) 1st April – 31st March 22	£48,000	£48,000
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	Six-month extension to support affordable food pilots 1st April – 31st Sept 21 On the day emergency parcels 1st April - Jun 21	£14,852	£14,852
Impact Initiatives	Fund for 'on the day' shopping (people who are isolating because of covid, but need someone to pick up some food for them who can't afford to pay) Jun 21 – 31st March 22	£6,000	£2,160
Moulsecoomb Hall	Moulsecoomb Hall (BHFP Central processing hub)	£9,000	£7,630
BHCC Parking team	Parking permits	£3,400	£3,400
Mixed providers	Food budget (split proportionally between emergency food providers who have recognised need)	£50,000	£50,000
	Reserve (decision to be taken by Jan 22 when further needs have been identified)	£25,748	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£215,000</b>	<b>£184,042</b>

3.9 Breakdown of spend on the COMF budget for capacity and resilience:

Organisation	What	How much	Spent/ Allocated
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership / BrightStore	Affordable food Project extension including Whitehawk Children's Centre pilot (Brighton & Hove Food Partnership employing coordinator of BrightStore who already have 4 stores) 13th Sept 21 – 15th April 22	£21,000	£21,000
BHFP/BHCC	Healthy start campaign + training	£5,000	0

	Winter 21/22 In line with national digitalisation launch		
Trust for Developing Communities / BHFP	Food Community Development Worker to help with capacity building for food banks (employed by Trust for Developing Communities with support from Brighton & Hove Food Partnership)	£30,000	£30,000
BHFP search	Shared premises/facilities - rent and searching	£10,000	£3,000
Mixed providers	2 - 5k pots for groups to bid in for capacity and resilience	£24,000	£20,000
	Reserve (decision to be taken in Jan 22 when further needs have been identified)	£10,000	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£100,000</b>	<b>£74,000</b>

### What has been achieved already?

- 3.10 The city's Emergency Food Network has been in existence since 2013. Coordinated by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership it brings emergency food providers together from across the city to connect, share, learn and develop joint solutions. In 2020 Brighton & Hove City Council set up a covid response team to focus specifically on food – the 'Food Cell', this brings together partners across the city to work strategically and escalate problems.
- 3.11 The BHCC Community Hub and Local Discretionary Social Fund team take enquiries from people who are in poverty and signpost them to the most appropriate service(s) to help address their issues. The LDSF will offer vouchers first before signposting to a food bank.
- 3.12 If someone is struggling to access food but can afford to pay, they will be signposted to the Impact Initiatives' Food Access service.
- 3.13 In August 2021, due to escalating COVID19 rates and the need to isolate, Impact Initiatives also agreed to do an 'on the day' shop if someone had no money and no food but needed to isolate. This scheme has worked well as it provides the food the person requires rather than a food parcel. Please see Appendix 2.
- 3.14 In Nov 2020 BHFP secured initial funding of £0.050m from the Big Lottery Coronavirus support fund to establish 7 'Affordable food projects'. These are membership-based schemes where members pay a small fee (£3.50/£4.50 a week), to enable them to access a larger amount of food sourced from surplus, donations and from local farms via Brighton Food Factory. These offer a next step on from emergency food, help with longer term food insecurity and give members, choice, dignity and access to healthy, local, food. BHCC has provided further funding to continue the pilot with match funding from Sustainable Food Places. This project has recently been shortlisted for a Eurocities Award. BHCC in partnership with BHFP & BrightStore is now piloting putting in affordable food schemes in Children's Centres.

- 3.15 A Food Policy Coordinator post was created in Brighton & Hove City Council, which was filled in May 2021.
- 3.16 The Trust for Developing Communities in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership are working with emergency food providers to support their capacity and resilience by providing support on organisational development, fundraising etc.

### **What does the Emergency Food Network need?**

- 3.17 29 out of 37 emergency food providers filled in this year's annual food bank survey conducted by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) in July 2021 (please see Appendix 1). BHFP conducted a focus group with 16 providers. The Food Policy Coordinator interviewed 8 food banks. These requests are based on the answers to these surveys and previous Emergency Food Network meetings.

### **Scaling up**

- 3.18 Winter pressures including the ending of furlough support, the ending of the Universal credit uplift, food supply chain issues pushing up food prices, fuel supply issues pushing up fuel prices, the seasonal demand for heating, plus the usual expense of the winter holiday period, mean that it is very likely that demand for emergency food will increase from the levels captured in the July survey. Therefore, there is an expectation that the numbers captured in points 3.26, 3.39 – 3.51 below are under-estimates.
- 3.19 There is also less food available now from surplus sources because of fuel shortages and supply chain issues.
- 3.20 BHCC Food Policy Coordinators, in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP), will escalate concerns through the Food Cell if demand outstrips supply. BHFP will monitor demand through the Emergency Food Network.

### **Premises**

- 3.21 8 of the 29 organisations who completed the EFN survey need to find more suitable premises for processing, food storage and distribution. BHFP is undertaking a premises search and there is funding within the COMF budget to pay for rent in the short-term. There is a lack of available buildings, due to many different competing needs for community and business space. The vacant buildings which are available need leasing, commitment to rent long-term (3 years) and come with other associated costs such as maintenance, services, and refit.
- 3.22 Premises to use for food processing or storage would help solve issues relating to food shortages and supply chains. Land & buildings for food systems infrastructure should be prioritised to improve the local food economy. Premises would be up to £35,000 per year. This unit would also need to have a Premises

Coordinator at a cost of £30,142 a year (3 days of work at Grade SO1/2 rate, plus 30% employer on-costs, plus a £5,000 operating budget). This would support long-term food systems infrastructure to assist food security.

- 3.23 Members are asked to agree to underwrite a 3-year lease and staffing to coordinate premises to provide storage and processing space for emergency food in the event that the sector cannot find space in existing community facilities. This would cost annually up to £65,142 if underwriting is required. Ideally, a council-owned space could be found, but in that case the funding would take the form of rent foregone, and funding would still be required to provide for a post to co-ordinate the space.

### **Funding for food & essential items (such as toiletries)**

- 3.24 When asked the question 'what would you spend a small grant on to help your organisation's capacity and resilience' 14 of the 29 food banks surveyed specified that they would use it to buy in food and essential items.
- 3.25 Food banks buy in extra food (especially fresh fruit and vegetables) to provide a nutritionally balanced food parcel. The food that is available from Fareshare Sussex and other surplus sources is dependent on what surplus is available, this sometimes means that it cannot provide the right nutritional balance. Last year, Fareshare UK was given a grant from DEFRA to buy in essential item such as pasta, tinned fruits & fish etc but that grant has finished. There is less surplus food available now (due to 2050 targets to halve food waste) and it is shared between more organisations and a greater number of people needing support. Additionally, surplus organisations have been impacted by supply chain issues e.g., the HGV driver shortage and fuel shortages.
- 3.26 Emergency Food Network are spending at least over £5,300 a week buying in extra food to supplement what they get from surplus food & donations. This is a yearly spend of at least £0.275m (plus the Children's Centres spend of £0.028m). Grant-making organisations do not tend to fund this kind of expenditure as it is seen as 'unsustainable', however it is unavoidable. Also, a lot of the grant making organisations are closing their covid response funding streams.
- 3.27 It is worth noting that the money that is spent here could be made to work better for the local economy. If it could be spent in local food businesses and farms (rather than the national supermarkets), this could be an important element of medium/long term plans for economic recovery and shortening supply chains for the Greater Brighton area.
- 3.28 Increasing donations from members of the public is a priority, however there is a reported decrease in donations from the public. During the crisis there was an outpouring of support from local people and businesses. There is now less public awareness about the continuing need, and it is harder for people to donate as lives are busier and sometimes the messaging is confusing about where/when to donate (as the 36 organisations have different donation needs).

- 3.29 To address the gap and meet ongoing need, Members are requested to consider providing £24,582 extra funding to purchase in food in Winter 2021/22.
- 3.30 Members are requested to instruct Officers to amplify and support a food & essential items donations campaign through the communications team at the council, to bring public attention this issue. This could include instating donation points at Brighton & Hove Council public buildings.

### **Parking**

- 3.31 Parking is an essential part of being able to deliver food around the city and has enabled food banks and meal providers to reach the most vulnerable in society. 83% of Emergency food organisations are still delivering despite the end of lockdown. The 'volunteer letter' (which allowed volunteers to park in any BHCC parking bay without risk of a parking ticket) was popular amongst food banks because of its simplicity, but this has been discontinued. Since then, parking dispensations have been issued at a cost of £40 per dispensation with 85 dispensations being funded from the LOP budget at a total of £3,400. This will require funding in future years (or a return to the much simpler letters option).
- 3.32 Members are asked to agree annual funding of £3,400 to cover the cost of the parking dispensations the scheme.

### **Volunteer drivers and other volunteers**

- 3.33 There is a high turnaround of volunteers (especially volunteer drivers) across the network. This is because volunteers return to work and there is a low percentage of car ownership in the most deprived wards in the city, where the food banks are located.
- 3.34 There are 350 volunteers working 1650 hours a week, which, if they were paid at the living wage would cost £15,675 a week, or £815,100 a year. Volunteers incur expenses such as petrol costs. However, most organisations felt that volunteers wanted to contribute their time for free and even where they could claim expenses, they often don't. Food bank volunteers are contributing £815k to the local economy through donating their time.
- 3.35 However, there are volunteers in some organisations in coordination roles (food ordering, volunteer management, fundraising, safe-working practices etc), which are very time-consuming. If these continue to be unpaid, then they risk volunteer burn-out and the potential closure of those organisations. While most volunteers get a great experience out of volunteering, they will only do so if in well-managed roles. This is being supported through the Food Community Development Worker role employed by the Trust for Developing Communities and BHFP.
- 3.36 Members are not asked to consider paying all volunteers as there is no need or desire to institutionalise volunteering. However, if organisations reach a certain size and capacity, they do need to recruit staff to manage the volunteers. This is explored below.

## **Staff capacity**

- 3.37 At the 3 December 2020 Policy & Resources Committee, it was agreed to ask officers for a further report that gives due consideration to paid positions at key food hubs around the city that are currently reliant on volunteers alone.
- 3.38 There are already 61 staff working across the organisations working 361 hours per week on emergency food (although staff are likely to have other roles within the organisations). At a coordination rate of £12.82 per hour this would equal £4,628 a week. These posts are currently paid for from fundraising from grants & donations.
- 3.39 Three organisations are looking for help to either pay current volunteers a staff wage or bring in staff to release capacity within the organisation. These three organisations have significant reach and are likely to need significant staff time (at a minimum four full time roles). A continued cost of £240,657 per year for the current paid staff, with an additional funding need of £100,000 for the new roles the total to pay all staff yearly would require a grant of £340,657. Within the COMF budget there is development time with the Trust for Developing Communities to support these organisations until March 2022, to be able to employ people and find further funding to do so.
- 3.40 Unless funding can be found to provide for staff across the wider Emergency Food Sector it would not be equitable to fund specific food banks. However, there is a good case to invest in key organisations, to develop their staffing, capacity and resilience in the short and medium-term to strategically deploy resources where they will have most impact. This is explored in points 3.41 – 3.48.

## **Support emergency food for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugees and Asylum seeker communities**

- 3.41 The three main organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities and Refugees and asylum seekers have critical funding issues to provide staffing and rental costs. There is an expected increase of Refugees & asylum seekers in the city due to issues in Afghanistan.
- 3.42 National research highlights the issue ‘Throughout the crisis, BAME communities have consistently encountered disproportionately higher levels of food insecurity compared with white ethnic groups. Comparing our data to before the pandemic, inequality in food insecurity has widened between those from BAME backgrounds and white ethnic groups.’ [FF\\_Impact-of-Covid\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.foodfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FF_Impact-of-Covid_FINAL.pdf) ([foodfoundation.org.uk](https://www.foodfoundation.org.uk)).
- 3.43 Members are requested to commission an exploratory piece of work to look at strengthening organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee & asylum seekers to provide food access, by working together and

providing staff capacity. This could result in proposals for a new or separate food bank or further resources for the existing banks.

### **Support organisations delivering a 'Meals on wheels' service**

- 3.44 In response to the pandemic, East Brighton Food Co-op set up a delivered meals-on-wheels service as of July 2020 delivering to 260 households daily (with a 7 day a week service). They receive referrals from over 33 organisations. Originally covering East Brighton, they now deliver across Brighton & Hove due to need. Additionally, 4 organisations moved from a lunch club model to deliver to their clients.
- 3.45 The council's contracted Community Meals Service was discontinued on 31/03/2016 after a review. Several factors have changed since this happened:
- an increase in amount of people needing to isolate or remain at home;
  - an increase in amount of people who are in food poverty; and
  - closure of lunch clubs and other provision.
- 3.46 Adults with disabilities have also consistently been more acutely affected by food insecurity during the pandemic compared with those without disabilities. Most recent data shows people with severe disabilities have five times greater levels of food insecurity than those without. Extremely clinically vulnerable people are more than twice as likely to be food insecure than average.' [FF Impact-of-Covid\\_FINAL.pdf \(foodfoundation.org.uk\)](#)
- 3.47 Most clients receiving this support are unable to afford to pay for this service. BHFP is currently undertaking a review of delivered community meals. Nationally, 1.3 million people over the age of 65 are malnourished. National Food & Farming organisation Sustain recommends that one of the steps that local authorities can take to reduce food poverty is to support and enhance meals-on-wheels provision. There is an opportunity to use food provision to link isolated adults to other services and avert escalating health and social care costs through early intervention (health and social care costs). There is also a potential to link support for individuals with support at the Community Hub and through LDSF.
- 3.48 In light of this information, the Committee are recommended to instruct officers to undertake further work to explore commissioning a city-wide delivered community meals service for residents who cannot afford to pay for existing providers, to understand need and the likely financial implications.

### **Development support**

- 3.49 Organisations across the Emergency Food Network need help with a range of development support such as help with fundraising, increasing donations, volunteer recruitment and management, employing staff etc. The current COMF funding has been used to pay for a Food Development Worker employed by the Trust for Developing Communities & with support from Brighton & Hove Food

Partnership to work one-to-one with emergency food providers. This bespoke support will be available until the end of March 21.

3.50 From April 2022 there is currently no funding to support the Emergency Food Network through Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, the Food Access work at Impact Initiatives or the needs of the Children’s Centre Food Bank.

3.51 **Further action needed and potential cost**

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Achieved?</b>	<b>Not yet found</b>
<b>Short-term (Between now &amp; end of March 22)</b>	Short-term premises for storage and processing (Downs View School until Jan 22). Further location needed.	£20,000 (£10,000 staff, £10,000 food budget)	£10,000 (COMF), £10,000 (LOP reserve)	
	Communications campaign for donations	£5,000	£5,000 (LOP reserve)	
	Increase funding for food needs of Emergency Food Providers	£148,540	£90,000 winter grant (70% on food = £63,000) £50,000 LOP £10,958 (LOP Reserve)	£24,582
	Review support needed for food organisations for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic communities & Refugee & Asylum seekers. Provide staff support.	£10,000	£10,000 (COMF reserve)	
	Scaling up Emergency provision	Unknown at this time		
	Scoping work for Community delivered Meals Service	£5,000	£5,000 (LOP reserve)	
	<b>TOTAL further funding needs</b>			<b>£24,582</b>
<b>Medium term (whilst food poverty continues to be this high) 1<sup>st</sup> April 22 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 23</b>	Food Hub premises (Rental, maintenance, utilities)	£35,000		
	Premises Coordinator	£30,142		
	Parking	£3,400		
	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership Support to Emergency	£33,500		

	Food Providers, Affordable Food Network, plus training needs			
	Impact Initiatives Food Access Service	£33,233		
	Grant funding to support buying in food & essential items Based on a 1/3 of need (due to fundraising & donations)	£91,666		
	Grant funding to support staff, capacity & resilience of organisations (invest in key organisations to increase capacity)	£40,000		
	Children's Centres Food Bank	£15,000		
	Review support provided, support for BAME organisations, parking need	£10,000		
	Provide additional Food Policy Coordinator on Emergency food	£10,000		
	Community Delivered Meals Service	Subject to review		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£301,941</b>		

3.52 The expected extra need for funding in this financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 21 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 22 is £24,582.

3.53 The total cost needed for next financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 22 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 23 is estimated to be £301,941 as laid out in Table 3.51.

**How do we move towards a more sustainable emergency food system, which has fair and inclusive access?**

3.54 Working from Brighton & Hove's Food Strategy Action Plan (2018 - 2023) which aims to take a preventative 'upstream' approach to food poverty and ensure equal access to healthy food:

**Prioritise a preventative 'upstream' approach for food poverty. Take action on low wages, insecure employment and the housing crisis.**

- Lobby government to ensure that the provision of welfare, employment and skills is sufficient to prevent the need for emergency food provision
- Promote the living wage
- Reduce people needing to access emergency food to relieve pressure on services and improve capacity
- Invest in sustainable food system infrastructure to help the city transition

from recovery and renewal to building resilience
<b>Help maximise the income of those at risk of food poverty. Take a strategic approach to preventing crises, including strengthening the links between support services, e.g., advice services, Job Centre Plus, food banks and shared-meal settings.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in &amp; increase affordable food schemes to help with long-term food insecurity</li> <li>• Run a campaign to promote Healthy Start vouchers (in line with national digitalisation and relaunch)</li> <li>• Ensure that anyone eligible receives school vouchers</li> <li>• Run school holiday club meals targeting families eligible for free school meals</li> <li>• Explore further activities in schools and Children’s Centres to act on food poverty</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure emergency support for people who do experience crisis. Seek to continue the Local Discretionary Social Fund. Emergency food providers work together to share skills and resources.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a ‘cash-first’ approach</li> <li>• Help build sustainability &amp; resilience within Emergency food organisations</li> <li>• Reduce the barriers for people to access food support</li> <li>• Improve the nutritional quality of food</li> <li>• Provide culturally appropriate food</li> <li>• Ensure information, advice and access to good food for people in food poverty. Involve people with first-hand experience of food poverty in designing responses to it</li> </ul>
<b>Ensure the limited support available is effectively targeted at those most vulnerable</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data from City Tracker, Joint Strategic Needs assessment, food banks survey</li> <li>• Research delivered meals service, invest in delivered community meals</li> </ul>

#### 4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The risks involved if B & H City Council is unable to support this system are set out below:

Risk	Potential Consequences
Brighton & Hove residents go hungry (most likely to affect vulnerable residents, those with long-term health conditions or disabilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased levels of malnutrition (leading to serious health consequences)</li> <li>• Increase in hospitalisations</li> <li>• Malnourished people more likely to stay in hospital for longer</li> </ul>
Emergency Food Providers need to close due to shortfalls in funding, returning to previous activities or lack of space in community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficiaries would need to find another source of food, putting increased pressure on other food banks.</li> </ul>

buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident's food needs not being met</li> </ul>
Disruption in supply chain means we have food shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brighton &amp; Hove Residents suffering hunger and greater food insecurity</li> </ul>

## 5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The information provided in this report has been devised in partnership with Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP). BHFP hold monthly Emergency Food Network meetings (usually attended by between 15 - 28 people) and monthly affordable food pilot meetings (usually attended by between 8 - 16 people) where organisations bring ideas, issues, and concerns to the attention of the group. This information is fed back into the monthly Food Cell meetings, who aim to address some of the issues and feedback to the networks.
- 5.2 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership undertook an annual survey of the Emergency Food Providers, this was completed in August 2021. They held a focus group of 16 Emergency food providers. The Food Policy Coordinate interviewed 8 food banks.
- 5.3 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership undertook an evaluation of the Affordable Food Projects, this was completed in July 2021.
- 5.4 Brighton & Hove Food Partnership is currently helping evaluate community delivered meals, this research is ongoing.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A significant and complex voluntary network of emergency food providers has emerged over the last 10 years. The number of providers and demands upon this network have increased significantly as result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. They will need ongoing support and resources whilst the demand remains high. Demand is expected to increase over Winter 2021/22.
- 6.2 Whilst there is so much uncertainty about the financial implications of Brexit and COVID19 on the general population. There is a need to strategically support the food network in the short and medium term (expected until March 23). The long-term aim should be to reach a position whereby emergency food provision is not needed in the city. We therefore need to be careful about not creating a system that embeds emergency provision in the city when in the longer term the approach should be a more preventative approach to tackling poverty and financial exclusion. Key to this is supporting economic and community recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and lobbying government to ensure that the provision of welfare, employment and skills is sufficient to prevent the need for emergency food provision.
- 6.3 There is however, an ongoing need that is not the result of Brexit or COVID19 alone and that is supporting the cities' most vulnerable residents to access food; in particular those that have illness, long-term health conditions or disabilities.

The exploration or continuation of services to support this group is vital to ensure residents health and dietary needs are being met.

- 6.4 The organisations and networks involved are not only responding to a crisis but also contributing to key strategic social, economic and environmental objectives wherever possible. It is unfortunate to note that with potential future impacts from Climate Change on food insecurity it is useful to have a long-term strategic approach.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The report sets out the various costs incurred this year, and projections of costs next year, based on current provision and demand for the delivery of emergency food provision. However, the report focuses on other action aimed at creating a longer-term strategic approach to food provision that may ultimately reduce overall costs. Costs are therefore indicative and are dependent on the proposed strategic approach being embedded.
- 7.2 Aside from this approach, for 2022/23 there are costs that require funding in order to underpin delivery including £3,400 for parking dispensations and £65,142 to cover Food Hub premises rental, maintenance and utilities costs and a Premises Co-ordinator. The committee are asked to accept these costs as a commitment in the 2022/23 budget setting process which means they will either add to the projected budget gap next year or could be funded from one-off resources if available.
- 7.3 There are remaining projected unfunded costs of £233,399 in 2022/23 based on the current model of provision. The developing strategic approach aims to mitigate these costs as far as possible but the committee is being asked to keep this situation under review and, if necessary, consider allocating one-off funding or grant funding to support emergency food provision if funding becomes available during 2022/23. Possible sources could include any outturn underspending or additional government one-off Covid grants.
- 7.4 In the current year, there is also a projected winter shortfall of £24,852. The committee are asked to keep this situation under review and consider allocating further funding from existing resources and/or grants subject to availability.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell*

*Date: 25/10/2021*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.5 Advice will be sought from the Estates Team and legal services in relation to the detail of the lease to provide storage and processing space for emergency food. There are no other relevant legal implications to note.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Name Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 21/10/21*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 All people should have access to food that provides sufficient calories and nutrients to promote good health. Food poverty is a key symptom of inequality and key groups affected are those in low income work, single parent households. Funding food for the emergency food network provides a short-term solution to food poverty exacerbated by COVID19 while longer term community recovery plans are developed and while the risk of COVID remains.
- 7.7 An Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out for the Food Cell.
- 7.8 Three organisations supporting Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugees and asylum seekers have funding & staffing issues.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.9 The network already shares lots of information from the Healthy Lifestyles team about active travel and Surplus Food Network e.g. have invested in electric vehicles and cargo bikes. The network is also reducing food waste by linking to Surplus Food Network redistribution and cooking surplus, supporting local farmers, carbon reduction, packaging reduction.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.10 The food and fuel supply chain issues have been impacted by Brexit, which has implications on household finances. Food is one of the Critical National Infrastructure sectors. Local Authorities, Local Resilience Forums and Local Enterprise Partnerships should work closely with local food partnerships where they exist on food resilience planning.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 There are significant public health implications if residents in the city become malnourished. Food insecurity affects physical and mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing. For children experiencing food insecurity, there are potentially negative developmental consequences.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.11 Food is one of the Critical National Infrastructure sectors. Local Authorities, Local Resilience Forums and Local Enterprise Partnerships should work closely with local food partnerships where they exist on food resilience planning.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

- 1. The July 21 Emergency Food Network Report
- 2. Impact Initiatives Report on food access work

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Household Support Fund</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>4 November 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Acting Chief Finance Officer</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Paul Ross-Dale</b>	<b>Tel:</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Paul.ross-dale@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

**1.1** The government has given £2.1m new funding to Brighton and Hove City Council in the form of the Household Support Fund. The fund is intended to provide support for food, fuel and other essential costs over the winter and up to the end of March 2022. This report outlines recommendations for the allocation of the fund.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**2.1** That the committee approves the allocation of funding as outlined in the table at 3.8.

**2.2** That, for the reasons outlined at para 3.23, the committee delegates necessary adjustments to the approved allocations to the Chief Finance Officer following consultation with the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee and Opposition Spokespersons, provided any adjustment is compliant with the council's rules for virement as defined under Financial Regulations.

**2.3** That the committee notes the Urgency Decision taken under officer delegations by the Chief Finance Officer and approved by the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee on 22 October 2021 regarding the allocation of funding from the Household Support Fund to provide vouchers for free school meals over the October Half-Term holiday period (see Appendix 4).

**2.4** That the committee approves the proposed re-allocation of duplicate Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) of £0.190m to homeless prevention by re-allocating funding to top up the Discretionary Housing Payments budget as set out in paragraph 3.13

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**3.1** The government is introducing a new £500 million Household Support Fund, and on 6 October, confirmed that the allocation for Brighton and Hove would be £2,140,360.89

- 3.2 There is a broad discretion conferred on local authorities in spending this fund, with some limitations. The grant must be allocated to support with the costs of food, energy (for heating, lighting and cooking), water (for household purposes, including sewerage) and other essential living needs in accordance with the Scheme guidance.
- 3.3 At least 50% of the grant must be used for supporting households with children. Up to 50% of the grant can be used to assist other households. Eligible spend includes:
- Food, either as consumable items, or through vouchers or cash;
  - Energy and water bills;
  - Essentials linked to energy and water, for example sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc;
  - Wider essentials, for example, support with broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel;
  - Housing Costs in exceptional cases of genuine emergency only, where existing housing support schemes such as Discretionary Housing Payments do not meet this exceptional need; and,
  - Reasonable admin or staffing costs.
- 3.4 The guidance stipulates that the following are not eligible costs for the scheme:
- Paying for advice provision;
  - Providing mortgage support.
- 3.5 Proposals have been developed in collaboration between services including Families, Children & Learning, Revenues & Benefits, and representatives from Community Works and the Moneyworks / Advice Matters partnerships.
- 3.6 The approach taken was to design a welfare response that ensures funding can reach a very broad range of support services within and outside the council. This will maximise the number of individuals and families who encounter opportunities for support, depending on which organisation they approach, and this in turn ensures maximum penetration of support throughout the community.
- 3.7 In this respect, it is also proposed to set aside a category for distribution of funding to organisations and services that support clients and communities with protected characteristics, or other vulnerabilities.
- 3.8 The recommended allocations are as follows:

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Organisation, Team or initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
£0.540m	Free School Meals October H/T, Winter Holiday, February H/T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of vouchers for free school meals to low income families</li> <li>▪ Provision of Early Years vouchers for children eligible for two funded childcare places and Early Years Pupil premium</li> </ul>

		<p>*Note: In order to issue vouchers for October half term, an Urgency Decision was approved on 22 October 2021 to allocate £0.139m of the £0.540m - see Appendix 4 for a record of the decision.</p>
£0.270m	Free School Meals Easter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The fund must be spent by the end of March 2022, but vouchers distributed after this point are eligible to be covered by the scheme.</li> <li>▪ The funding can therefore be used to pay for the Easter holidays.</li> </ul>
£0.030m	Children's Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of vouchers for the existing foodbank. This will replace food parcels being distributed to families with children aged under five years.</li> </ul>
£0.050m	Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Additional opportunity for schools to use their knowledge to provide additional support to families with children, with costs associated with energy, essentials linked to energy and water and/or wider essentials</li> </ul>
£0.060m	Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provision of citywide out of school activities for Feb half term 2022 based on the current HAF model. Not currently funded in the existing DfE grant.</li> </ul>
£0.010m	HAF admin and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extension of current staff contracts to end March 2022</li> </ul>
£0.050m	Community Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Centres are accessed by many local residents who may be in need.</li> <li>▪ Buying food and groceries.</li> <li>▪ Paying for gas and electricity.</li> </ul>
£0.150m	Other organisations supporting groups with protected characteristics or vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A list of organisations identified so far is included at Appendix 1.</li> <li>▪ This list is not exhaustive and will be added to as and when suitable organisations are identified.</li> </ul>
£0.100m	Community Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Households not on DWP benefits.</li> <li>▪ Buying food and groceries.</li> <li>▪ Essential items such as white goods, beds.</li> <li>▪ Other support people may need in an emergency such as phone and broadband bills, help with transport.</li> <li>▪ Signposting to other sectors that can help such as warmth for wellbeing for utilities.</li> </ul>
£0.090m	Winter Grant Fund	<p>Grant available this winter for organisations that support vulnerable people to assist with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food;</li> <li>▪ help with cooking;</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ heating, including oil and portable gas cylinders;</li> <li>▪ clothes and bedding;</li> <li>▪ other essentials that are related to food, heating, lighting, cooking, water and toiletries.</li> </ul>
£0.070m	Warmth for Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grants to help with fuel bills where people are on a low income and in an 'at risk household'.</li> <li>▪ Benefit checks &amp; help claiming benefits, budgeting tips.</li> </ul>
£0.090m	Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support foodbanks across the City.</li> <li>▪ Purchasing items in bulk.</li> <li>▪ Storage of food and other essential items to be distributed to the various foodbanks.</li> <li>▪ Collate information from foodbanks on behalf for BHCC to report to DWP.</li> </ul>
£0.200m	Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discretionary payment for residents entitled to Council Tax Reduction.</li> <li>▪ Assistance for residents with council tax debt who are "just about managing" with council tax debt.</li> </ul>
£0.015m	Emergency Placement Service Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist with service charge arrears to prevent evictions.</li> </ul>
£0.404m	Local Discretionary Social Fund (LDSF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Households on DWP benefits.</li> <li>▪ Buying food and groceries.</li> <li>▪ Paying for gas and electricity where people pay for it by key card or meter.</li> <li>▪ Essential items people need to live in their home such as beds, cookers or fridges.</li> <li>▪ Other support people may need in an emergency such as phone or broadband bills, help with transport.</li> <li>▪ Includes £25,000 for staffing.</li> </ul>
£0.011m	Admin support for LDSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based on approximate staffing cost of 5 months at Grade Scale 3.</li> </ul>
<b>£2.140m</b>	<b>Total</b>	

3.9 One of the key elements of the fund will be the ongoing provision of vouchers for families in receipt of Free School Meals during the holidays. Government Covid funding previously enabled the council to provide this support during all school holiday periods from December 2020 including Summer 2021. It has proven to be a lifeline for low income and vulnerable families and the new funding will enable the council to continue the same level of support. It is proposed that the amounts of the vouchers will again be £15 per week.

- 3.10 Associated funding is also proposed for the provision of vouchers for schools to allocate as they deem appropriate, Early Years, and the Children's Centres. The funding for the Children's Centres will enable them to switch their offer from direct food provision to food vouchers, which will be more efficient, and will also enable service users to have more control and choice over their situation.
- 3.11 An amount has also been set aside for Holiday Activities and Food (HAF). Current HAF funding is ringfenced and cannot be used for half terms. The provision from the Household Support Fund will enable HAF to run over the February half term.
- 3.12 Other elements of the proposed allocation are intended to allow distribution of funding directly into community organisations. This will ensure that a wide range of people are reached, even if they do not typically engage with council services. £0.050m is set aside for Community Centres and £0.150m is set aside for other organisations supporting groups with protected characteristics or vulnerabilities. See Appendix 1 for a preliminary draft list of organisations identified so far. This list is not exhaustive, and more will be added, according to need, demand and coverage across the city.
- 3.13 . A Winter Grants Scheme had already been approved and funded from the 2020/21 Contain Outbreak Management Fund at the [Policy and Resources \(Recovery\) Sub-Committee on 28 April 2021](#) which allocated £0.090m to the scheme. This is a grant pot for organisations to bid for up to £5,000 to support their service users, and in fact applications have recently closed, pending decisions. However, in light of receiving the guidance for the Household Support Fund, it is clear that this new funding is targeted at Winter support and is a direct duplication of the previous COMF allocation. Similarly, the proposed funding to support the Local Discretionary Social Fund (LDSF) detailed below is also a direct duplication of the previous £0.100m allocation from 2020/21 COMF as this is also a key area to be targeted by the new Household Support Fund. This releases £0.190m 2020/21 COMF money which is therefore available for reallocation to other priority needs. It is recommended that this funding is re-allocated to top up Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). DHPs are used primarily for helping Housing Benefit or Universal Credit recipients if they have a shortfall in their rent. However, the bulk of the budget is set by the DWP and this year's allocation has been reduced from £1.170m to £0.911 million. This year, the combined budget for DHP is already projected to be overspent by circa £0.200m. By reallocating the duplicated funding, this could help to ensure that demand is met and contribute to homeless prevention which is an eligible area of spend for COMF
- 3.14 The existing Warmth for Wellbeing programme will receive a boost of £0.070m to increase the amount of support provided with fuel bill assistance and energy efficiency. In consulting the voluntary sector, increasing the budget for Warmth for Wellbeing was one of the highest impact and strongest representations. This will mitigate the impact of rising fuel bills for some of the poorest households. Help provided includes grants to help with fuel bills, benefit checks and help claiming benefits, help switching energy providers and other help around fuel efficiency and keeping your home warm.

- 3.15 The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership will receive an allocation of £0.090m and this will help to maintain continuity and support for the Food Strategy through the winter months. See also the Food Strategy report, also due to be considered at this meeting of the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub Committee.
- 3.16 It is proposed that an amount is set aside for assistance with Council Tax. There are already funds for reducing Council Tax on a discretionary basis. Discretionary Council Tax Reduction (DCTR) works in conjunction with the core Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme. The CTR scheme awards up to 82% discount, however, the Discretionary CTR fund can provide top up discount of up to 100%. The demand for support from the discretionary fund has been high and an overspend is projected of up to £0.170m, against a core budget of £0.200m. There is also another fund arising from the previous Covid Hardship Fund, and this helps with arrears for non-CTR cases. This fund is also being spent at a steady pace. The £0.200m allocation from HSF will ensure that support continues to be available for Council Tax liability.
- 3.17 Service charges for tenants in Emergency Placements are often subject to a large accumulation of arrears and can result in evictions. £0.015m would enable some of those service charges to be paid off.
- 3.18 It is proposed to allocate the remainder of the fund nominally to the Local Discretionary Social Fund (LDSF) and the Community Hub. However, there will be flexibility in the funds held there, and allocations will be made as appropriate for other emerging priorities that fall within the remit of the Household Support Fund. For example, funding requests have been submitted by Children's Services to supplement Section 17 budgets and enhance the emergency support that those budgets are able to provide. Such support would enable provision of emergency help for those who are referred to Children's Social Services and have not presented at any other service. This would also enable further support for those with no recourse to public funds. As the support is likely to overlap partially with LDSF activity, discussion is ongoing between services about the appropriate allocation of funds and the best way to administer the need.
- 3.19 The LDSF is a key resource for crisis and emergency help in the city for low income households on benefits, or those waiting for benefits. Demand has been high this year due to Covid. The core budget for LDSF is £0.180m and whilst some contingency was allocated from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, it is likely that, even on current demand, the existing contingency will be fully spent. The Household Support Fund allows for assistance with a broader range of help, such as emergency car servicing, or helping with broadband and phone bills. This is outside of the usual LDSF scope, but additional funding will enable the council to provide that assistance in emergency circumstances.
- 3.20 The Community Hub will hold a budget of £0.100m to provide support for people who are struggling, but do not qualify for LDSF support (because they are not on benefits). This will aim to complement another initiatives funded by the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, whereby it is proposed that Money Advice Plus manage a £0.100m pot for their client group, again in situations where usual benefit entitlement does not apply. This would support the people in the city who are "just about managing" but cannot access the help available to others, as they do not qualify. Feedback from across multiple settings during the last year has

shown that debt issues, furlough and fluctuating income can affect this group just as severely as those on benefits. The Community Hub will work with Money Advice Plus to ensure that there is an efficient blend of support between the two services.

3.21 In addition, the Community Hub will continue providing practical and financial assistance for people who are self-isolating. It is anticipated that their funding will also enable proactive work to identify and contact vulnerable households, to offer support.

3.22 The guidance allows for reasonable admin, staffing and out-of-pocket costs to be provided for from the fund. There is a balance to be struck in providing support directly to the community, and recognising that there are increased costs in providing this support. In acknowledging feedback from voluntary sector representatives, provision for administrative and staffing costs should be kept at 10% or less in order to minimise costs whilst ensuring sufficient resources for timely and effective distributions to people in need. The elements for council admin and staffing have been specified in the table at 3.8, but in total amount to less than 10%.

3.23 Management of the fund through the coming months will require flexibility and monitoring. There are many strands to manage and co-ordinate, and the unpredictable nature of the pandemic and winter pressures means that new demands could emerge. Services will need to respond swiftly to changes during the lifetime of the fund, especially since there could be underspends or overspends in any area and the funding may be lost if it is not spent by the end of March 2022. To this end, it is recommended that officers are authorised to make decisions about reallocation of funds, either between the strands, or to allocate against appropriate new initiatives or external organisations, within the terms of the scheme guidance and in accordance with the council's scheme for virement under Financial Regulations. A delegation to the Chief Finance Officer following consultation with the Chair of Policy & Resources and Opposition Spokespersons is sought in order to effect this.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 The fund is large enough that all options have been incorporated or are under further discussion, and the flexibility of the scheme going forward will allow for a broad range of services and organisations to be supported.

4.2 The requirement to utilise the fund by the end of March 2022 and the lead-in times to set up the necessary administrative processes and delivery mechanisms means that proposals have had to be developed at pace and brought to the first available committee for consideration and approval. However, members of all groups have the ability to bring amendments to committee reports and in this case may bring amendments to seek support for an alternative allocation of the funds.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

5.1 The proposals have been designed collaboratively with officers from across Families, Children & Learning, Revenues & Benefits, and Housing.

- 5.2 Officers from Revenues & Benefits met with partners from Community Works and the Moneyworks /Advice Matters partnerships where the proposals were discussed in detail. Their feedback has been incorporated and has helped to shape the proposals.
- 5.3 The principles of the fund, and the general intentions around its allocation were discussed at the Equality and Inclusion Partnership meeting on 20 October 2021.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Household Support Fund will be a fundamental and practical response to the issue of welfare support over the winter months and is the government's primary response to the ending of other support including the Universal Credit uplift and employment support (Furlough).

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The financial implications are set out in the body of the report. The council has received an allocation of £2,140,360.89 from the Household Support Fund, which must be utilised by 31 March 2022. The proposed allocations in this report are consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant which are set out in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4 above.
- 7.2 The proposed reallocation of the duplicated Winter Grant Scheme funding, provided from the 2020/21 Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), to support homeless prevention (DHPs) is also eligible within the terms and conditions of the 2020/21 COMF grant.

*Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld*

*Date: 25/10/2021*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The key legal and governance implications are to ensure that the funds are distributed in accordance with the funding criteria to avoid any claw back or loss of funding. A clear record of both the decision making and the detail of the allocations will assist with this,

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 21/10/21*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The development of the proposals has been informed by previous Equalities Impact Assessments on the topics of hardship, welfare and poverty. An adapted version of the Welfare Support and Financial Assistance EIA is shown at Appendix 2.
- 7.5 In designing the allocations, officers have already been identifying key support needs across the protected characteristics, and the funding will reach a broad range of organisations with close connections to communities.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 Food supply may be restricted over the winter months, and the cost and choice of food may increase.
- 7.7 Supply chain and transport issues may continue to restrict the flow of goods and services.

Any Other Significant Implications:

None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.8 Supporting vulnerability and reducing poverty has a positive impact on the drivers for crime and disorder.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.9 If Covid rates rise during the winter, this could have a further impact on demand. Whilst the fund is significant in terms of how much support it can provide, there is a risk that the infrastructure for delivering the support may not be able to cope with demand. The voluntary sector is raising concerns about their current resource situation being under significant strain. Resources within the council will also come under increased pressure if rates increase, for example in supporting clinically vulnerable people (if shielded), dealing with help requests via Community Hub and Local Discretionary Social Fund teams, and conducting test and trace activity.
- 7.10 An element of the fund can be, and has been recommended to be, committed towards admin and staffing, but there are still practical issues in terms of being able to identify and bring in the necessary resources.
- 7.11 The situation will be monitored throughout the lifetime of the fund.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.12 The work is linked closely with the overall Covid response. Community Hub is linked in a practical sense as a joint operation between Public Health and Revenues and Benefits.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.13 This forms part of the city's Covid 19 response.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. List of supported organisations
2. Hardship EIA
3. DRAFT guidance on the scheme from government

4. Record of Urgent Decision taken by the Acting Chief Finance Officer

**Background Documents**

None

## Organisations under consideration for Household Support Fund allocation

The organisations below are being considered for allocation of funding out of the HSF under the categories of:

- Other organisations supporting groups with protected characteristics

The scheme guidance was only distributed to Local Authorities on 6 October, so the following is a **preliminary and incomplete** list, whilst we develop the detail of the allocations to community organisations.

Amounts of funding have not yet been finalised but will be flexible throughout the duration of the fund's lifetime. The council will be able to reduce or increase the individual budgets in order to focus support in areas where there is the most need.

Some of these organisations will work as part of wider partnerships, not administering funds directly, but referring into schemes in order to reduce administrative burden.

Organisations identified so far are as follows (incomplete draft list – more organisations to be added):

Money Advice Plus	Financial and other vulnerability
Rise	Women experiencing domestic violence
YAC	Young people
ExtraTime	Children and young people with disabilities
Amaze	Families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
Brighton Youth Centre	Young people
BMEYPP	BAME community / Young people
BMECP	BAME community
Voices in Exile	No recourse to public funds / asylum seekers
JustLife	Homelessness and supporting those in emergency accommodation
Brighton Unemployed Centre Family Project	General
Possability People	Disabilities
BHESCO	General – energy efficiency
Together Co	Befriending and support – older people, disability, anyone experiencing isolation

The £0.090m Winter Grants scheme is also currently underway, whereby organisations are able to bid for up to £5,000 funds for providing support around food, fuel and essential items. Bids are now closed and applications are being assessed.



## Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment (EIA) Template - 2019

**EIAs make services better for everyone and support value for money by getting services right first time.**

EIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy or strategy from an equalities perspective and then action plan to get the best outcomes for staff and service-users<sup>1</sup>. They analyse how all our work as a council might impact differently on different groups<sup>2</sup>. They help us make good decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions<sup>3</sup>.

See end notes for full guidance. Either hover the mouse over the end note link (eg: Age<sup>13</sup>) or use the hyperlinks ('Ctrl' key and left click).

**For further support or advice please contact:**

- **BHCC: Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team on ext 2301**
- **CCG: Engagement and Equalities team (Jane Lodge/Debbie Ludlam)**

### 1. Equality Impact and Outcomes Assessment (EIA) Template

First, consider whether you need to complete an EIA, or if there is another way to evidence assessment of impacts, or that an EIA is not needed<sup>4</sup>.

<b>Title of EIA<sup>5</sup></b>	Welfare Support and Financial Assistance Workstream – adapted for Household Support Fund	<b>ID No.<sup>6</sup></b>	
<b>Team/Department<sup>7</sup></b>	Revenues and Benefits		

**Focus of EIA<sup>8</sup>**

**The following is adapted from an EIA that was drafted in 2020 for the Welfare Support and Financial Assistance (WSFA) Workstream, as part of the Covid 19 response. The contents have gone on to inform similar EIA's, for example concerning Council Tax Reduction.**

**2. Update on previous EIA and outcomes of previous actions<sup>9</sup>**

<b>What actions did you plan last time?</b> (List them from the previous EIA)	<b>What improved as a result?</b> What outcomes have these actions achieved?	<b>What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take?</b> (add these to the Action plan below)
Not Applicable		

### 3. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Groups to assess	What do you know <sup>10</sup> ? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you <sup>11</sup> ? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean <sup>12</sup> ? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do <sup>13</sup> ? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>												
Age <sup>14</sup>	<p>There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has mostly been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.</p> <p>Source: Mid Year Estimates ONS 2018</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 954 792 1406"> <tr> <td>Population</td> <td>290,395</td> </tr> <tr> <td>0-15</td> <td>45,375</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Working Age</td> <td>206,515</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Over 65</td> <td>38,505</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household one pensioner</td> <td>14,468*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Household claiming Pension Credit</td> <td>6,525*</td> </tr> </table> <p>*Source: DWP Feb 2020</p>	Population	290,395	0-15	45,375	Working Age	206,515	Over 65	38,505	Household one pensioner	14,468*	Household claiming Pension Credit	6,525*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event of new restrictions, or increased covid rates, older People are more likely to be shielding (some through choice). Older people also more likely to be asked to shield and prevented from leaving their home, for social or essential needs.</li> <li>• Young people, aged 18-25 less likely to secure employment and so more likely to be applying for Universal Credit. This age group also currently at high risk of contracting C-19.</li> <li>• Mental Health issues are continuing to increase and demand has been identified in Youth Services such</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those shielding will be shopping less, shopping locally or not shopping in person at all. They may not have access to full variety of goods, or the best deals (if shopping locally). This could mean food costs rise. Older people may be more likely to be digitally excluded, therefore not accessing on-line shopping slots</li> <li>• Young people less financially independent as a result of decrease in employment opportunities. More likely to be</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. Additional C-19 specific additional funds also available – SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes. The LDSF</p>
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<b>Groups to assess</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>11</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>12</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>13</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
	<sup>1</sup> <a href="https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14848">https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14848</a>	<p>as YAC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children under 16 long term effects of further school closures having a greater detrimental impact on low income households.</li> <li>• Working age households more at risk of income reduction and therefore increase in debt - furlough scheme ending and potential redundancies.</li> <li>• Older people with limited mobility may be more reliant on public transport and therefore at greater risk of contracting C19</li> </ul>	<p>on a fixed income. If they contract the virus, their household will need to shield, preventing others from accessing work, community, shops etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children from low income households will spend less hours in home schooling than better off households and have less access to technology to enable home schooling.<sup>1</sup> This could have long term impact on mental health, educational attainment and long term employment prospects.</li> <li>• Households newly</li> </ul>	<p>team for crisis payments, as well as ongoing support via the 3x3x3 scheme.</p> <p>Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable. Community Hub is in partnership with Together Co a befriending charity, specialising in supporting older members of the community well through their Ageing</p>

<b>Groups to assess</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>11</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>12</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>13</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
			furloughed or made redundant will need to adjust to lower income, regardless of pre-existing financial commitments based on their employed income – mortgage, rent, hire purchase, mobile phones, debt repayments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people may make a choice of taking taxis as opposed to using the bus, to reduce risk of contracting the virus.</li> </ul>	Well branch.  Cross service response to the Household Support Fund will help to ensure broad points of access for help.  Preventative work by Revenues and Benefits to identify households who may be struggling with Council Tax debt and offering early intervention.
<b>Disability<sup>15</sup></b>	There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event of increased rates or further restrictions, more likely to be shielding due to pre-existing health conditions.</li> <li>• More likely to be digitally excluded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those shielding will be shopping less, shopping locally or not shopping in person at all. They may not have access to full variety of</li> </ul>	Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.

Groups to assess	What do you know <sup>10</sup> ? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you <sup>11</sup> ? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean <sup>12</sup> ? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do <sup>13</sup> ? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>								
	<p>Source: Department for Work and Pensions Feb-Jul 2020</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="427 544 801 884"> <tr> <td>PIP Claimants</td> <td>10,710</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attendance Allowance</td> <td>5,020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UC – Limited capability for work</td> <td>1,955</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DLA</td> <td>6,615</td> </tr> </table>	PIP Claimants	10,710	Attendance Allowance	5,020	UC – Limited capability for work	1,955	DLA	6,615	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More likely to be living on a fixed income.</li> <li>• Reliant on support that may be limited or stopped due to carers' need to self-isolate or shield themselves.</li> <li>• The visually impaired may find it more difficult to adhere to new protocols in shops, ie one-way systems, written instructions.</li> <li>• Could be at risk of abuse or intolerance from members of the public due to not wearing a mask for health reasons.</li> <li>• May be more reliant on public transport and therefore at greater risk of contracting C19.</li> <li>• Social isolation may restrict access to a support network that is</li> </ul>	<p>goods, or the best deals (if shopping locally). This could mean food costs rise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those digitally excluded may not be accessing on-line shopping slots.</li> <li>• Those on a fixed income less likely to have savings or financial contingency for increased cost in food expenses if shopping locally etc.</li> <li>• Visually impaired may be more likely to avoid going to the shops themselves due to changes in protocol that they are unable to follow easily.</li> <li>• Those unable to</li> </ul>	<p>Possability People is part of the Moneyworks commission and Advice Matters partnership and so is represented on the WSFA board.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. Additional C-19 specific additional funds have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household</p>
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		relied upon, placing a risk on MH	<p>wear a mask may find themselves choosing to go into shops less.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Disabled people may make a choice of taking taxis as opposed to using the bus, to reduce risk of contracting the virus.</li> <li>• Lack of community contact and support may result in negative impact on Mental Health. Poor mental health can link to greater risk of indebtedness</li> </ul>	<p>Support Fund. The LDSF team for crisis payments, as well as ongoing support via the 3x3x3 scheme.</p> <p>Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment<sup>16</sup></b>	There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More likely to be financially disadvantaged or living on a fixed income.</li> <li>• Social isolation may restrict access to a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those on a fixed income less likely to have savings or financial contingency for increased cost in food expenses if</li> </ul>	Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including

<b>Groups to assess</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>11</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>12</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>13</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
		support network that is relied upon, placing a risk on Mental Health	shopping locally etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of community contact and support may result in negative impact on Mental Health. Poor mental health can link to greater risk of indebtedness</li> </ul>	council's own Welfare Rights team.  Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. Additional C-19 specific additional have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund. The LDSF team for crisis payments, as well as ongoing support via the 3x3x3 scheme.

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				Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.  Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity<sup>17</sup></b>	There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already reduced income placed under greater pressure due to C-19 rules.</li> <li>• Pregnant women may choose to be more isolated to limit contracting the virus .</li> <li>• Reduced access to post birth support from Community Midwives and Health Visitors.</li> <li>• Reduced access to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced income risks deepening or newly establishing debt. Unable to comfortably adapt to additional costs associated with isolation, ie additional meals for the whole family, but specifically</li> </ul>	Family Information Service, with links into Children's Centres, Community Midwifery and Health Visiting service, are part of the WSFA board, so issues can be identified and considered strategically across the council.

<b>Groups to assess</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>11</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>12</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>13</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
		<p>family support due to travel and social distancing rules</p> <p>NB: the needs of and impacts on this characteristic group are being picked up in other workstreams.</p>	<p>children of school age. Less able to buy in more food to manage isolation periods, as well as post-natal period when less able to get out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-isolation through choice may result in shopping locally, less economically, relying on others to pick up items for them, may need to use on-line shopping.</li> <li>• Isolation from support network may have a detrimental impact on Mental Health. Poor MH may result in a lack of motivation or ability to face responsibilities, or</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund. The</p>

<b>Groups to assess</b>	<b>What do you know<sup>10</sup>?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you<sup>11</sup>?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean<sup>12</sup>?</b> Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	<b>What can you do<sup>13</sup>?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• foster good relations</li> </ul>
			resolve issues. This could lead to worsening debt issues or failure to seek help when necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced access to professional support may impact on the wellbeing of the family as a whole.</li> </ul>	LDSF team for crisis payments, as well as ongoing support via the 3x3x3 scheme.  Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.  Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.

<p><b>Race/ethnicity<sup>18</sup></b> Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers</p>	<p>There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has mostly been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in racially motivated abuse in regards to C19 experienced by South East Asian community.</li> <li>• More serious health implications for BAME residents if C19 is contracted</li> <li>• More likely to be on a low or fixed income or having limited hours of work.</li> <li>• Residents with No Recourse to Public Funds including EU nationals without access to benefits in precarious employment or working in the black economy are already vulnerable to destitution if they lose employment.</li> <li>• Engagement issues with advice, stemming from a reported distrust with government and council departments.</li> <li>• Some communities will have specific dietary needs</li> <li>• Social isolation may restrict access to a community network that is relied upon to provide cultural support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who choose to shop less, shop local or shield are more likely to be spending more on food and travel.</li> <li>• Lack of community contact and support may result in negative impact on Mental Health. Poor mental health can link to greater risk of indebtedness</li> <li>• Specific dietary needs may be impacted by food shortages or price rises on high demand products (like rice, for example).</li> <li>• Emergency food support available may not include items specific to dietary needs.</li> <li>• Due to distrust in official organisations, some groups may not be aware of support available through grants, additional benefit support or crisis</li> </ul>	<p>Additional funding awarded from central DEFRA grant to fund continuation of food bank /service for the diverse dietary needs of the BAME community, through BMECP.</p> <p>Ensure information about support is accessible to all groups and encourage this information to be distributed through community-based groups. Consider all options of how financial support can be devolved to community-based groups.</p> <p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council</p>																				
	<p>Source: Census 2011</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>White British</td> <td>220,020</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-White</td> <td>29,855</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White Non-British</td> <td>23,495</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mixed</td> <td>10,410</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>11,280</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>4,190</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other ethnic group</td> <td>3,985</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Households with multiple ethnicities</td> <td>18,340</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>No members of household have English as first language</td> <td>5,925</td> </tr> </table>				White British	220,020	Non-White	29,855	White Non-British	23,495	Mixed	10,410	Asian	11,280	Black	4,190	Other ethnic group	3,985	Households with multiple ethnicities	18,340			No members of household have English as first language	5,925
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		<p>NB: the needs of and impacts on this characteristic group are being picked up in other workstreams.</p>	<p>intervention routes (eg food banks, LDSF etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRPF households may be at particular financial risk if not eligible for all support mechanisms that have been put in place.</li> <li>• Residents with insecure immigration status may fear contacting the authorities in case their details are shared with the Home Office.</li> </ul>	<p>Tax shortfalls. have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund. The LDSF team for crisis payments, as well as ongoing support via the 3x3x3 scheme.</p> <p>Information to be made clear and accessible for all, including translated materials in key languages for the city’s migrant populations, and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable</p>
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				<p>LDSF webpage clarifies that those on a low income but not eligible for benefits can still apply (ie NRPF)</p> <p>To ensure the needs and eligibility of NRPF households and EU nationals without access to benefits are considered within the allocation of temporary discretionary funds dispersed from central government to support households financially impacted by the pandemic. Each scheme deriving from these funds, in addition to all pre-existing discretionary funds administered by the council, should be inclusive by default.</p>
<b>Religion or belief<sup>19</sup></b>	There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has mostly been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement issues with advice, stemming from a reported distrust with government and council departments.</li> <li>• Some religious groups will have specific dietary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of community contact and support may result in negative impact on Mental Health. Poor mental health can link to greater</li> </ul>	Additional funding awarded from central DEFRA grant to fund continuation of food bank /service for the diverse dietary needs of the BAME

since the onset of the pandemic.

Source: Census 2011

Christian	117,275
Buddhist	2,740
Hindu	1,790
Jewish	2,670
Muslim	6,095
Sikh	340
Other	2,410
No religion	115,955

- needs
- Social isolation may restrict access to a community network that is relied upon to provide cultural support.

NB: the needs of and impacts on this characteristic group are being picked up in other workstreams.

- risk of indebtedness
- Specific dietary needs may be impacted by food shortages or price rises on high demand products (like rice, for example).
  - Emergency food support available may not include items specific to dietary needs.
  - Due to distrust in official organisations, some groups may not be aware of support available through grants, additional benefit support or crisis intervention routes (eg food banks, LDSF etc)

community, through BMECP.

Ensure information about support is accessible to all groups and encourage this information to be distributed through community-based groups. Consider all options of how financial support can be devolved to community-based groups.

Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.

Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension),

				<p>Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund. Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.</p>						
<b>Sex/Gender<sup>20</sup></b>	<p>There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has mostly been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.</p> <p>Other data available:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Total Population:</td> <td>290,395</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Female</td> <td>145,778</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male</td> <td>144,616</td> </tr> </table> <p>95% of single parents with open HB</p>	Total Population:	290,395	Female	145,778	Male	144,616	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women more likely to be furloughed.</li> <li>• Women are more likely to be working part time, or on a fixed income, than men</li> <li>• Women more likely to be single parents.</li> <li>• Significant increase in reports of domestic abuse and violence throughout the pandemic, disproportionately affecting women. This results in women fleeing their homes and facing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional costs of COVID related social isolation and lockdown could have disproportionate impact on women due to the nature of their employment types.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS,</p>
Total Population:	290,395									
Female	145,778									
Male	144,616									

	claim are women. (Northgate report 15/10/2020)	financial vulnerability through the homelessness process.		<p>DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund. Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b> <sup>21</sup>	There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has mostly been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social isolation may restrict access to a community network that is relied upon to provide support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrictions placed on the meeting of community groups could place a risk on MH and wellbeing which could have a knock-on effect around financial resilience.</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council</p>

				<p>Tax shortfalls. have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund.</p> <p>Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.</p>
<p><b>Marriage and civil partnership<sup>22</sup></b></p>	<p>There is a limited set of current data available on the financial resilience of this characteristic group. Our assessment has mostly been based on face to face feedback from residents accessing third sector support and wider reports published since the onset of the pandemic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant increase in reports of domestic abuse and violence throughout the pandemic, disproportionately affecting women. This results in women fleeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness places women at a significant financial disadvantage as well as impacting on their mental health and the wellbeing of the</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p>

	<p>Source: Census 2011</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="432 643 808 834"> <tr> <td>Married Households</td> <td>28,335</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Co-Habiting</td> <td>15,430</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lone Parent</td> <td>8,635</td> </tr> </table>	Married Households	28,335	Co-Habiting	15,430	Lone Parent	8,635	<p>their homes and facing financial vulnerability through the homelessness process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When fleeing DV, the family is often relocated away from their network of family and friends.</li> </ul>	<p>family, as a whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without a network of support, increased expenses may follow due to a loss of informal childcare. Or hours of work may need to be reduced.</li> </ul>	<p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. have also been available during the course of the pandemic– SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes and now the Household Support Fund. Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.</p>
Married Households	28,335									
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Lone Parent	8,635									
<p><b>Community Cohesion<sup>23</sup></b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social isolation may restrict access to a community network that is relied upon to provide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restrictions placed on the meeting of community groups could place a risk</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure easy access to and smooth referrals into the advice sector for those identified as</p>						

		support.	on MH and wellbeing which could have a knock-on effect around financial resilience.	<p>in need of financial support, including council's own Welfare Rights team.</p> <p>Standard discretionary funds available to assist with Housing Benefit and Council Tax shortfalls. Additional C-19 specific additional funds also available – SIPS, DEFRA funds, C-19 Winter Grant Scheme (incl Free School Meals extension), Council Tax Relief scheme, various Fuel Poverty schemes. The LDSF team for crisis payments, as well as ongoing support via the 3x3x3 scheme.</p> <p>Information to be made clear and accessible for all and for all front-line services to be aware of support available and signpost accordingly.</p> <p>Community Hub service to provide households access to</p>
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				emergency food or help with shopping, if vulnerable.
<b>Other relevant groups<sup>24</sup></b>				
<b>Cumulative impact<sup>25</sup></b>				
<b>Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations<sup>26</sup></b>				

**4. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EIA**

Title (of data, research or engagement)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)

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**5. Prioritised Action Plan<sup>27</sup>**

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.				

**EIA sign-off:** (for the EIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

**Staff member completing Equality Impact Assessment:**

**Date:**

**Directorate Management Team rep or Head of Service/Commissioning:**

**Date:**

**CCG or BHCC Equality lead:**

**Date:**

## Guidance end-notes

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<sup>1</sup> The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- **Knowledge:** everyone working for the council must be aware of our equality duties and apply them appropriately in their work.
- **Timeliness:** the duty applies at the time of considering policy options and/or before a final decision is taken – not afterwards.
- **Real Consideration:** the duty must be an integral and rigorous part of your decision-making and influence the process.
- **Sufficient Information:** you must assess what information you have and what is needed to give proper consideration.
- **No delegation:** the council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services which provide services on our behalf can comply with the duty, are required in contracts to comply with it, and do comply in practice. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.
- **Review:** the equality duty is a continuing duty. It applies when a policy is developed/agreed, and when it is implemented/reviewed.
- **Proper Record Keeping:** to show that we have fulfilled our duties we must keep records of the process and the impacts identified.

NB: Filling out this EIA in itself does not meet the requirements of the equality duty. All the requirements above must be fulfilled or the EIA (and any decision based on it) may be open to challenge. Properly used, an EIA can be a tool to help us comply with our equality duty and as a record that to demonstrate that we have done so.

### <sup>2</sup> Our duties in the Equality Act 2010

As a public sector organisation, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the impact and potential impact of our activities on all people in relation to their 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership).

This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on what you are assessing, who it might affect, those groups' vulnerability, and how serious any potential impacts might be. We use this EIA template to complete this process and evidence our consideration.

**The following are the duties in the Act. You must give 'due regard' (pay conscious attention) to the need to:**

- **avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact** (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- **advance equality of opportunity.** This means the need to:
  - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
  - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
  - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
  - Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary
- **foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.** This means:
  - Tackle prejudice
  - Promote understanding

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<sup>3</sup> EIAs are always proportionate to:

- The size of the service or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The numbers of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected within the context

The greater the impacts, the more thorough and demanding the process required by the Act will be.

<sup>4</sup> **When to complete an EIA:**

- When planning or developing a new service, policy or strategy
- When reviewing an existing service, policy or strategy
- When ending or substantially changing a service, policy or strategy
- When there is an important change in the service, policy or strategy, or in the city (eg: a change in population), or at a national level (eg: a change of legislation)

Assessment of equality impact can be evidenced as part of the process of reviewing or needs assessment or strategy development or consultation or planning. It does not have to be on this template, but must be documented. Wherever possible, build the EIA into your usual planning/review processes.

**Do you need to complete an EIA?** Consider:

- Is the policy, decision or service likely to be relevant to a specific group or groups (eg: older people)?
- How many people is it likely to affect?
- How significant are its impacts?
- Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
- How vulnerable are the people (potentially) affected?

If there are potential impacts on people but you decide not to complete an EIA it is usually sensible to document why.

<sup>5</sup> **Title of EIA:** This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing

<sup>6</sup> **ID no:** The unique reference for this EIA. If in doubt contact your CCG or BHCC equality lead (see page 1)

<sup>7</sup> **Team/Department:** Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed

<sup>8</sup> **Focus of EIA:** A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section. Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - eg: 'Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)'

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This section should explain what you are assessing:

- What are the main aims or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function?
- Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person/team/body and where other organisations deliver under procurement or partnership arrangements.
- How does it fit with other services?
- Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Who are the external and internal service-users, groups, or communities?
- What outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? Eg: what do you want to provide, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be?
- What do existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function tell you?
- What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, service, legal etc)? The Act requires us to make these clear.

<sup>9</sup> **Previous actions:** If there is no previous EIA or this assessment if of a new service, then simply write 'not applicable'.

<sup>10</sup> **Data:** Make sure you have enough data to inform your EIA.

- What data relevant to the impact on specific groups of the policy/decision/service is available?<sup>10</sup>
- What further evidence is needed and how can you get it? (Eg: further research or engagement with the affected groups).
- What do you already know about needs, access and outcomes? Focus on each of the groups identified above in turn. Eg: who uses the service? Who doesn't and why? Are there differences in outcomes? Why?
- Have there been any important demographic changes or trends locally? What might they mean for the service or function?
- Does data/monitoring show that any policies or practices create particular problems or difficulties for any groups?
- Do any equality objectives already exist? What is current performance like against them?
- Is the service having a positive or negative effect on particular people in the community, or particular groups or communities?
- Use local sources of data (eg: JSNA: <http://www.bhconnected.org.uk/content/needs-assessments> and Community Insight: <http://brighton-hove.communityinsight.org/#> ) and national ones where they are relevant.

<sup>11</sup> **Engagement:** You must engage appropriately with those likely to be affected to fulfil the equality duty.

- What do people tell you about the services?
- Are there patterns or differences in what people from different groups tell you?
- What information or data will you need from communities?
- How should people be consulted? Consider:
  - (a) consult when proposals are still at a formative stage;
  - (b) explain what is proposed and why, to allow intelligent consideration and response;
  - (c) allow enough time for consultation;
  - (d) make sure what people tell you is properly considered in the final decision.
- Try to consult in ways that ensure all perspectives can be considered.

- 
- Identify any gaps in who has been consulted and identify ways to address this.

<sup>12</sup> Your EIA must get to grips fully and properly with actual and potential impacts.

- The equality duty does not stop decisions or changes, but means we must conscientiously and deliberately confront the anticipated impacts on people.
- Be realistic: don't exaggerate speculative risks and negative impacts.
- Be detailed and specific so decision-makers have a concrete sense of potential effects. Instead of "the policy is likely to disadvantage older women", say how many or what percentage are likely to be affected, how, and to what extent.
- Questions to ask when assessing impacts depend on the context. Examples:
  - Are one or more groups affected differently and/or disadvantaged? How, and to what extent?
  - Is there evidence of higher/lower uptake among different groups? Which, and to what extent?
  - If there are likely to be different impacts on different groups, is that consistent with the overall objective?
  - If there is negative differential impact, how can you minimise that while taking into account your overall aims
  - Do the effects amount to unlawful discrimination? If so the plan must be modified.
  - Does the proposal advance equality of opportunity and/or foster good relations? If not, could it?

<sup>13</sup> Consider all three aims of the Act: removing barriers, and also identifying positive actions we can take.

- Where you have identified impacts you must state what actions will be taken to remove, reduce or avoid any negative impacts and maximise any positive impacts or advance equality of opportunity.
- Be specific and detailed and explain how far these actions are expected to improve the negative impacts.
- If mitigating measures are contemplated, explain clearly what the measures are, and the extent to which they can be expected to reduce / remove the adverse effects identified.
- An EIA which has attempted to airbrush the facts is an EIA that is vulnerable to challenge.

<sup>14</sup> **Age:** People of all ages

<sup>15</sup> **Disability:** A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The definition includes: sensory impairments, impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects, progressive, organ specific, developmental, learning difficulties, mental health conditions and mental illnesses, produced by injury to the body or brain. Persons with cancer, multiple sclerosis or HIV infection are all now deemed to be disabled persons from the point of diagnosis.

<sup>16</sup> **Gender Reassignment:** A transgender person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change their gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected

<sup>17</sup> **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Protection is during pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which the woman is entitled.

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<sup>18</sup> **Race/Ethnicity:** This includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and includes refugees and migrants, and Gypsies and Travellers. Refugees and migrants means people whose intention is to stay in the UK for at least twelve months (excluding visitors, short term students or tourists). This definition includes asylum seekers; voluntary and involuntary migrants; people who are undocumented; and the children of migrants, even if they were born in the UK.

<sup>19</sup> **Religion and Belief:** Religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief.

<sup>20</sup> **Sex/Gender:** Both men and women are covered under the Act.

<sup>21</sup> **Sexual Orientation:** The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people

<sup>22</sup> **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

<sup>23</sup> **Community Cohesion:** What must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together.

<sup>24</sup> **Other relevant groups:** eg: Carers, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, ex-armed forces personnel, people on the Autistic spectrum etc

<sup>25</sup> **Cumulative Impact:** This is an impact that appears when you consider services or activities together. A change or activity in one area may create an impact somewhere else

<sup>26</sup> **Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

- Make a frank and realistic assessment of the overall extent to which the negative impacts can be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures. Explain what positive impacts will result from the actions and how you can make the most of these.
- Countervailing considerations: These may include the reasons behind the formulation of the policy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, budget reductions, the need to avert a graver crisis by introducing a policy now and not later, and so on. The weight of these factors in favour of implementing the policy must then be measured against the weight of any evidence as to the potential negative equality impacts of the policy.
- Are there any further recommendations? Is further engagement needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?

<sup>27</sup> **Action Planning:** The Equality Duty is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give 'due regard' to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.



# Household Support Fund: – Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England

## Introduction

1. £421 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this winter during the final stages of economic recovery. This funding covers the period 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 inclusive. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in this guidance and the accompanying grant determination. The expectation is that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs. 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. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to households most in need. It is important to stress this covers a wide range of vulnerable households including those with children of all ages and those without children. **Note: County Councils and Unitary Authorities will be referred to as ‘Authorities’ throughout the remainder of this guidance.**
2. Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of debt advice provision). Authorities have the local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those most in need. County Councils are expected to work together with District Councils to provide support and ensure the funding meets its objectives by identifying those most in need.
3. This guidance sets out the required collaboration between DWP, Authorities, including their delivery partners, such as District Councils and charitable organisations etc., to successfully meet the policy intent within the agreed framework. It also provides the constraints that Authorities need to work within and the distribution of funding and reporting arrangements.
4. Rather than focus on one specific vulnerable group, Authorities should use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in their area. Authorities have access to DWP’s Searchlight portal which provides information on individual citizens’ entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. From June 2021 we started to provide Authorities with information relating to Universal Credit claims with limited capability for work or, earnings below the free school meals and free prescription thresholds in their area. Authorities may find this information useful in identifying those most in need.
5. However, support is not restricted to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits. Therefore, Authorities should also use other sources of information to identify vulnerable households, including advice from professionals who come into contact with vulnerable households such as social workers and Supporting Families advisors.

6. This guidance applies to Authorities in England only and should be read in conjunction with the Household Support Fund Grant Determination issued alongside this guidance.

## **Communication**

7. The Authority must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.

## **Objective and key principles**

8. The objective of the Household Support Fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support this winter as the economy recovers.
9. This is a new grant and underspends from previous DWP grants cannot be carried forward.
10. Funds should be spent or committed before 31 March 2022 and cannot be held over for future usage.
11. When administering this scheme, you are encouraged to adopt the following principles:
  - use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, taking into account a wide range of information;
  - use the funding from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials. You can also use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford 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 at paragraph 17 below.
  - This includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authority or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. For example, this would allow any vouchers issued before the end of the funding period to be redeemed in April 2022. All authorities are encouraged to ensure that any vouchers issued are redeemed before the end of the scheme, or shortly thereafter, or consider recycling unused vouchers;
  - 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.
12. When deciding how to help people, you should consider:
  - how you plan to provide support to vulnerable households, i.e. paying into bank accounts, use of cash and vouchers;
  - any risks associated with these payment methods – see section Managing the risk of fraud.

## **Working with other organisations**

13. Authorities should develop a 'local eligibility framework and approach' to enable them to distribute grant funding that best supports households most in need. At least 50% of the funding is for vulnerable households with children (see the definition of a child under paragraph 21). The remainder of the funding (up to 50%) is available for vulnerable households without children (including individuals).
14. Authorities have flexibility to develop a local delivery approach that best fits the scheme's objectives. Where Authorities choose to work with multiple organisations to provide a local delivery network or where Authorities engage with District Councils to deliver this grant on their behalf, detailed arrangements and funding should be made available to those organisations as soon as possible so that support for vulnerable households can be provided as soon as is practically possible.
15. County Councils are expected to work collaboratively with District Councils and other organisations in their area who may come into contact with those households who are eligible and would benefit from this grant. Authorities that do not have the mechanisms in place to administer this grant should consider whether District Councils are better placed to do so on their behalf. If Authorities decide to engage with District Councils in this way they are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible to ensure roles, responsibilities and effective arrangements are put in place to deliver the scheme promptly and efficiently. Where Authorities are working with Third Party Organisations (TPOs), this should be done on an objectively fair, transparent and non-discriminatory basis, having regard to the time available to deliver the scheme.

## **Establishing eligibility**

16. Authorities have the flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility. Authorities can request applications for support or can proactively identify households who may benefit or can take a mixture of the two approaches. There is no requirement for Authorities to undertake a means test or conduct a benefit check unless this specifically forms part of the Authority's local eligibility criteria. However, in relation to housing costs, Authorities must establish whether other forms of support are available to the household, such as Discretionary Housing Payments. In accordance with their general legal duties, Authorities must have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining their approach including how they are defining eligibility and how households access the scheme. We expect Authorities to review any existing approach and to have a strong rationale for their targeting so that funding is available to the households who most need it.
17. Awards must be based on the following framework:
  - at least 50% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, with up to 50% of the total funding to other households genuinely in need of support this winter. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits;

- Eligible spend includes:
  - Food. The Fund should primarily be used to provide support with food whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
  - Energy and water. The Fund should also primarily be used to support with energy bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support with water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, and sanitary purposes and sewerage.
  - Essentials linked to energy and water. The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access food, energy and water.
  - Wider essentials. The Fund can be used to support with wider essential needs not linked to energy and water should Authorities consider this appropriate in their area. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive.
  - Housing Costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. Where eligible, ongoing housing support for rent must be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit (UC) and Housing Benefit (HB) rather than the Household Support Fund. In addition, eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) must first be considered before emergency housing support is offered through the Household Support Fund. The Authority must also first consider whether the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
    - In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, households in receipt of HB, UC, or DHPs can still receive housing cost support through the Household Support Fund if it is deemed necessary by their Authority. However, the Fund should not be used to provide housing support on an ongoing basis or to support unsustainable tenancies.
    - Individuals in receipt of some other form of housing support could still qualify for the other elements of the Household Support Fund, such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials.

- The Fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the Fund (such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials). Where a homeowner is having difficulty with their mortgage payments, they should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances as lenders will have a set procedure to assist.
  - The Fund can exceptionally and in genuine emergency be used to provide support for historic rent arrears built up prior to an existing benefit claim for households already in receipt of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. This is because these arrears are excluded from the criteria for Discretionary Housing Payments. However, support with rent arrears is not the primary intent of the fund and should not be the focus of spend.
- Reasonable administrative costs. This includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
  - staff costs
  - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
  - web page design
  - printing application forms
  - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production
- Eligible spend does not include:
  - Advice services such as debt advice;
  - Mortgage costs.
- It is expected that the focus of support should be on food and bills and that support for housing costs should only be given in exceptional cases of genuine emergency. Beyond this, Authorities have discretion to determine the most appropriate scheme for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.
- Individual awards can be whatever type and amount is deemed appropriate by Authorities for the receiving household, bearing in mind the overall spend eligibility priorities listed above and the risk of fraud and error. Awards to any given household can cover only one of the spend eligibility categories listed above, or can cover several.
- Authorities should not make Household Support Fund eligibility conditional on being employed or self-employed, or directly linked to a loss of earnings from employment or self-employment. This will ensure that there is no National Insurance Contribution liability payable on any payments by either the claimant, the Authority or employer.

## Funding overlap

18. Authorities should consider household circumstances when making a decision to spend this grant. Households may be receiving other forms of support, and this should be taken into account to avoid duplicating provision where possible. However, families receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through this grant.

## Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds

19. Authorities can provide a basic safety net support to an individual, regardless of their immigration status, if there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example if:

- there are community care needs
- they have serious health problems
- there is a risk to a child's wellbeing

20. The rules around immigration status have not changed. Authorities must use their judgement to decide what legal powers and funding can be used to support individuals who are ineligible for public funds or statutory housing assistance.

## Definitions

21. For the purpose of this grant (and without prejudice to other schemes):

- The definition of a child is any person:
  - who will be under the age of 19 as at 31 March 2022 or
  - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.

22. Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in the 50% allocation for households with children.

23. Households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers may still be eligible for grant support however that support falls within the 50% allocation to households without children.

24. There is no prescriptive definition of essentials. Authorities have discretion to assess what is reasonable to assist those in genuine need this winter with regard to the examples above.

25. Third party organisations may include but are not limited to:

- Registered charities and voluntary organisations
- Schools
- Food banks
- General Practitioners
- Care organisations

## Access to data

26. The Household Support Fund is being classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP). The provision of DWP data to LAs is under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 'Department for Work and Pensions and local authorities (Access, handling, exchange and protection of Department for Work and Pensions' and HM Revenue and Customs' data)'.
  27. Local authorities who have signed and returned the relevant section (Annex C) of the current DWP/LA MoU have legal permission to access DWP's Searchlight portal and specific UC data via a monthly data share for the purpose of this grant.
  28. LAs will need to ensure they sign future iterations of the MoU and the appropriate Annex to continue to have the legal permission to access the below data sources for Local Welfare Provision.
  29. Staff accessing Searchlight will need to be registered with the Employee Authentication System (EAS). Further information on Searchlight can be found in the local authority Searchlight Training Pack available in the Searchlight folder on Glasscubes (the LA/DWP online collaboration tool). If your Authority needs to discuss access to Glasscubes, contact DWP at LAWELFARE.LASUPPORT@DWP.GOV.UK

### DWP Searchlight

30. This portal provides information on individual citizens' entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. Therefore, this data can be used to help Authorities identify those families and individuals to whom to target this support. Authorities may also wish to establish if other forms of support are available to the household. In relation to housing costs they must do so including by checking whether the household could receive Discretionary Housing Payments. The Authority must also first consider if the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
31. Authorities do not have permission for the purposes of this scheme to access the 'Income' data provided on Searchlight for the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.
32. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential customers who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify each claimant's DWP benefit entitlement (although benefit entitlement is not a condition of support).

### UC data share

33. We are providing Authorities with details of UC claimants in their Authority whose income is below the Free School Meal and Free Prescription thresholds for both individuals and summary level by Ward. We are also providing Authorities with details of UC claimants with a limited capability for work both at individual level and summary level by Ward. The data is provided monthly via Transfer Your File.
34. We are also providing 2 UC claim data shares on a monthly basis.

**File one** – contains the National Insurance number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants within the LA area and:

- income below the thresholds of £7,400 per year for Free School Meals and income below the Free Prescription threshold of £935 per month as identified in their last UC assessment period;
- those with a Limited Capability for Work indicator within the last assessment period; and
- the number of children in the household.

**File two** – contains aggregate data showing those people at or below the:

- Free School Meal income threshold;
- Free Prescription income threshold; and
- are in the Limited Capability for Work group.

For a full breakdown of the file contents see **Annex B**

35. Authorities also have access to their own non-DWP data to help identify vulnerable households who may be eligible for support under this scheme.

## Reporting requirements

36. Authorities are required to make two Statements of Grant Usage and management information (MI) returns – **see the Grant Determination**. The deadline for completing these returns is shown in the table below. Completed MI returns should be sent to LAWELFARE.PDT@DWP.GOV.UK

37. An interim MI return is required by 21 January 2022 for spend for the period 06 October 2021 to 31 December 2021. The interim MI return will be used to determine eligible spend to 31 December 2021 and an interim grant payment will be made to your LA for this period when the information in your return has been verified.

38. A final MI return is required showing total spend from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 by 22 April 2022. The final MI return will be used to determine total eligible spend to 31 March 2022 and a final grant payment will be made to your Authority for this period when the information in your return has been verified.

39. Authorities should use the standard MI reporting template provided, which incorporates the Statement of Grant Usage. For the purpose of this section:

- **Grant allocation** – refers to the amount of grant allocated to a TPO to distribute to vulnerable households.
- **Grant award or spend refers** to the amount provided or paid to vulnerable households under the remit of this grant.

MI return	Reporting period		Deadline
Interim MI return	From: 06 October 2021	To: 31 December 2021	<b>Deadline:</b> 21 January 2022
Final MI return	From: 06 October 2021	To: 31 March 2022	<b>Deadline:</b> 22 April 2022

40. It is the responsibility of Authorities to provide the MI returns to DWP. Failure to return the MI by the deadline may result in a delayed payment or a payment being refused.
41. Where Authorities (including District Councils) issue awards directly to vulnerable households they should either obtain information at source or via information or data they have access to, to complete the split of spend and number of awards across the eligibility criteria. i.e. households with and without children and food, energy bills, essentials linked to food and energy bills, wider essentials and (in exceptional circumstances) housing support. Where Authorities decide to deliver support to vulnerable households through TPOs they should use whatever information the TPO holds, or other available data, to split the level of spend and volume of awards across the eligibility criteria to the best of their ability.

The different elements of the MI template are shown below together with guidance on how to complete them.

**Table 1**

Table 1: Governance	Response
Local Authority (full name)	
Section 151 officer (name)	
Section 151 officer (email address)	
Is the section 151 officer / CFO copied into the return to DWP? (Y/N)	
Reporting Period	06/10/21-31/12/21
Approved signed off by	
LA Single Point of Contact	
Date Returned to DWP	

42. Each MI return must include your Section 151 Officer's name and email address to provide assurance on validation of funding spend. If they are the same contact, please input details in both response fields.
43. We also require you to copy your Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer into the email, providing this assurance when you return the MI template to DWP.
44. Please indicate that you have done this in row 4 of the table "Is the section 151 officer / CFO copied into the return to DWP?" If the MI is incomplete/incorrect it will be returned to the authority by the DWP for correction and re-submission which must also be copied to your Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer.

**Table 2**

Table 2: Total Awards	
Item	Spend (£s)
a) Total amount provided to vulnerable households	
b) Administration Costs	
c) Total spend (a+b)	

- **Total Amount provided to vulnerable households** – this is the total amount of the grant fund that has been paid/awarded to vulnerable households. It includes amounts paid by Authorities and by TPOs on behalf of Authorities. It should not include amounts allocated to TPOs that have not been spent during the reporting period.
- **Administration costs** – this includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
  - staff costs
  - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
  - web page design
  - printing application forms
  - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production
- **Total Spend** – this is the total of the above. It is the amount that will be used to determine the grant funding payment, from DWP to cover the full cost of administering the grant in your area. A single grant payment will be made in arrears on the receipt of a fully completed and verified MI return.

**Table 3**

Table 3: Total Value of Awards split by Household Composition				
		a) Households with Children	b) Households without Children	c) Total (a+b)
Row1	Spend (£s)			
Row2	Volumes			

45. Table 3 relates to grant spend and the volume of awards made in relation to families with and without children. Rows 1 and 2 relate to grant awards made by Authorities (including District Councils) directly to vulnerable households, and grant awards to vulnerable households made by TPOs.
46. **Spend (£s)** - this is the amount paid/awarded to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. Authorities should make every effort to gather information to establish whether a child resides in the household (including being the only member of the household) in order to complete the template as fully as possible. This information is important for DWP to evaluate how successful the scheme has been in providing support to households with and without children.
47. Authorities should either gather information or check existing records they hold or have access to, to establish whether the household includes a child (as defined above) and complete columns a and b accordingly. Responsibility for MI reporting rests with Authorities. Where Shire Counties pass grant allocations to District

Councils, District Councils should pass the information relating to columns a and b to the County Council/Unitary Authority to collate the information and send one collated template to DWP.

48. **Volumes** - this is the number of individual/separate payments made to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. If multiple awards are made to the same household throughout the period of the scheme each award should be counted separately. Where an award is made to a household with multiple children, it should be classed as a single award.
49. **Reporting TPO Spend and TPO Volumes** - we acknowledge that some TPOs, for example, charitable and voluntary organisations such as food banks, have limited or no access to household information and may not be in a position to provide this information to the same level of accuracy as Authorities. We are therefore asking Authorities and TPOs to report the actual level of spend and the volume of awards across the different eligibility criteria in rows 1 and 2 to the best of their ability.

**Table 4**

Table 4: Total Value of Awards Split by Category							
		a) Food	b) Energy and Water	c) Essentials linked to Energy and Water	d) Wider Essentials	e) Housing Costs	e) Total (a+b+c+d+e)
Row 1	Spend (£s)						
Row 2	Volumes						

50. Table 4 relates to grant spend and the volume of awards made in relation to food, energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs.
51. Spend (£s) - this is the amount paid/awarded to vulnerable households in respect of each category.
52. Volumes - this is the number of individual/separate payments made to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. If multiple awards are made to the same household throughout the period of the scheme each award should be counted separately.
53. Rows 1 and 2 relate to awards/payments made directly to vulnerable households by Authorities including District Councils and grant funding spent by TPOs e.g. charitable and voluntary organisations.
54. TPO Spend and TPO Volumes - we acknowledge that some TPOs, for example, charitable and voluntary organisations have limited MI and may not be in a position to provide this information to the same level of accuracy as Authorities. We are therefore asking Authorities and TPOs to provide, the level of spend and the volume of awards across the different eligibility criteria in rows 1 and 2 to the best of their ability.
55. Total - the total spend in Table 2 row a, Table 3 Row 1 column c and Table 4 Row 1 column e should add up to the same amount.
56. When allocating spend and the volume of awards across the eligibility criteria please follow the guidance below.
57. Table 3 and Table 4 ask for spend and award volumes to be recorded against two sets of criteria. Therefore, the details of each award need to be recorded twice once against one set of criteria and then a second time against the other criteria. Shown below is a worked example of how the MI template should be completed.
58. The eligibility criterion is set against the category of spend, at least 50% for households with children. We are collecting information on food, energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs to provide ministers and interested

bodies (e.g. the National Audit Office) assurance over how the Household Support Fund is being spent.

59. Authorities are asked to report and manage spend in relation to both these areas. For example, if a £100 award is made to a household with children for food, you would allocate £100 to the 'Households with children' section in Table 3 and £100 to the 'food' section in Table 4. You would also allocate one award in both these sections of Table 3 and Table 4.
60. Each award needs to be allocated twice – one allocation to each of the eligibility category tables so that when you report on the total spent on family composition and the total spent on the type of support, both eligibility criteria categories will total the amount you have paid. The total volume of awards in Table 3 and Table 4 should also be the same.

### **Additional guidance and examples when working with TPOs**

61. Please include, where possible, the amount of spend across the following categories:

- households with or without children, and
- energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs.

62. For example, if you have allocated:

- grant funding to a food bank to provide food to vulnerable people, establish the amount of that allocation the food bank has spent and enter the full amount spent under food as you know that the grant allocation has been spent in respect of food, and provide the split across households with and without children to the best of your ability in accordance with the example below.
- grant funding to a charity that specialises in providing vulnerable children with clothing, establish the amount of that allocation the charity has spent and enter the full amount spent in 'households with children' and the full amount of the grant spent in 'wider essentials'. This is because you know that the purpose of the grant is for children and the nature of support is clothing which comes under wider essentials.

63. The amount of MI available will vary considerably across each TPO. Please use whatever information is already available or reasonable to collect to be as accurate as possible.

64. Shown below are some examples of how to complete the template.

#### **Example 1**

65. A food bank operates on an open basis where anyone can turn up and pick up food and supplies. This is not an award made directly to vulnerable households by an Authority. The cost is picked up by a TPO, for example, the food bank. The MI template should be completed as per guidance below.

66. The total value of grant spent and the volume of awards made by the charity or voluntary organisations providing the food bank should be entered in Table 3 and Table 4. The Authority or food bank provider will need to provide the split between households with and without children to the best of their ability.

## Example 2

67. The Authority directly provides vouchers to vulnerable households. These could be redeemable at a number of food outlets including supermarkets or food banks. Food voucher amounts can vary depending on how many children reside in the household. Authorities are expected to collect or verify information to establish whether the award is made to a household with or without children. The MI template should be completed as follows:

- the value of awards should be entered in Table 3 in 'spend' row 1 column a and row 1 column b based on the information the Authority has been capturing to split spend across these categories;
- the volume of awards should be included in Table 3 row 2 (Volumes) column a and row 2 column b based on the information the Authority has been capturing to split the volume of awards spend across these categories;
- the value of awards should be entered in Table 4 row 1 column a because it relates to food;
- the volume of awards should be included in Table 4 row 2 (Volumes) column a because it relates to food;

## DWP engagement

68. LA relationship managers from DWP's LA Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division will contact Authorities to provide support and gather information throughout the scheme. Examples where LA relationship managers will contact Authorities for initial compliance include:

- the MI templates have not been completed and returned;
- the MI templates have not been copied to the Authority's S151 officer or CFO.

69. They will also contact Authorities where further clarification is needed in respect of the information provided on the MI reporting template, if for example:

- critical data is missing, or the data looks odd, or
- the Authority is reporting a high value of awards where they have not been able to establish the household composition. We may need the Authority to explain why that is the case and provide supporting evidence.
- the Authority is reporting a high value of administration costs. We may need the Authority to explain why that is the case and provide supporting evidence.
- there is a significant gap between actual and allocated spend. We may need the Authority to explain why spend was so low.

70. They will look to identify good practice and identify case studies where appropriate.

71. They will also engage with Authorities around completion of the questionnaire issued with this guidance regarding delivery plans for the grant. Please complete and return this questionnaire to DWP by 29 October 2021.

72. DWP will also continue to engage with Authorities to respond to questions we receive via the designated inbox as quickly as possible.

73. Where Authorities work with District Councils and TPOs it is the responsibility of Authorities to collect and collate MI and complete one collated MI return and submit to DWP.

## DWP funding arrangements

74. Household Support Fund is ring-fenced to be spent as detailed in this guidance and the accompanying grant determination, including the specific condition that at least 50% be spent on families with children. To ensure that the objectives of the fund are being met during the course of the grant and reduce administration costs for all concerned, including the need for DWP to recover underspend, grant payment will be made in arrears upon DWP being satisfied with the MI returns. This will enable DWP to adjust the amount of the payment based on the MI returns.
75. Payment of the grant from DWP to Authorities will be made in arrears after the interim MI return in January 2022 and the final MI return at the end of grant period in April 2022 after we have verified the MI. If an Authority feels that the payment arrangements will create significant cash flow problems please notify DWP as soon as possible with supporting evidence. Both an interim and a final MI return will be required and grant payments will be made in respect of the periods 06 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 and 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.
76. MI returns **must be endorsed by the S151** officer in accordance with their statutory assurance responsibility in order for the grant payment to be made by copying your Chief Financial Officer and Section 151 Officer into the email.
77. The guidance for completion is provided on a separate tab within the MI template.
78. The definition of spend includes grant funding that has been provided to vulnerable households, within the scope of the eligibility criteria, and within the period of the scheme 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.
79. Spend also includes 'committed spend'. For the purpose of this scheme committed spend relates to grant funding that has been spent and delivered to vulnerable households even though the vulnerable household may not have used their grant funding. An example would be the award of a food voucher on 31 March 2022 to a vulnerable household. It would be unreasonable to expect the family to be restricted to redeem the voucher on the day of receipt. In this example spend has been committed by the Authority, support has been provided to a vulnerable household and, therefore, should be included as eligible grant spend. It would be reasonable to expect the vulnerable household to redeem the food voucher during the month following the end of the scheme.
80. However, committed spend does not include large volumes of food vouchers, procured quite late in the scheme, which cannot be distributed to vulnerable households within the period of the scheme.
81. Authorities that plan to order vouchers in bulk should attempt to be realistic in the volumes ordered to avoid holding large stocks of unused vouchers at the end of the scheme. Alternatively, Authorities may want to consider:
- purchasing vouchers on a sale or return basis, so that they can return any unused vouchers, or
  - if the Authority wants to use the vouchers after the end of the Household Support Fund scheme they should be funded through other means.
82. The definition of committed spend for the purpose of this scheme does not affect its accounting treatment in accordance with normal rules.
83. The timetable for provision of funding and MI returns is as follows:

### Funding:

Payment	Amount (%)	Date	Notes
Interim	Actual grant spend up to 100% of grant allocation*	February/March 2022	Payment made in arrears
Final	Actual grant spend up to 100% of grant allocation*	May/June 2022	Payment made in arrears

\*subject to eligible spend criteria

## Managing the risk of fraud

84. Fraudsters can target funds of this type.

85. As with any welfare payment to vulnerable recipients there is a risk of fraud, as recipients might appear to be eligible when they are not.

86. To help mitigate this risk, Authorities should involve District Councils and other organisations chosen to administer this scheme to help identify vulnerable families, households and individuals.

87. Authorities wishing to work with TPOs to deliver the scheme must carry out suitable due diligence checks to ensure they are viable and able to deliver the support. So, for example, ensuring all charities are registered and taking extra caution if they are new organisations.

88. Authorities are also encouraged to ensure checks are in place to verify the identity of those eligible.

89. Authorities are encouraged to ask neighbouring authorities to work together to help prevent double provision and/or no provision – especially where allocation of provision is by school in one area and by residential address in another.

90. It is for Authorities to decide how payments are made to recipients. However, when making decisions, Authorities should consider the risks involved. Although they still carry fraud risks, vouchers should be used instead of cash where possible as this helps to mitigate the risk of the money being spent by the recipient on things outside of the policy intent.

91. Authorities should ensure that they consider and put in place suitable controls when making use of vouchers as part of this scheme. Authorities may wish to consider restricting access to these vouchers; and also consider restricting usage to ensure that they cannot be spent outside the intended scope of this Scheme.

92. It is important to be vigilant to fraud and error risks in relation to housing costs, and to assure yourself that the appropriate checks are in place. Authorities should take appropriate steps to ensure they take into consideration household income and rent liability which may be requested and reviewed as set out in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the grant determination. We expect Authorities to work with district councils to ensure support is going to those with genuine need and to help minimise the risk of fraud on housing support.

93. Where possible, any payments made into a bank account should be in the same name of the person that is eligible for that payment. Authorities have access to a range of data sources, and checks can be carried out against this data to verify the

identity of the recipient. Authorities are also encouraged to use existing tools at their disposal to verify personal bank accounts.

94. If the Authority has any grounds for suspecting financial irregularity in the use of any grant paid under this Determination, it must notify the department immediately, explain what steps are being taken to investigate the suspicion and keep the Department informed about the progress of the investigation. For these purposes 'financial irregularity' includes fraud or other impropriety, mismanagement, and the use of grant for purposes other than those for which it was provided.
95. If you suspect fraud, you should notify DWP of the:

- number of instances
- total amount lost

96. This will help DWP identify any emerging threats and share them with other Authorities, so they can take steps to prevent and detect any fraud in their schemes.

### **Complying with Subsidy (previously State Aid) rules**

97. The funding is intended to benefit households most in need of support with food, energy bills, related essentials, wider essentials and (exceptionally) housing costs as the economy recovers this winter. The funds should not be used for any economic undertaking.
98. Whichever way you use the funding, including where you work in partnership with others, you should consider all Subsidy rules (previously state aid) issues. Check whether the 'de minimis' regulation exception applies. You should also follow government procurement procedures where relevant.

### **Administration costs**

99. The Household Support Fund funding allocation includes reasonable administration costs to enable Authorities to deliver the scheme. Authorities should deduct their administration costs from the total allocation to determine the amount remaining.
100. In all cases, Authorities should keep administrative costs to a reasonable level.
101. Administration costs for each Authority will be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) alongside detail of all spend related to this scheme.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

102. In accordance with the public sector equality duty, DWP has had due regard for the potential equalities impacts of this grant.
103. Under the Equality Act 2010, all public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. For the purposes of this grant, you should consider how any support that helps people facing severe financial hardship impacts those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act.
104. When developing your local delivery frameworks, you should ensure people are not disadvantaged or treated unfairly by this scheme. For example, any application process should be easy to access and to navigate.

### **Questions and answers**

105. Questions and answers can be found at Annex A

## **Contact**

106. If you have any queries about the content of this guidance or use of the funding, you can contact DWP: [LA-PED.LAGRANTSPROJECTTEAM@DWP.GOV.UK](mailto:LA-PED.LAGRANTSPROJECTTEAM@DWP.GOV.UK)

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## **Questions and answers**

### **Q1. Why is DWP asking County Councils and Unitary Authorities to administer this instead of District Councils?**

A1. County Councils and Unitary Authorities have a statutory duty regarding children and are generally responsible for Local Welfare Assistance. This is not to suggest that District Councils are not capable of delivering support. It reflects the focus of this grant and that support could take many, broad, forms and, therefore, the funding sits better with County Council and Unitary Authorities.

We expect County Council and Unitary Authorities to work with their district partners, particularly in relation to any support exceptionally provided with housing costs, as well as other organisations, as appropriate, to ensure the most effective support is delivered to as many vulnerable households as possible.

### **Q2. Is it acceptable to use the grant funding for Free School Meals?**

A2. The Household Support Fund is not intended to replicate or replace Free School Meals and Authorities should avoid duplicating provision where possible.

However, Authorities have discretion over how they use the funding within the grant framework and within the stipulated time period.

Therefore, Authorities may choose to offer awards to families in receipt of Free School Meals over the entirety of the school holidays, if they consider this to be appropriate in their area.

### **Q3. Can the Scheme be used flexibly for more strategic activity such as advice provision around financial hardship?**

A3. Advice provision is not included in the scope of this scheme.

Should Authorities choose to fund advice as part of their support they must do so through means other than the Household Support Fund.

### **Q4. Can we make multiple awards to the same people or families?**

A4. A family or individual can be supported on multiple occasions throughout the lifetime of the scheme, should an Authority deem it to be necessary. However, each award should be reported separately. Although multiple awards to the same households are possible, funding should not be used to support unsustainable tenancies. Where eligible, ongoing housing support should be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit and through Housing Benefit – and if needed, through Discretionary Housing Payments.

**Q5. Can Searchlight information be used by Authorities to help identify suitable recipients?**

A5. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Universal Credit award information is available on Searchlight. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential claimants who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify those claimants' DWP benefit details.

DWP is sharing UC data with LAs each month which LAs can use to identify vulnerable households eligible for payments under the Household Support Fund.

**Q6. Does there need to be a complaints and appeals process?**

A6. The appeals process falls within each Authority's normal complaints and appeals process. Authorities will be responsible for making determinations on eligibility and as such will need to decide how they administer any complaints or appeals.

**Q7. Are there any other sources of guidance?**

A7. DWP will continue to update a comprehensive Q&A log based on questions raised by Authorities. This will be reissued in due course.

**Q8. Why can't we carry over funding from the Covid Local Support Grant?**

A8. The Covid Local Support Grant was a separate grant that ended on 30 September 2021.

This new scheme is targeted towards both individuals and families and is not related to Covid in the same way as the Covid Local Support Grant was.

Annex B



UC Data Share Field  
Definitions.docx

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DRAFT

This record relates to urgent decisions taken by Chief Officers under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers Paragraph 7(2).

## **RECORD OF URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY Nigel Manvell, Acting CFO**

**SUBJECT:** Allocation of the Household Support Fund for October Half Term Free School Meals

**CONTACT OFFICERS:** Debbie Abbott and Paul Ross-Dale, Revenues & Benefits Managers

### **REASONS FOR URGENCY AND WHY NOT PRACTICABLE TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING OR URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE:**

The government has provided £2.1m new funding to Brighton & Hove City Council in the form of the Household Support Fund. The Local Authority must decide how to allocate the fund, but one key funding request will be to continue providing Free School Meals during the holidays.

An Urgency Decision is required because fund details were only announced on 7 Oct, after which colleagues from Revenues & Benefits, and Families, Children & Learning attended a government seminar to understand the conditions of the funding and subsequently worked together on proposals and logistics. Consultation has therefore not been possible until now but in order to be able to issue vouchers from 22 Oct 2021 for half term, a decision is required now.

This Decision therefore only deals with partial allocation of the Household Support Fund to ensure provision of support to low income families for the October half term for those eligible for Free School Meals. Further allocations will be brought forward to Policy and Resources (Recovery) Sub Committee on 4 November 2021 for consideration, which will include additional Free School Meals funding and broader community support.

### **DETAILS AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION WITH THE CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR OF RELEVANT COMMITTEE AND OPPOSITION SPOKES:**

The Chair of Policy & Resources Committee (Cllr MacCafferty) and Opposition Spokespersons (Cllrs Allcock and Bell) were sent the Urgent Decision for approval and comments on the afternoon of 21 October 2021. The chair gave his approval on 21 October 2021 and there was general support from opposition councillors.

### **DATE OF CONSULTATION WITH CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR AND OPPOSITION SPOKES:**

21/10/21

### **THE DECISION:**

To approve the allocation of £139,000 from the Household Support Fund to provide Free School Meals for the October half term.

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

The council's allocation of the Household Support Fund is £2,140,360.89.

There is a broad discretion conferred on local authorities in spending this fund, with some limitations. The grant must be allocated to provide support with the costs of food, energy (for heating, lighting and cooking), water (for household purposes, including sewerage) and other essential living needs in accordance with the Scheme guidance.

At least 50% of the grant must be used for supporting households with children. Up to 50% of the grant can be used to assist other households.

Eligible spend includes:

- Food, either as consumable items, or through vouchers or cash.
- Energy and water bills
- Essentials linked to energy and water, for example sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.
- Wider essentials, for example, support with broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel
- Housing Costs in exceptional cases of genuine emergency only, where existing housing support schemes such as Discretionary Housing Payments do not meet this exceptional need.

Proposals have been developed in collaboration with Families, Children & Learning, Revenues & Benefits, and representatives from Community Works and the Moneyworks / Advice Matters partnerships. Full details and recommended allocations from the fund will be submitted to Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub Committee on 4 November 2021. However, one of the recommendations is to continue paying for Free School Meals during the school holidays, as this will be a key element of support for families with financial vulnerability during the winter months and beyond.

The following allocation is to enable the half term October provision to go ahead immediately. Further Free School Meal provision, including related funding for schools and Early Years will be outlined in the full report on 4 November.

Area of Support	Amount	Explanation and notes
Free school meals vouchers	£135,000	(including £15,000 Early Years vouchers)
Provision for SEND	£4,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£139,000</b>	

**DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

There are no alternative options under consideration for this Urgency Decision, but the allocated amount represents only a small percentage of the overall fund. There will be an

opportunity for Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub Committee to explore the breadth of support planned for the rest of the fund of approximately £2 million.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The Council has the power to allocate this proposed additional funding for the uses described in this report. The Acting Chief Finance Officer has the necessary delegations under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (Part 6 of the Council’s Constitution) to use Urgency Powers after consultation with the Chair of Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee and opposition spokespersons.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert                      Date: 21/10/21*

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The council has been allocated £2,140,360.89 from the Household Support Fund. The eligible areas of spend are provided under ‘Reasons for Decision’ above and as noted, at least 50% of the grant must be used for supporting households with children with up to 50% of the grant therefore available to assist other households. The grant is required to be utilised by 31 March 2022 and therefore deployment will need to be relatively quick to maximise the use of the funding.

*Finance Office Consulted: James Hengeveld      Date: 21/10/21*

**DATE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING TO WHICH THE DECISION WILL BE REPORTED:**

Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub Committee 4 November 2021.

<b>Date: 21 October 2021</b>	
<b>Signed:</b> <b>Acting Chief Finance Officer</b>	<i>R. Llanell</i>
Logged by Democratic Services Officer for Annual Report: Name:	Date:

