

**20 June 2022****Agenda Item:****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES****HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND****Purpose of the Report**

1. To approve the allocation and launch of the remaining elements of the Household Support Fund to support those in immediate need in Nottinghamshire until 30 September 2022.
2. This is a Key Decision because it will result in expenditure of £1 million or over and it will have significant effects on two or more electoral divisions.

**Information**

3. In October 2021 the Government launched the Household Support Fund, which was due to finish in March 2022, and allocated **£5,646,450** to the Council to allocate to those in immediate need in the County.
4. The Fund was used to provide food for Free School Meal (FSM) entitled pupils during holidays in the period as well as to provide energy and food support to those households both with and without children. By working closely with partners over the 6 months of the scheme, **£5,624,064** of the funding was applied.
5. In the Chancellor's spring budget statement on 23 March 2022, it was announced that the Household Support Fund would continue and a further **£5,646,450** was awarded to Nottinghamshire for the period 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 to support those most in need to help with significantly rising living costs. The Fund must be utilised by 30 September, so it is important that it is deployed in a timely manner.
6. Final guidance relating to the distribution of the £5.6million fund was provided on 29 April 2022. This states that at least one third of the fund must be ringfenced and used to support pensioners and that one third of the fund must be ringfenced and used to support families with children.
7. On 26 May 2022 a further statement from the Chancellor confirmed the Government would provide further funding for the Household Support Fund to cover the period from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. At the time of writing, further detail on the Nottinghamshire allocation, and the criteria for this tranche of funding, has not been received.

8. This report therefore focuses solely on the Fund's distribution for the period from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. Distribution of the funding received for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 will be the subject of a future decision report.

#### 9. Relevant decisions already taken

- a. On 1 April 2022, under the Council's Committee system, the Chief Executive used urgent decision-making powers to use **£904,560** of the Fund to provide meals to children eligible for FSMs during the Easter Holidays from the fund.
- b. On 20 April 2022 the Communities Committee approved using a further **£159,654** to pay for the County Council team to administer the current phase of the Fund.
- c. On 16 May 2022, the Cabinet Member for Communities approved applying a further **£450,000** to provide meals to children eligible for FSMs during the May/June 2022 half term.

#### Proposals for applying the remaining funding

10. The decisions taken to date commit up to **£1,514,214** of the Fund, leaving **£4,132,236** remaining.
11. As required by Government, plans for deploying the fund have been developed for approval by and in consultation with a Partnership Steering Group largely comprising of Borough and District Council representatives. Further, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has been consulted on the proposals in the report relating to funding for households with children.
12. The guidance for the 2022 financial year fund requires at least one third of the funding to be allocated to households with children, and at least one third to people of pensionable age. It is therefore proposed that **£1,882,150** (one third of the Fund) is reserved for people of pensionable age. There is a discretion on how to apply the remaining one third of the Fund.
13. Although Government requires at least one third of the Fund to be applied to households with children, Cabinet members have expressed a keenness to apply more than one third of the funding to households with children, and to do that by provision of holiday vouchers to those children entitled to Free School Meals.
15. It is therefore proposed that **£1,500,000** is allocated to provide FSM support over the summer school holidays to the approximately 30,000 children and young people who fall within the criteria that entitles them to receive Free School Meals. The proposed allocation would mean that each FSM entitled child would receive £50 of food support for the 5 week school summer holiday period. This will mean that for the period April – September 2022 a total of £2,845,560 will have been allocated towards FSM holiday funding, whilst balancing those needs against other households in need who have no children and are not of pensionable age.
16. Based on the administration costs incurred by the Council's partners, including District and Borough Councils for delivery of the first scheme being similar for this scheme, it is proposed that **£140,346** is approved and reserved to reimburse these costs.

17. It is further proposed that **£609,740** of the Fund is approved to be awarded to those in immediate need in those households not of pensionable age and with no children.
18. As with the previous fund, the Nottinghamshire Household Support Fund Partnership Steering Group has met to design the most effective systems by which the support will be delivered to those in immediate need who are of pensionable age, and also to those households without children and that are not of pensionable age.
19. The Steering Group consists of professionals from Boroughs, Districts and the County Council, and partners such as the Department for Work and Pensions. It will continue to meet during the delivery timeframe of the Fund. The initial key features of the systems designed, which have been developed and tested in the earlier phases of the Household Support Fund, will be:
- a. **Pensionable age** – provide support to those identified in the group as being in immediate need through professional referrals and partnership data (such as access to pension related benefits). Support to be in the form of energy vouchers, food vouchers or access to essential white goods as deemed necessary.
  - b. **Those households not of pensionable age and also that do not have children** - provide support to those identified in the group as being in immediate need through professional referrals (such as access to certain benefits or evidence of in-work poverty). Support to be in the form of energy vouchers, food vouchers or access to essential white goods as deemed necessary.
20. It is proposed that regular reports are provided to the Cabinet Member with regards to progress, and to agree any necessary significant changes to the approach.
21. The table below summarises the financial position of the existing and proposed decisions:

<b>Government Allocation to Nottinghamshire</b>	<b>£5,646,450</b>
<b>Committed to be spent</b>	
Easter - FSM's Holiday Vouchers	£904,560
May/June 2022 Half Term - FSM's Holiday Vouchers	£450,000
County Council Administration Costs	£159,654
<b>Total Committed to date</b>	<b>£1,514,214</b>
<b>Balance to approve</b>	<b>£4,132,236</b>
<b>Further Spending Proposals in this report</b>	
People of Pensionable Age	£1,882,150
Summer Holiday - FSM Holiday Vouchers	£1,500,000

Admin costs District/Borough Councils	£140,346
Households without children and not of pensionable age	£609,740

**Total Proposed Spending in this Report**

**£4,132,236**

## Other Options Considered

22. The proposed allocation proportions as set out in this report have been arrived at following careful consideration by a cross council partnership group of the impacts of changing the relative proportions of deploying this finite fund of money on the different household groups and the requirements within the Government guidance.
23. To not offer FSM support during the school summer holidays, but as stated above, Cabinet Members expressed keenness to continue to provide this support at the present time, given the continued availability of appropriate resources through the Household Support Fund.
24. To allocate more of the Fund to FSM support during the school summer holidays in order to maintain funding at the previous level of £3 per eligible pupil per day. However, this would require £750,000, which is in excess of the remaining monies available within the Fund. This would also further reduce the Household Support Funding remaining to be awarded to those in immediate need in those households not of pensionable age and with no children, or it would require the transfer of resources from other areas of the Council's revenue budget, which is already subject to ongoing pressures and would adversely impact other important Council funding priorities.
25. To seek further Cabinet Member approvals for the detailed design of the schemes to apply the funding to pensioners and to those without children. Given the extensive learning that has taken place on the effective delivery of the Funding from its previous iterations, and the short timeframe available to deploy the funding (it must be utilised by the end of September) it is appropriate to continue to deploy the existing design and delivery model, adapted for the changed criteria of the current Fund.

## Reasons for Recommendation

26. To allow the Council to work with a range of partners to deploy the government funding available to those in immediate need in the County as soon as is practical.

Group/purpose	Previous decision allocations	Allocations from this decision	Total Funding	Minimum % Required by Grant	Overall % Proposed
Households with Children	£904,560 £450,000	£1,500,000	£2,854,560	33.3%	50.6%
Pensionable Age	-	£1,882,150	£1,882,150	33.3%	33.3%
Non-pensioner Households without children	-	£609,740	£609,740	-	10.8%
Admin costs	£159,654 (County)	£140,346 (District/	£300,000	-	5.3%

		Borough/ Partners)			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,514,214</b>	<b>£4,132,236</b>	<b>£5,646,450</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Statutory and Policy Implications

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## Financial Implications

28. Paragraph 21 of this report sets out the financial implications of the decisions sought in the report.

## Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

29. £421 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with significantly rising living costs to cover the period 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 inclusive. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in guidance. This is additional resource with the expectation that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food, and water bills.

30. The proposals set out in this report will ensure that at least one third of the total funding available will be reserved and targeted towards older adults of pensionable age. In addition, over one half of the total funding will be deployed to supply food vouchers for the school holidays to those children entitled to free school meals.

31. The design of the system to deploy the funding to those households who do not have children and that are not of pensionable age, and the system to deploy the funding to those of pensionable age has been undertaken by the Partnership Steering Group. The wider partnership approach proposed to deploying the funding will provide several contact/access points to those in need of the funding.

32. Aside from the specific age considerations set out above, the Partnership Steering Group does consider broader equality matters to ensure as far as possible the funding reaches and supports those in immediate need in all groups including those with protected characteristics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That the Cabinet Member approves the allocation of the remaining unallocated Household Support Fund of £4,132,236 in the amounts and to the groups set out in paragraph 22 of

the report and approves the overall proportions of the total funding for the period from April to September 2022 as set out in the table at paragraph 26.

- 2) That the Cabinet Member approves that the Nottinghamshire Household Support Fund Partnership Steering Group implements the systems to provide support to pensioners and to households without children who are not of pensionable age as set out in the report.
- 3) That updates on the progress of the scheme or any proposed changes, be provided to the Cabinet Member with necessary approvals sought where appropriate.

**Derek Higton**  
**Service Director, Place and Communities**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:** Mark Walker, Group Manager, Trading Standards and Communities, 0115 977 2173

### **Constitutional Comments (CEH 25.05.2022)**

33. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Cabinet Member for Communities.

### **Financial Comments (SES 19/05/2022)**

34. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 21 of the report.

35. The total proposed funding of £4,132,236 detailed in this report will be fully funded from the Household Support Fund provided to the Council.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

1. Government Spring Statement Government announcement on 24<sup>th</sup> March of additional Household Support Fund monies - BEIS in the Spring Statement 2022 - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))
2. Report on 1 April 2022 to the Chief Executive to use **£904,560** of the fund to provide meals to children eligible for FSM's during the Easter Holidays from the fund.
3. Report to 20 April 2022 Communities Committee to approve the use of **£159,654** to pay for the County Council team to administer the next phase of the fund.
4. Letter of 22 April 2022 from Department of Work and Pensions - Household Support Fund Grant Determination letter Household Support Fund Grant Determination 2022 No 31/3096 ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk))
5. Government Guidance for Councils on the Fund - Household Support Fund (1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

6. Report on 16 May 2022 to the Cabinet Member for Communities to approved applying **£450,000** to provide meals to children eligible for FSM's during the May/June 2022 half term.

#### **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

- All