

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Award of Funding from the Household Support Fund to third party organisations														
Date of decision:	21 st May 2024														
Decision maker:	Director of Resources and Assurance														
Authority for delegated decision:	Cabinet member decision on 10 May 2024 delegated operational matters in relation to the Household Support Fund to the Director of Resources and Assurance Link: Household Support Fund 5 - Herefordshire Council														
Ward:	Countywide														
Consultation:	Cabinet member for finance, corporate services and planning has been consulted about the approach to support third party organisations as part of the Household Support Fund framework.														
Decision made:	To provide funding from the Household Support Fund to third party voluntary and community organisations so that vulnerable residents in Herefordshire can access help with essential household bills.														
Reasons for decision:	<p>Herefordshire Council has received an allocation of £1,329,601.78 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) under the Household Support Fund. In line with DWP guidance, the fund is expected to support vulnerable households who would otherwise struggle with energy, food and energy bills as well as other essential costs. The decision to support third party organisations will enable those organisations to support Herefordshire households who are struggling to meet essential household bills.</p> <p>The funding to third party organisations is an important component of the support that is provided to low-income households. Providing funding to third party organisations will mean that those organisations can provide residents who are struggling with the increase in the cost of living. Having regard for the time available to deliver the scheme, Herefordshire Council identified existing trusted partners which had already been recipients of government grants to support low income households during the Covid 19 pandemic. The partners have also been identified based on the need to support all the eligible spend categories specified by the DWP guidance and to provide support to vulnerable households, across Herefordshire whatever their household composition.</p> <p>The amount of funding requested is to support residents until 30th September 2024.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Name of third party organisation</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Type of Support provided</th> <th style="text-align: left;">Amount of Household Support</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age UK Worcester, Malvern Hills and Hereford Localities</td> <td>Home energy checks / energy advice</td> <td>£42,330.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bromyard Foodbank and Money Advice Centre</td> <td>Emergency food provision</td> <td>£13,850.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ethos</td> <td>Emergency food provisions,</td> <td>£90,024.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Name of third party organisation	Type of Support provided	Amount of Household Support	Age UK Worcester, Malvern Hills and Hereford Localities	Home energy checks / energy advice	£42,330.00	Bromyard Foodbank and Money Advice Centre	Emergency food provision	£13,850.00	Ethos	Emergency food provisions,	£90,024.00
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		household's items to reduce energy consumption, budget advice and cooking courses. Emergency housing payments.		
	Hereford Foodbank	Emergency food provision; support for cooking equipment	£63,350.00	
	Herefordshire Community Foundation	Support for energy; support for other essentials linked to energy and water	£13,622.00	
	Ledbury Foodbank	Support for food; support for other essentials	£36,000.00	
	Leominster Foodbank (including the Money Advice Centre)	Support for food	£13,200.00	
	NILS Scheme	Support for household essentials	£30,000.00	
	Putson Baptist Church	Support for food; support for energy; support for other essentials	£70,165.00	
	Severn Wye Energy Agency	Support for energy; support for other essentials linked to energy and water	£9,000.00	
	YES Energy Solutions	Support for energy; support for other essentials linked to energy and water	£33,368.00	
	Total		£414,909.00	
	By utilising the funding from government, this will have a positive impact on low income households by minimising the debt burden on those that struggle to pay essential bills.			
Equality Considerations:	<p>Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows; a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act; b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p> <p>The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Local authorities have discretion on exactly how the Housing Support Fund is used within the scope set out in the guidance for April 2024 to September 2024 issued by the Department of Work and Pensions and the local eligibility framework which is set out in paragraph 5 of this report. In prioritising low income households, there is likely to be a positive impact for people who are financially disadvantaged (although this is not in itself a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010). If there are households in urgent need due to rising living costs, they may access support through the Local Welfare Provision service of the Council.</p> <p>The scheme specifically targets families on low incomes with children who are eligible for free school meals. It will also aim to target disabled households, especially those that have high utility bills. The Household</p>			

	<p>Support Fund will provide additional support to other financially disadvantaged households in Herefordshire, many of these households will include those who share a protected characteristic e.g. age, so by utilising the scheme this will support the council in discharging its Equality duty by supporting many of these households to access these funds through third party agencies.</p> <p>All agencies involved in the distribution of the funding will be made aware of their equality responsibilities in regards to the Equality Act.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>The cost of the scheme will be funded through the Household Support Fund allocation of £1,329,601.78.</p> <p>The council recognises that the pandemic has exacerbated the inequalities in our society, and this is being further compounded by the increased cost of living. By providing funding to third party organisations, the council will be supporting low income families who are struggling with energy or food price increases.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>Not to approve spend to provide funding to third party organisations. This is not recommended. The Household Support Fund is expected to support households in most need. By working with third party organisations, this will enable the funding to reach struggling households as well as provide them with further advice and support that many of these organisations offer.</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	<p>None</p>

Signed: Andrew Lovegrove

Date: 21/05/24