

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to provide up to £15k of the Household Support Fund to deliver support for families with children 0 to 5yrs old.
Date of decision:	21st November 2024
Decision maker:	Head of Communities
Authority for delegated decision:	Cabinet member decision on 7 November 2024 delegated operational matters in relation to the Household Support Fund to the Talk Community Lead Link: Decision - Household Support Fund 6 - Herefordshire Council
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	Cabinet member for finance, corporate services and planning and Director of Finance have been consulted about the approach to support children and families as part of the Household Support Fund framework.
Decision made:	To provide up to £15,000.00 of funding from the Household Support Fund to support families with children 0 to 5yrs old that have been referred on by a specified provider with a one off payment of £100.00.
Reasons for decision:	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 most of the funding should be earmarked to support families with children and pensioner households who would otherwise struggle with energy, food and energy bills as well as other essential costs. The decision to support families with children between the ages of 0 to 5yrs old would meet the recommended guidance. Families will be identified via referrals through Children’s Centre, Health Visitors, Midwives and Nurseries/ Early Years settings. This is to ensure that the most in need are best placed to be in receipt of the funding. The support provided would be a one of payment of £100.00 that could potentially benefit up to 150 households.
Equality Considerations:	<p>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.</p> <p>Due to the scope of this project and its potential impact on certain protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached as an appendix to the cabinet report.</p> <p>In summary, this project impacts on protected characteristics as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Age - Pensioners who are just above the pension credit threshold will be eligible for support for their heating over the winter months. Working with Age UK will enable us to identify those pensioners most in need. b. Disability - Services within the council that work with disabled people in receipt of adult social care services will be asked to identify households in need of support financially to help reduce the impact of increasing energy costs. c. Pregnancy & Maternity - Parents identified by professional colleagues, who need financial support to pay for essentials related to children, for example, nappies, formula milk, clothing, or food. d. Other: Carers, care leavers, homeless, economic deprivation - Services within the council that support unpaid carers will be consulted with to consider how financial support can be offered to households most in need. <p>The EIA did not identify any negative impacts at this time. Any future</p>

	negative impacts will be reviewed and mitigated accordingly.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	The cost of the scheme will be funded through the Household Support Fund allocation of £1,329,601.78. Referrals for this support will be made through Children’s Centre, Health Visitors, Midwives and Nurseries/ Early Years settings and not via an open application process. 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 support for families with children under 5yrs old who have been identified at risk will help to elevate pressure from the rising cost of energy and food price increases.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Not to approve spend to provide funding to support families with children 0 to 5yrs old. This is not recommended. The Household Support Fund is expected to support households most in need. Families with children below school age are often not eligible for support with the focus of support historically being targeted primarily towards children of school age.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed
Head of Communities

Date: 21/11/24