

# **POLICY & RESOURCES (RECOVERY) SUB-COMMITTEE**

## **ADDENDUM 1 Late Reports**

**4.00PM, THURSDAY, 21 APRIL 2022**

**HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER**

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# ADDENDUM

ITEM		Page
32	COVID 19 RECOVERY & RENEWAL UPDATE	5 - 20
33	ENERGY BOOST COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION - DISCRETION	21 - 46
34	FOOD IMPACTS FROM COST OF LIVING INCREASE	47 - 56
35	INTERIM REPORT ON COVID FUNDS AND THE NEW HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND	57 - 68



# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub- Committee

## Agenda Item 32

**Subject:** Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Update

**Date of meeting:** 21 April 2022

**Report of:** Nick Hibberd, Executive Director (Economy,  
Environment & Culture)

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that due to a miscalculation of the date of public holidays the report was not completed when the agenda was published.

### For general release

#### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The 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 20 January 2022.
- 1.2 It should be noted that the report provides an update on progress to mid March 2022 and given the fast-moving nature of the pandemic, aspects of this report may have been superseded by events by the date of the committee meeting.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Notes the progress updates in this report.

#### 3. Context and 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 and outbreak control activity, throughout lockdowns and restart following lockdowns, 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 On 24 February, a 'Living with Covid' strategy was announced, with the key changes summarised below:

**From 24 February**

- People testing positive for Covid-19 are no longer legally required to self-isolate. Advice is to stay at home if you can and avoid contact with other people.
- People no longer have to take daily tests or are legally required to self-isolate following contact with someone who has tested positive.
- The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme has ended. Those told to self-isolate before 24 February could make a claim up to 6 April.

**From 1 April**

- The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) published updated guidance to support the next stage of the pandemic on 1 April. As set out in the government's [Living with COVID-19 plan](#), the focus of this new phase is on protecting those who are most at risk from the virus. BHCC continues to support with managing outbreaks in close collaboration with UKHSA, this includes proactively supporting business continuity measures for situations.
- A new set of guidance from UKHSA provides important public health advice for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as Covid-19; people with a positive Covid-19 test and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone. UKHSA has also published a set of public health principles for businesses, organisations and employers to consider in managing the risk to their workforce from respiratory infections, such as Covid-19. There will be some [symptomatic testing available](#) for certain high-risk groups and settings.
- Those over 75, immuno-compromised and care home residents will be offered a second Covid-19 booster and all 5-11 year olds offered vaccination.
- There will be an ongoing vaccination offer for all those who have not yet received first, second or booster doses.

Covid-19 cases in the city remain high, therefore, there is an emphasis on public health messaging advising people to do whatever they can to lower their chances of catching or spreading the virus. Advice is as follows:

- If you feel unwell or have symptoms of Covid-19, the guidance is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people and to avoid close contact with anyone [who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19](#). You can go back to your normal activities when you feel better or do not have a high temperature.
- Covid-19 is most likely to be spread in busy places with poor ventilation. Meeting friends outside or opening windows when you are inside will help to stop that spread.
- Wearing a face covering anywhere that is crowded or enclosed will also reduce the risk. It is not difficult to keep one in your bag to use when you need to.

- Also, do not forget that face coverings continue to be required in many health and care settings. This includes hospitals, GP surgeries and pharmacies, as well as everyone who is visiting or working in care homes.
- Get vaccinated so you have the best protection against Covid-19. People 16 years old and over can [book online](#) or visit a [walk-in session](#). People aged 12 to 15 can get vaccines through schools or from Churchill Square by booking an appointment online or walking in - they must have a parents or carer with them. Find more [information about vaccinations for people aged 5 to 11](#).
- Wash your hands regularly, and cover coughs and sneezes to reduce the spread of viruses.

### 3.4 Recovery & Renewal Programme

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

#### 3.4.1 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**

- Data gathering about the current structure of phone provision to inform future recommendations.
- Data gathering around initial recovery phase to understand customer needs to inform longer term recommendations.
- Analysis and presentation of data gathered at customer contact points.
- Annual promotion of customer satisfaction survey.
- Piloting Councillor Enquiries Case Management system and learning from this to strengthen the customer experience.

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

- Working with the Future Ways of Working programme on information technology skills training for staff, ensuring they are equipped to troubleshoot customer issues when using digital services.
- Working towards exploring other self-help facilities in the city.
- Preparation of the proposed Target Operating Model and proposal for future options for customer service delivery.

#### 3.4.2 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 & Minority Ethnic (BME), 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 and represent children and young people's matters in 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**

- Children & Young People's Working Group discussion around Covid rates remaining high and the ongoing impact of disruption across the system, particularly around various groups of the workforce supporting children's services and 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 settings. Advice and support given around the recent changes to guidance affecting all education settings.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Greater numbers of staff working back in the offices is helping deliver the full relationship based practice model in social work. Full service delivery now back in place to support children with additional needs face to face. Children at risk continued to be supported to get their Covid vaccines.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy - Work on the Early Help review continues. Workshops have taken place with a range of stakeholders to map, and identify gaps in, the current system and talk through potential new ways of working. A bid for the first round of the national Family Hubs Transformation Fund has been submitted. A 'call for assistance' has been shared with the Community & Voluntary Sector to help to develop a draft of the Disadvantage Strategy.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Children & Young People's Working Group - Discussions will continue about vaccinations for children and young people, including the roll out of the vaccine equity plan and the start of the wider 5-11 programme. A focus is also being taken on workforce pressures.
- Supporting education settings - Support and guidance will be provided as new and/or amended guidance comes out for April 2022 onwards. This is likely to be a further significant change in approach nationally.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy – Coproduction workshops planned for March and April with key stakeholders regarding the development of plans for potential Family Hubs within the city as a key delivery arm of the Early Help system for families. Feedback from Community & Voluntary Sector partners to be collated and built into the emerging Disadvantage Strategy.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Concerns continue regarding the availability and stability 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. The SEND sufficiency workstream of the SEND Strategy has identified where some additional capacity may be needed across the city and work is being planned to develop that as needed.



### 3.4.3 Food Policy

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

To provide an all-age citywide response to issues relating to food arising from Covid-19 crisis – emergency phase, through recovery and in readiness and response to local outbreaks/other waves.

#### **Key recent activities**

- Cost of living crisis planning across fuel, food and money advice organisations.
- Commission launched to support the food access needs of Black & Minority Ethnic communities, Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
- Capacity and support work outlined for Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) continues. The Trust for Developing Communities and Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) are undertaking food development work, and one-to-one support for capacity and resilience for Emergency Food Network providers. Downview School continues to be used as a temporary food hub while BHFP's search for premises continues. The Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership (BMECP) centre food bank is being supported to stay open. Further allocation of COMF funding to support organisations to comply with Natasha's law.
- Children's Centres food banks have moved to vouchers only. There has been a successful start to the affordable food pilot at Roundabout Children's Centre.
- Identification and giving out of major funding to support people in poverty through the Household Support Fund, Winter grants allocated and Local Outbreak Plan funding given out to purchase extra food.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Allocating food access commission and progressing recommendations from the November report.
- Strategic planning for the next financial year, including fundraising and evaluating support over 2021/22. Concern particularly around the funding shortfall in April 2022.
- Supporting/liasing around increasing central capacity for emergency food.
- Developing the Healthy Start campaign and continued donations campaign, and continued search for premises.
- A report on food in relation to the cost of living is a separate paper to this committee.

### 3.4.4 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 to ensure the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people.

#### **Key recent activities**

#### **Community Hub**

- The Local Discretionary Social Fund has been distributed to many different organisations throughout the city in the hope this can reach as many household as possible. Application is also available through the Local Discretionary Social Fund for households in receipt of benefits via <https://brighton-gwa.egovhub.net/Gwa/launch>. Households not in receipt of benefits can apply via the Community Hub.
- Concerns have been raised around residents heating their homes in the city. The Covid pages on the council's website link to the government's Household Support Fund: [Request help for yourself or someone else \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk).
- Sample questions have been provided to local services that interact with those at risk of fuel poverty. These questions aim to identify those at risk of fuel poverty and refer them on appropriately for support. The Covid Testing Street Team have distributed leaflets on the government's Household Support fund.
- The government's Household Support Fund has been available to those who need extra support to pay for food, fuel and other essential expenses.
- The 2021/22 Household Support Fund of £2.1m has now been fully utilised and will be expended by the 31 March 2022 deadline, including the planned distribution of vouchers to Free School Meal families for the Easter school holidays for which funds have already been transferred to the voucher provider.

### **Equalities & Access**

- The Vaccine Equity Plan has been active from January to March 2022, aiming to tackle vaccine uptake inequality via the following methods:
  - Enhanced targeted communications and engagement.
  - Adapting vaccination delivery utilising pop-ups and non-English speaking support at sessions across the city, roving teams visiting care settings, targeted outreach sessions for the homeless community and utilising pharmacies.
  - Task groups to work across sectors to tackle specific groups effectively.

### **Communications**

- Translated communications are now available with vaccination information and are being distributed at relevant vaccination sessions.
- Social media content is being considered for the next stage of "Living with Covid".
- A communication to be produced detailing information for those eligible for Covid-19 antiviral drugs.

### **Volunteering**

- Recruitment of volunteers is increasingly difficult and numbers continue to decrease.
- Disability confidence training is to be provided for all those working in vaccination centres and pop-ups, including volunteers.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- This working group has now closed and its activities have been mainstreamed into day to day service delivery.

## **3.4.5 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**

- A six month progress report on the City Employment & Skills Recovery Plan is now available on the council's website: [Employment and Skills Recovery Plan Progress Review \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/employment-and-skills-recovery-plan-progress-review). The Action Plan for Year 2 has been drawn up with the Adult Learning & Skills Partnership.
- GB MET hosted a hospitality sector event at the college with local employers. The role of the local further education provider in supporting skills development was identified as being important by the Events & Economy Working Group. The council supported the event.
- In February, the Youth Employment Hub promoted National Apprenticeship Week through a series of events at Montague House. It also offered four Art Clubs, four Grub Clubs, one Dealing With Anxiety course, two Yoga Workshops, eight Recruitment Events, ten dedicated careers and employability support sessions
- The council continues to engage with Fedcap and Maximus, providers of Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) funded programmes to support people towards work.
- The council has supported the SEND Network and Work & Learning Group to identify priorities which support the City Employment & Skills Plan.
- Collaboration with the Sussex Learning Network and the council to utilise European Social Fund funding for the 'Class of Covid' to best effect in the city.
- MyBnk running an accredited Money Works programme at the Youth Employment Hub. Money Works is a financial and digital skills programme for young people to confront their money worries.
- The Adult Education Hub (AEH) will be working with Voices in Exile to assess the English language levels of adults that have recently settled in the city through the refugee resettlement initiative. Once assessed, they will be placed on an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme either at the Adult Education Hub or with another ESOL provider.
- The AEH is working to support Hong Kong British overseas nationals with English language support through the welcome programme and are currently supporting five students at the hub.
- The Multicultural Employability Support Hub (MESH), funded by the DWP, is supported by the council. The service is run by The Trust for Developing Communities, supporting people from ethnically diverse backgrounds move towards and into employment by developing skills, volunteering and accessing training. The project has been running for six months and at end of February 2022, 85 clients had been supported.
- The AEH has achieved 517 enrolments since opening in September across a range of courses, including English, Maths and Information Technology (IT) skills, Business Enterprise, ESOL and employability courses. The hub has engaged with a number of community outreach centres, charities and other key stakeholders to help deliver adult education to residents in the city. Partners include the International Women's Network, Hangleton & Knoll Project, Trust for Developing Communities, Voices in Exile, Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) and many more.

- The Adult Education team and Pre-employment Co-ordinator continue to work closely with other services in the council to help support their recruitment needs through pre-employment training programmes. A Sector Work Based Academy (SWAP) has been delivered for CityClean and City Parks, and plans are underway to deliver pre-employment courses for Civil Enforcement Officer recruitment and Adult Social Care.

### **Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Sussex**

- Two fixed term posts (one full-time equivalent) have been appointed as BIPC Manager. The post holders will work with the British Library on a long term funding model for the BIPC network.
- The BME & Female Entrepreneur tender has been awarded by the Brighton Chamber and Always Possible who will be rolling out the programme in the coming months.
- The BIPC has hosted webinars for business to make them aware of the European Regional Development Fund Invest4 business grants.
- The BIPC is making a positive contribution to Community Wealth Building in creating and supporting local entrepreneurs and businesses. The centre provided advice and support to nearly 500 people in the first two quarters of 2021/22 (despite the lockdowns), which equals the full year target; of those supported, 50% were women, 11% were BME and 5% were disabled.

### **Brighton Living Wage Campaign**

- Raised the salaries of over 4,042 people.
- 793 employers signed up as Living Wage employers.
- The campaign continues although it slowed during the pandemic.
- Five blog posts released about the Living Wage Week event:
  - "Kingsway Care Goes Beyond the Living Wage"
  - "Why is St John's School and College a Living Wage Employer?"
  - "Brighton & Hove Businesses Celebrate Living Wage Week 2021"
  - "FareShare Sussex on the Living Wage Campaign and Future Growth"
  - "Brighton Gin's Commitment to the Living Wage"
- 141 employers participated in the annual Living Wage survey:
  - 90% of businesses with 100+ employees said that joining the Brighton Living Wage directly elevated salaries.
  - 48% of businesses said that it helped with staff retention.

### **European Regional Development Fund Invest4 Business Grants**

- 43 new grant applications have been approved for a total of £552,000 since the end of November 2021.
- A total of £2.03 million in grant funds have been awarded out of the total £2.85 million grant programme.
- The project has been officially extended to May 2023, with the grant programme closing in March 2023.
- The target for grants paid for the October to December period was exceeded with £453,000 of grant funds awarded.
- The project has exceeded its 'grants paid out' target in the last two claim periods. Since January 2021, £168,707 has been paid out and the overall project total paid out is £897,000.

- Invest 4 supplied all of the information needed to satisfy the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government 'On the Spot Audit Visit' with the University of Chichester (the Accountable Body) which occurred in January 2022.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Agree future priorities for the Adult Learning & Skills Partnership, SEND Network and ESFA Network.
- Contribute to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) as it continues to evolve.
- Support working groups responding to:
  - the Levelling up White Paper (January 2022);
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (Spring 2022); and
  - Local Enterprise Partnership review and impact on Coast to Capital and the Skills Agenda.
- In April, the AEH is to start a new service for homeless individuals who need support to develop core skills in Literacy, Numeracy, IT and ESOL. This replaces the Step by Step project that ended in 2021.
- Creation of a new council virtual work experience programme to support recruitment and Gatsby benchmarks.
- The AEH is to launch Security Guard training (Security Industry Authority qualifications) in response to employer and DWP demand.
- AEH recruitment onto the new Circular Economy module (Blueprint Interreg project) to commence at the end of March.
- Planning for the citywide apprenticeship graduation on 29 June following last year's successful event supported by several stakeholders/providers.
- Meet the Construction Industry Training Board as part of a review of the council's Local Employment Scheme.

### **Business & Intellectual Property Centre Sussex**

- Continue to work with the British Library to push for a longer term funding stream from central government.
- BIPC Brighton & Hove's Confident Business Series is a business support programme delivering webinars, 121 clinics and peer-to-peer networking based around the Business Model Canvas. The programme is open to all businesses and aims to particularly engage businesses from BME communities and female entrepreneurs. It will run from March to the end of July 2022 and is being delivered by the Brighton Chamber and Always Possible.
- Official launch of the BIPC, including invitations to Members planned for May 2022.

### **Brighton Living Wage Campaign**

- Ongoing promotion of the Brighton Living Wage and aiming for the 800th sign up.
- In person event to be organised to celebrate the 800th sign up.
- Living Wage survey results will be released in the form of a two to three page report and social media infographics.

### **European Regional Development Fund Invest4 Business Grants**

- Ongoing work to achieve the target of £614,000 in grants paid out by March 2022.
- Explore setting up a Small Grant Programme to help meet the target for Small and Medium Enterprises supported.

- Gather monitoring data to show the benefits that have resulted from the grants.

### 3.4.6 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**

##### **Tourism and Hospitality**

- National research from the Tourism Alliance shows 29% of businesses reporting cancellations of pre-booked business from January to March and 40% reporting they are likely to fail.
- Hotel occupancy rates in the city were at 59% in December 2021 (compared to 72% in 2019).
- VisitBrighton is working hard to recover membership numbers.
- The Brighton Centre diary is full but dealing with a lot of displaced business from 2020 and 2021. There is positive news around the future conference enquiries.
- Venues across the city now fully functioning but still recovering in terms of return to full revenues.

##### **Outdoor Events**

- Reports for events in parks and open spaces (45 in total) and on Madeira Drive (18 in total) have been approved. There is a buoyant events calendar but there are issues with staffing and access to hiring infrastructure. Costs have risen steeply.
- Continuing with Covid risk assessments and working with Public Health ensuring no complacency in terms of risk management as the city moves forward.
- The PCR testing site has moved from Preston Park to The Level. Plans are on target for Pride in August.
- Good progress is being made for the Women's Euros event in July, particularly around the Fanzone. The Euro Officer is now in post.
- A New Outdoor Events Manager joined in February.

##### **Sector Skills and Employment**

- The male unemployment rate is very high in the city.
- The Skills Recovery Plan six month review have been well received.
- Looking at support to the over 50s to address the skills gap. Relevant to skills shortages in tourism, hospitality and events sectors.

##### **Revenue and Benefits**

- Invited 1,400 businesses to apply for business rate grants on 18 January and 557 applications were received within five days.

- Retail was not included in the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) this time. Some businesses may fall into eligibility for new Covid additional relief if no rate relief has been received previously.
- Live events and music ARG closed on 24 January with 24 applications.

### **Wider City Economy View**

- Summary of the Cities Outlook 2022 report looking at the health of high streets by a think tank tracking the 33 largest cities in the United Kingdom, including Brighton & Hove.
- The mixed use of shops creates a unique city environment. There is a need for a balance of small businesses, independents and creatives.
- Voids in mixed use office premises due to home working.
- Current rents being paid but rents from early in the pandemic are slow to be repaid but overall, a positive recovery.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Licencing– need to consider how small businesses will be supported after September 2022.
- Examine the detail of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Levelling Up emerging policy areas and set up a working group.
- Adult social care crisis – consider a campaign to target the male workforce.
- Focus on mixed use of shops for the wider community, creative and entrepreneurial uses to protect the uniqueness of the city.

## **3.4.7 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.
- Reduce use of the additional emergency accommodation acquired to meet demands of Everyone In.
- 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). Now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC).
- Delivery of both MHCLG / DLUHC Programmes - Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP).

### **Key recent activities**

#### **Move on plan**

Includes NSAP for people accommodated under Covid-19 Emergency Accommodation (hotels and longer term move on provision):

- There are 40 rooms in Houses in Multiple Occupation rooms provided for rough sleepers and single homeless people accommodated under Covid.

- 50 additional properties acquired under the Home Purchase scheme to be used as Housing First for the most entrenched rough sleepers and those with complex needs.
- 20 additional units with St Mungo's/Clarion to provide medium/high support.
- The remaining number of people that need to be moved on from those accommodated under pandemic provisions ( Covid 1 & 2) as of week commencing 21/02/22 (figures reported to Housing Committee on 16 March), has reduced to 50 clients. In total, 770 people have been moved on under this project.
- Between December 2021 and March 2022, a further eight people have been successfully moved into the private rented sector bringing the total to over 140.

### **Offenders Project**

- There is funding to assist ten offenders from July 2021 until March 2022 working with Southdown Intensive Support. Seven tenancies have been set up as at the end of January 2022.

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

Capital and revenue grant funding to deliver homes has been awarded under this programme. The two schemes are aimed at a Housing Led Support Model (aimed at rough sleepers with complex and multiple needs) and a Rapid Rehousing Model aimed at people with lower needs who are newer to the streets:

- Under 'Purchase & Repair', the target is to provide 30, one bedroom properties during 2021/22 and 2022/23. The target for this financial year is to ensure 20 properties are purchased and ready to let. As of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (figures reported to Housing Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March), 25 offers had been accepted. Fourteen of these properties were back in council ownership, with nine ready to let. A further five properties were under assessment.
- It is the early stages of the second scheme, which is to deliver 30 properties under 10 year leases. The properties are to house rough sleepers with lower support needs. Eight properties have been completed, with another 12 to complete by the end of March 2022 and a further nine pending consideration. The scheme is going well with very proactive engagement with local accommodation owners and a robust communication strategy via social media.
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol provision is available and has been triggered many times this winter.
- The official street count went ahead on 2 November 2021 and numbers were at 37. In January, the intel count was undertaken which counted nine rough sleepers.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- The Private Rented Sector Team continue to train and upskill landlords and other professionals to assist clients to access private rented accommodation.
- The transformation project is well underway with a focus on resetting the Housing Needs Service following the Covid pandemic. This will be progressed when the restructure of Heads of Service in Housing is in place.
- The move on plan for the remaining clients placed in emergency accommodation (hotels) under pandemic provisions (Covid 1 & 2 clients) is the key focus. The current plan projects that the remaining 50 clients



will be moved on from emergency provision into more sustainable accommodation by the end of June 2022.

- The Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 grant bid has been submitted with support from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities for just under £9m. Moderation will take place late March/early April with the outcome expected around June 2022.
- Preparing to submit a bid for a further RSAP grant for 2022/23–2023/24 for capital and supporting revenue.

### 3.4.8 Future Ways of Working

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

- To scope the Future Ways of Working for the council through service and staff engagement. From this, develop a vision for the council which will inform Our People Promise, and Digital and Accommodation strategies.
- Consolidate emerging workplace needs, and deliver the programme and model for a different return to the workplace in 2022-2023, which considers changing service delivery models and working practices

#### **Key recent activities**

- Completed analysis of 94 focus groups and identified the key future ways of working themes for engagement.
- Engagement with existing staff and management networks, trade unions and workers' fora on the themes from focus groups and the staff survey as relating to Future Ways of Working.
- Launched Collaboration Space Pilot in Bartholomew House (running January to April) for staff to trial different office set-ups for hybrid working and gather feedback.
- Agreement by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on the service led hybrid working framework and to engage with staff and key stakeholders.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Engagement on hybrid working framework with existing staff and key stakeholders to inform the programme and return to ELT and the Policy & Resources Committee to verify the model.
- In April, explore Customer Service Centre opening of self-help and assistance at Hove Town Hall.
- Scope and design a digital skills framework for the council for all staff.
- Define booking software requirements to inform the hybrid working framework.
- Continue to review interim working arrangements, including current office demand, to inform the hybrid working framework and verify the model.

### 3.4.9 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**

- Charter Plus accreditation achieved in recognition of the council's work in supporting Members and Member Development.
- Performance & Development Plans (PDPs) completed the Group Leaders, Deputy Group Leaders and other Members who have requested them.
- Focus in recent weeks has been on planning for the Being a Councillor events. The events were open to anyone interested in being a Councillor as part of the lead up to the May 2023 local elections and were promoted across the city, including to under-represented groups. The events were held on 7 and 8 March and provided attendees with the opportunity to hear from Members about their experiences of being a Councillor and from officers providing an overview of the city and council, and the rules and practicalities around the role. A follow up event will be held next year closer to the elections regarding the detail of the nominations process.
- Proposals for Future Ways of Working (FWoW) in relation to Members were agreed by Leaders' Group on 9 March.
- Continuing to trial the Councillor Enquiries Case Management System, including training for officers.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Obtain views from Members on FWoW during March, including an online survey, two online focus groups and two slots for Members to visit the future workspace at Bartholomew House. These activities will be in conjunction with colleagues from the FWoW and Workstyles programmes. Feedback and next steps will be presented to the Leaders' Group for approval.
- Debrief and analysis following the Being a Councillor events and completing outstanding actions.
- Scheduling future meetings of the Supporting Members Working Group and initiating Member Development reporting.

### **4. Analysis and consideration of 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 has been designed to ensure 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 was 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 and consultation**

- 5.1 The programme has engaged 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 has planned ahead as far as it has been able, adapted in line with outbreak control, emergency response and restart of the city, and each working group has reviewed its approach as circumstances changed. 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, the council and its staff, and will continue to update Members as work progresses.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The governance structure of the Recovery & Renewal Programme is provided for within the council's existing resources. The schemes, projects and programmes supported are themselves funded from various sources including the Household Support Fund, Contain Outbreak Management Funds, and other Covid grants and reliefs for businesses and individuals. 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.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell*

*Date: 28/03/22*

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 This report is for information only. There are therefore no legal implications arising directly from it. The Recovery and Renewal Programme is consistent with the Council's powers and duties.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 23/03/22*

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 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 has considered 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 have considered whether recovery from the pandemic creates any opportunities to narrow pre-existing inequalities. Progress towards delivery of each EIA has been checked regularly as part of the governance of the programme.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 The sustainability of its recovery plans has been a key aspect of the programme's approach. This has ranged 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 has sought 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. A representative from the council's Sustainability Team has been invited to Covid Recovery & Renewal Group meetings.

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Crime & disorder implications:**

- 11.1 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.

### **Public health implications:**

- 11.2 Public Health is at the heart of the council's response to, and recovery from, the pandemic and has been mainstreamed throughout the Recovery & Renewal programme. Colleagues from Public Health and the Recovery & Renewal programme have co-ordinated their responses to the pandemic and met regularly to discuss progress and any issues.

## **Supporting Documentation**

None.

# Brighton & Hove City Council

**Policy and Resources (Recovery)  
Sub-Committee**

**Agenda Item 33**

**Subject: Discretionary Energy Payment Scheme**

**Date of meeting: 21 April 2022**

**Report of: Executive Director Governance, People & Resources**

**Contact Officer: Name: Paul Ross-Dale**

**Email: paul.ross-dale@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

**For general release**

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that due to a miscalculation of public holidays the report was not completed when the agenda was published.

## **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

- 1.1 The government has introduced a nationwide scheme to provide a £150 energy payment for households in Council Tax Bands A – D. Alongside the main Energy Payment scheme, the government has provided Brighton and Hove with £0.594m for discretionary awards to cases that are not eligible for the main payment. The discretionary allocation will pay for the equivalent of 3,963 awards at £150.
- 1.2 This report outlines recommendations for criteria and indicators that will determine how decisions are to be made and who will receive discretionary payments.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Committee approves the criteria set out in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.18 for making Discretionary Energy Payment decisions.
- 2.2 That Committee notes the creation of a donation scheme, through Third Sector partners, for residents to make donations to support households impacted by the cost of living increase.

## **3. Context and background information**

- 3.1 The £150 Council Tax energy payment is part of the government's response to the rising cost of energy bills from April 2022. Local Authorities are tasked

with administering the scheme. Later in the year, energy companies will be tasked with crediting £200 to energy bills, repayable over five years. However, the £150 Council Tax rebate does not have to be repaid.

- 3.2 The main scheme will see households in Bands A – D receiving a £150 payment. The expected number of eligible households is 105,000. 71,000 of those are on Direct Debit and will receive the payment directly into their bank accounts during April. The remaining 34,000 are not on Direct Debit and will have to complete a simple application, providing their bank details via the council's website before their payment is made. There will also be an option for these 34,000 households to receive the payment as a credit to their Council Tax bill. A third option for payment is currently being investigated, in the event that neither of the other two choices are suitable.
- 3.3 The government has also provided £0.594m to the Local Authority for making Discretionary Payments. This amounts to the equivalent of 3,963 payments of £150. This report outlines the conditions under which awards can be made and recommends a framework for making discretionary decisions.
- 3.4 The government suggests that the scheme could cover households in need who have not benefited from the main scheme, but could also be used to top up help for households in Bands A – D who have already received a payment. However, in designing the scheme, there must be awareness that the fund is limited. The main scheme will cover 105,000 payments, but the discretionary scheme only has enough funding to cover a further 3,963 cases.
- 3.5 Under the main scheme, the government requires payments to be made by 30 September 2022, but payments for the Discretionary Scheme can be made up to 30 November 2022. The council will not receive reimbursement for payments made after those dates.
- 3.6 To ensure that all remaining claims are processed in time for the 30 November payment deadline, the application period will end on 13 November 2022. If, in advance of scheme closure, it appears likely that the scheme will be underspent, the application period may be extended and proactive communication and engagement will be undertaken to ensure disbursement of the fund as far as practicably possible.
- 3.7 The government has set certain limitations and exclusions. Awards cannot be made to:
  - occupants with a Class M Council Tax exemption (Halls of Residence) – unless they are subject to rising energy costs
  - Occupants with a Class O Council Tax exemption (Ministry of Defence properties)
- 3.8 In designing the decision-making framework, the following principles have been incorporated:

- The criteria should allow sufficient flexibility to respond to individual cases;
- The application process should be as straightforward as possible;
- Specific cohorts and groups could be identified for a payment;
- There will need to be a fair and transparent way to differentiate requests as it will not be possible to help every applicant;
- The discretionary scheme should not be so burdensome to administer that it prevents other more significant welfare support being provided
- Vulnerability and hardship should be recognised as part of the process;
- The priority focus will be on households who have not received a main scheme payment, and;
- There will be consistency with the main scheme in terms of the amount awarded i.e. £150.

3.9 The following categories describe specific groups that have been identified for help. It is proposed that households or individuals in the following groups will receive a £150 payment, upon completion of an application form:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Estimated Numbers</b>
People in emergency and supported accommodation who are not liable to pay Council Tax, but who are liable to pay energy costs	Approximately 400-600 cases (c£60,000 - £90,000)
People on Council Tax Reduction in Bands E – H. These households will already have qualified for low income help from Council Tax Reduction	Approximately 439 cases (c£70,000)

3.10 For the remainder of the scheme, as funds are limited, awards will be targeted towards households who are experiencing financial or other vulnerability. To make a discretionary decision, officers will take account of any or all of the following indicators:

*The following list is not exhaustive and other indicators may be taken into account.*

- People who receive a Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance, or Attendance Allowance People with disabilities or chronic health conditions
- Carers or those receiving care
- Older people (70 +) with financial vulnerability
- Pregnant women with financial vulnerability
- Households using a key meter;
- On Universal Credit or other benefits;

- On low or nil income
- In overall debt, beyond debt that has solely been caused by rising fuel costs;
- Someone in the household has specific medical needs that drive up fuel costs
- Someone in the household has an exemption or a disregard for Severe Mental Impairment.

- 3.11 Where it is possible to identify households with specific financial or health indicators, for example those where a household member is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance, those households will be contacted proactively to be invited to claim.
- 3.12 Consideration will also be given to households and individuals who did not receive the main £150 payment as they were not in qualifying accommodation on 1 April 2022, but they subsequently move into qualifying accommodation prior to 30 November 2022.
- 3.13 There will also be consideration for other situations, for example:
- Survivors of Domestic and Financial Abuse, where the individual did not receive the benefit of the original £150 payment.
  - Marginalised and isolated communities - including Refugees and Migrants; Gypsies, Roma and Travellers and BAME communities.
- 3.14 Where a household has already received a main scheme payment, whether in a Brighton and Hove address or from another Local Authority, they will not receive an additional payment unless they are experiencing exceptional hardship when compared to other households.
- 3.15 Efforts will be made to ensure that support provided to households will include signposting to further fuel help, as outlined on the council's website, for example the Warmth for Wellbeing scheme.
- 3.16 Due to the limited extent of the fund, once the budget has been spent, no further awards will be possible. If the awards are fully allocated in advance of 13 November (the planned application closure date), then the fund will by necessity be closed early.
- 3.17 There will be no right of appeal against any discretionary decision taken.
- 3.18 Nothing in the criteria shall fetter or restrict the discretion of the Council in the exercise of its powers.

#### Third Sector Donation scheme



- 3.19 Under the main scheme for Energy Payments, nearly all households in Bands A – D will receive a £150 payment regardless of whether they request it. There has already been interest from individuals who do not feel they need the extra money and would rather it went to other households in need.
- 3.20 In partnership with Brighton and Hove Food Partnership and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), the two organisations will create a new donation scheme where residents can visit the partners' websites, or access them via the council's web site, and donate their energy payment, or make other donations, which the two organisations will distribute to provide further support to households impacted by the cost of living increase.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 In designing a discretionary scheme, there are a number of different options, including setting specific categories for assistance, or having a more generalised case-by-case discretion.
- 4.2 It is also important that the scheme is administratively proportionate to the level of the award. While a £150 award is supportive to households it should not detract from the other council initiatives that are contributing more significant assistance to those in need. Therefore the discretionary scheme should be designed so it is not administratively burdensome on the same services that are providing other essential welfare support.
- 4.3 Generally, the simpler and more transparent the scheme, and the more it is focused around specific groups, the easier it will be to administer, and, critically, for residents to apply for. They would be required to provide less evidence and the decision making would be simpler and quicker. This would leave officers with more time to focus on supporting vulnerable residents accessing the main scheme. However, the disadvantage is that the simpler the discretionary scheme, the less responsive it may be to individual cases of hardship. Courts have held that whilst it is lawful and essential for decision makers to follow policies for the exercise of discretion, overall discretion should not be fettered by such policies, and there should always be the ability to consider exceptional cases.
- 4.4 Two specific groups have been identified in the table at paragraph 3.9, as they will have experienced financial vulnerability and can be identified easily. However, there will still be enough funding left to allow for other applications to be made on a case-by-case basis. This should offer a balanced blend of approaches.
- 4.5 There are options around the amount of award given. It is open to the Local Authority to choose amounts for the discretionary scheme, and it is also allowable to top up existing recipients. However, justification of different payment levels would be potentially difficult and the preferred option is for Discretionary Energy Payments to match the main scheme, at £150 per household. This is to ensure consistency and equity, especially in light of the overall main scheme being a bulk exercise in distributing flat amounts of

£150. However, there will be enough flexibility to allow for some discretion to top up smaller cases in exceptional circumstances.

## **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The timeframe for setting up the Energy Payment Scheme has been very restricted and has not allowed time for a broader consultation. The Discretionary Scheme has been designed by a cross-section of officers from Welfare and Council Tax teams based on their knowledge of managing existing hardship schemes, working with the Community Hub and administering other discretionary schemes such as LDSF and the Household Support Fund. Money Advice Plus, and the Advice Matters / Moneyworks partnership were also invited to one of the design meetings and contributed important feedback and ideas to the discussion. Feedback from Public Health (specifically the Fuel Poverty Steering Group) has also been incorporated into the scheme.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Once approved, the scheme will enable further support to be provided to qualifying households experiencing fuel poverty in the coming months.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The government is providing funding for the energy payment scheme and the discretionary energy scheme through Section 31 grant and has passed the funding to the council in advance. The energy payment scheme is estimated to be £15.897m in total within Brighton and Hove however the final funding will be based on actual allocations and therefore the government will adjust this allocation accordingly.
- 7.2 The discretionary scheme has total resources of £0.594m and all allocations will need to be made by 30 November 2022.
- 7.3 Administering these new schemes is recognised by government as a new burden on local authorities and one-off funding will be provided. However, the level of funding is not known and the council will therefore incur additional administrative costs, including IT costs, with a low risk that they are not fully covered.

Name of finance officer consulted: James Hengeveld Date consulted 04/04/2022

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 A discretionary scheme such as the one proposed in the report must be implemented reasonably and fairly by the Council. A written Policy setting out the criteria for decision making will assist in achieving this aim. Ensuring there is flexibility to review exceptional circumstance or representations will prevent the Council from applying the Policy too rigidly.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date consulted 23/03/22

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 The Discretionary Energy Payment scheme has been designed with the considerations from the Equalities Impact Assessment in mind. There is a limited impact overall in terms of mitigation, as payments are a maximum of £150 and the overall fund allows only for a maximum of 3,963 awards.
- 9.2 Section 3 sets out the categories where inequality due to vulnerability (financial and health) is likely to present. In terms of access to the scheme, there will be proactive work to award the payment to some of these cohorts, and the Community Hub will be on hand to assist with applications.
- 9.3 Organisations in the voluntary sector will be fully apprised of the scheme (both main and discretionary) so that they can ensure clients are able to access it with support.
- 9.4 We will gather officer and voluntary sector feedback about the scheme, which will be used to understand demand in the city for support. This insight will help to shape future schemes, should funding opportunities arise.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

There will be a marginal benefit in the sense that households may be referred into energy saving / energy efficiency schemes as a result of applying for discretionary help.

### **Public health implications:**

11. There is a clear Public Health benefit in assisting households with their fuel bills. However, compared to the scale of rising fuel costs, the £150 payment represents a relatively low amount. The value of it may be multiplied up by ensuring that residents are signposted to appropriate fuel support schemes at the same time as receiving their payment.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **Appendices**

1. [Equalities Impact Assessment](#)
- 2.

### **Background documents**

- 1.
- 2.



## 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>	Energy Boost Rebate	<b>ID No.<sup>6</sup></b>	
<b>Team/Department<sup>7</sup></b>	Revenues & Benefits		
<b>Focus of EIA<sup>8</sup></b>	<p>The focus of this EIA is to ascertain what the impact of delivering the governments Energy Boost Rebate scheme for both the Main Scheme and Discretionary Scheme to the residents of Brighton &amp; Hove.</p> <p>Main Scheme: The government has legislated that all local authorities must distribute a payment of £150 to households with the rising energy costs. This is a one-off payment to each household (not individuals) in Council Tax bands A-D based on the data as of 01<sup>st</sup> April 2022. If they are a direct debit payer, then we are to use these payment details to send the payment of £150 to the customer, regardless of their Council Tax status. If they are not a direct debit payer, then they will have to complete a form to receive the payment to their nominated bank account. They will also have the choice of not filling in the form and instead having the payment credited to their Council Tax account as a rebate.</p>		

	<p>Discretionary Scheme: The government has allocated £144m to be distributed to all local authorities, so that they can create their own discretionary schemes for those households who fall outside the main scheme (described above). The allocation for Brighton &amp; Hove is £594,000. Based on the Local Authority's own criteria, a household will receive a one-off payment as described in the various ways above. As a Local Authority will have to identify the most vulnerable households in the city, to help ease the burden of the rising energy costs.</p>
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All payments must be disbursed by the 30 November 2022.

## 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)
NA – This has never been done before	NA – This has never been done before	NA – This has never been done before

### 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: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations
Age <sup>14</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People of all ages will be eligible for a payment.</li> <li>• Those on fixed incomes such as Pension Credit and state pensions could be affected by the rising energy costs, especially those who are vulnerable due to health issues</li> <li>• Young people who are on fixed incomes could also be affected due to the vulnerability of their status, especially those who have fled homes etc.</li> <li>• Accessibility to the main and discretionary scheme may also be an issue in terms of online access</li> </ul>	<p>Those who are elderly have historically been disproportionately affected by changes in weather and increasing prices</p>	<p>Vulnerable people at either end of the age spectrum could be adversely affected by the rise in energy costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure they are identified as a vulnerable group for our discretionary policy.</li> <li>• Reach out to the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector to make sure they are aware of the scheme and how to support their client group.</li> <li>• Support available from Community Hub to help with applications.</li> </ul>
Disability <sup>15</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with disabilities may be disproportionately affected, especially those who need specialist electronic equipment as part of their medical therapy. Also, there could be individuals in this cohort who spend more time in their home, therefore having increased fuel costs</li> <li>• Accessibility to the main and discretionary scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some medical machines have to run all the time to help someone. This has a huge impact on the energy bill and household income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents have to prioritise medical need over all other expenses such as food and other energy costs</li> <li>• Residents are at risk of choosing to turn off heating, if they feel that is their only option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify those on disability benefits.</li> <li>• Speak to the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector about those with specific medical needs</li> <li>• Identify 'at risk' medical categories, eg those on DLA/PIP / Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Support available from Community Hub to help with applications.</li> </ul>



<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>
	<i>may also be an issue in terms of online access</i>			
<b>Gender reassignment<sup>16</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We do not have specific data at case level.</li> <li>• Changes in energy prices will affect any person</li> </ul>	The Trans Needs Assessment highlights that Trans people are more likely to have disabilities, including a higher proportion of mental ill health than other people		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Make sure they are identified as a vulnerable group for our discretionary group.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reach out to the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector to make sure they are aware of the scheme and how to support their client group.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity<sup>17</sup></b>	Pregnancy and maternity can bring a range of health issues, which could result in increased energy costs, but we are unable to identify those who are pregnant or on maternity from our data sets. There can also be greater financial vulnerability for single parents in this group.	Pregnancy is a specific indicator in the Public Health criteria for accessing the Warmth for Wellbeing scheme		<p>We can invite a discretionary application and be aware of this extra need.</p> <p>Pregnancy is highlighted as a possible indicator of vulnerability in the discretionary scheme report</p>
<b>Race/ethnicity<sup>18</sup></b> Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers	Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers will be vulnerable to the energy increases due to the low incomes and in some cases, quality of accommodation and resources <i>Accessibility to the main and discretionary scheme may also be an issue in terms of online access and language barriers</i>	Asylum seekers are typically excluded from government support if they are not entitled to public funds.	Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are less able to support themselves without assistance and yet assistance is limited. This payment falls outside the definition of “public funds” and can therefore assist them, assuming that they haven’t already received a payment	<p>This cohort is specified in the report as being one that may require support from the scheme where they are subject to rising energy costs</p> <p><i>Support available from Community Hub to help with applications.</i></p> <p>Pre-existing relationship with Voices in Exile will help us</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>
				navigate the issues and reach those in need
<b>Religion or belief<sup>19</sup></b>	It's not thought that religion or belief will have an effect on energy bills above any other categories	NA	NA	NA
<b>Sex/Gender<sup>20</sup></b>	From other welfare-oriented EIA's, we know that women tend to be adversely impacted by benefit rules and other factors, including that single parent families are more likely to be female-led.		There could be cumulative spending pressures for single parent families, which statistically are more likely to be female-led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Financial vulnerability will be identified for applicants and this will help to determine whether discretionary support is needed</i></li> <li>• <i>Reach out to the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector to make sure they are aware of the scheme and how to support their client group.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation<sup>21</sup></b>	There is no direct impact due to sexual orientation	NA	NA	NA
<b>Marriage and civil partnership<sup>22</sup></b>	Those who are married or in a civil partnership would more likely have a combined household income to cover the increased cost in living expenses, so would not be adversely affected compared to those who are single or without a partner in the household	NA	NA	NA

<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>
<b>Community Cohesion<sup>23</sup></b>	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Other relevant groups<sup>24</sup></b>	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Cumulative impact<sup>25</sup></b>	There is a degree of crossover with other welfare schemes, for example the Household Support Fund, which also provides fuel support among a range of other things. A revised Council Tax Reduction scheme was introduced from 1 April 2022 that is more generous than before.			

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

*The construction of the main scheme is such that it prioritises those in Bands A -D who pay by Direct Debit. These households will receive the £150 into their bank accounts, without having to do anything. For households in Bands A-D who don't pay by Direct Debit, an application process is required. The resident will have to apply online, providing their bank details. However, in this cohort, we are likely to see greater financial vulnerability, as often people avoid Direct Debit because it requires them to have funds at the time the direct debit is taken, and their income may fluctuate or be too low. So the result of this is that those who aren't on Direct Debit are automatically at a disadvantage and this group is likely to have a higher proportion of vulnerability in it. We are mitigating this by looking carefully at the communication that will be sent to households inviting them to claim. Assistance will be provided by Community Hub where access is an*

35

<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><i>issue. And we will work with partners in the voluntary sector to ensure that their clients are aware of the payment and are supported. In the worst case scenario, the £150 is not lost. It would simply be added as a credit onto the resident's council tax account.</i></p> <p><i>The Discretionary Energy Payment scheme has been designed with the above considerations (around protected characteristics) in mind, although we have to be aware that the scheme is limited financially in the sense that the individual payments are a maximum of £150 and the overall fund allows only for a maximum of 3,963 awards.</i></p> <p><i>We are also limited in terms of the distribution of the main scheme as it is heavily prescribed for specific households. Most of our mitigations are in regard to the Discretionary Scheme as that is the element we can control.</i></p> <p><i>We will gather officer and voluntary sector feedback about the scheme, which will be used to understand future demand and effective responses, after the scheme has closed.</i></p>				

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

<b>Title</b> (of data, research or engagement)	<b>Date</b>	<b>Gaps in data</b>	<b>Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with?</b> (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
<b>Meeting held with Warmth 4 Wellbeing and Emma Daniels (CAB)</b>	<b>16/03/22</b>	<b>Vulnerable groups identified</b>	<b>Added to the list of vulnerable subsets to consider paying</b>

## 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

<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.

**4 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.

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

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

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

**8 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)'

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.

<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.

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<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.



# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Policy and Resources Recovery Sub Committee

## Agenda Item 34

**Subject:** Impacts to Food Access from Cost-of-Living Increase

**Date of meeting:** 21<sup>st</sup> April 22

**Report of:** Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture

**Contact Officer:** Name: Helen Starr-Keddle

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that due to a miscalculation of public holidays the report was not completed when the agenda was published.

### For general release

#### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members about the food access concerns presented by the cost of living increases on residents of Brighton & Hove. The report outlines the problems, consequences, and mitigations.

#### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee notes the work taken toward the ongoing work streams from the [Response & Recovery Update: Food Nov 4<sup>th</sup> Report](#) and the future mitigations from 3.18 – 3.27

2.2 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee support Brighton & Hove City Mission's application for a lease of council owned - 5 Preston Circus, subject to the agreement of acceptable terms.

2.3 That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee instructs officers to review risk management procedures for food emergencies and incorporate into city plans and policies.

#### 3. Context and background information

3.1 National reports identify that food insecurity levels have risen to the highest yet ([Jan 22\) Food Foundation](#) See Round 9

3.2 The cost of food has increased. The cost is expected to increase more in future due to fuel price increases, inflation, the war in Ukraine and global

supply chain issues. [Child poverty action group](#) estimates that the cost of food for families will go up by £26 per month for families in poverty.

- 3.3 The cost of living will rise about £20 per week for most family types. Significantly affecting families with children. [New Economics Foundation](#) estimate that 23.4 million people will be unable to afford the cost of living in Spring.

### **Levels of food insecurity in Brighton**

- 3.4 At least 5870 people supported weekly through community emergency food providers (17 % children) in Jul 21. [Emergency Food Network Report 2021 \(bhfood.org.uk\)](#)
- 3.5 Emergency Food Providers report an increase over winter 21/22
- 3.6 There is a cohort of people (such as single parents, people with disabilities or long-term health conditions in household, Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic Communities) who will need ongoing support for food & fuel (not short-term interventions). Despite help with advice services, some people have already received all the support there is available, but still can't be assisted from their situation. Short-term interventions won't be suitable for a proportion of the population.
- 3.7 Estimates suggest that between 6500 – 7000 further people in Brighton & Hove will enter fuel poverty in April. Only a percentage of these will be expected to need emergency food (rather than budgeting, support from other sources etc). With a larger proportion seeking help in the Winter months from October. There is no current accurate estimation for how many people this will be because it is impossible to calculate all the multiple variations that are affecting household budgets and at what point they hit crisis. Estimates vary from 200 – 1000 extra households needing weekly food support, but it could be higher.
- 3.8 The ideal solution to help the new cohort of people in poverty is to provide cash, through discretionary payments. If there is no funding to provide financial assistance, the impact will be that emergency food providers who are already running at capacity will have to turn away people.
- 3.9 Eventually, the impact will be that more people will suffer malnutrition, health consequences of an inadequate diet, will need to seek healthcare services for poor physical and mental health, higher risk of homelessness, addiction problems and increase in crime levels. Already obesity rates in Brighton are higher, which can be a result of people needing to choose cheaper, unhealthy food.
- 3.10 Particularly at risk from April are people with disabilities and long-term health conditions who are housebound. This is because many food banks have stopped delivering due to volunteer shortages, East Brighton Food Coop have started charging for their service and the Household Support Fund is stopping.



## Update on work over Autumn 21 and Winter

- 3.11 Previous [BHCC committee report Nov 4<sup>th</sup>](#) updated members on the work that is being done, in terms of emergency provision and consideration of a longer-term strategic approach to food. All recommendations approved. However, due to budget constraints, there is still a funding need of £242,058, to be able to deliver all aspects outlined in the previous report. There is a potential £200,000 outlined in the [24<sup>th</sup> Budget Council](#) to go towards this need, however this also covers discretionary funds and free school meals in holidays, so would not fund all the items outlined in the [Nov 4<sup>th</sup> Food report \(Table 3.51\)](#).
- 3.12 Regarding the recommendation 2.5.2 to find storage and processing space for Emergency Food: Brighton & Hove Food Partnership employed a Premises Co-Ordinator for 3 days a week from November to March, using Downs View School in Hollingdean as a base to store and distribute supplies. They undertook extensive research which has not led to finding any suitable properties, for future emergency food storage and distribution. Properties coming onto the market are let quickly. Accessing an empty property e.g., Downs View School the very short-term nature of the meanwhile arrangement means that it is not suitable for longer term planning. If an empty property is being made available, it would need at least 6 months access to be viable.
- 3.13 In conclusion, locating a suitable premises for storage and processing for food, is not viable right now, unless a suitable property became available.
- 3.14 Regarding the recommendation 2.6, to help increase donations through the council, agreement has been made to put in food donation points at Hove and Brighton Town Hall.
- 3.15 Regarding the recommendation 2.7. A Food access commission has been advertised to appoint an organisation to carry out research and recommendations for supporting the food access needs of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities, Refugees & Asylum Seekers.
- 3.16 Regarding the recommendation 2.8, to research the need for financial help with meal delivery services. East Brighton Food Coop who offer the only city-wide 7 day a week meal delivery service have changed from a free service, to a paid for service. This means that there are around 28 clients currently who cannot afford to pay for this service and there is no alternative viable solution. Impact Initiatives and Brighton & Hove Food Partnership have been trialing direct payments to East Brighton Food Coop, when clients are referred from Impact Initiatives (via LDSF team or Community Hub) using the Household Support Fund. There is no funding for this from April.
- 3.17 Trust for Developing Communities employed a Food Development Worker, who has been supporting emergency food providers with funding, training, volunteer advice etc. £24,000 was given out through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to support 11 community organisations with their

capacity and resilience such as complying with Natasha's Law. The need for funding for food was met by using the Household Support Fund.

- 3.18 COMF funding has been found (£74,000) to do the following activities in April 22 – March 23, highlighted in the Nov 4<sup>th</sup> report.
- Brighton & Hove Food Partnership's strategic support to the Emergency Food Network
  - Impact Initiatives food access work e.g., shopping for families who are isolating, digital access for older people, supporting people who are housebound to access food
  - Children's Centres city-wide food bank and affordable food project at Whitehawk
  - Food Policy Coordinator – Emergency Food (7.5 hours per week)
  - Food Access commission for supporting Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and Refugee & Asylum seekers
  - Parking vouchers provided for emergency food organisations
  - Promotion of the Healthy Start voucher scheme, when suitable
  - Support to new and existing emergency food providers

**Future Actions - The work streams that we are now focusing on:**

- 3.19 Support cash-first (or vouchers where cash isn't possible) approaches, if budget can be identified e.g., discretionary payments, free school meal holiday vouchers, to stop people needing to access Emergency Food
- 3.20 Work strategically across Food/Fuel/Money Advice via officer meetings to share schemes and work out where we can add value or reduce duplication
- 3.21 Communicate money support schemes through the Emergency Food Network via meetings and email.
- 3.22 Creation/distribution of materials about where to seek help e.g., cash-first leaflets, which can get distributed via food parcels or in areas of the city.
- 3.23 Continue to look for premises to use as a shared storage/processing space for emergency food
- 3.24 Advance ways of moving beyond crisis to local food system transformation, via Food Policy Officer's long-term strategic city & region plans.
- 3.25 Current global situations mean that food insecurity and disruptions in the supply chain are likely. The city needs a robust mechanism to future proof any shocks to supply or have plans in place which can be launched if certain conditions are met. We need to review food crisis/risk management to feed into city strategies & plans and ensure any risks with food access are identified quickly and actioned upon within council systems & management.
- 3.26 Therefore, we recommend that the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Subcommittee instructs officers to review risk management procedures for food emergencies and incorporate into city plans and policies.

- 3.27 Brighton & Hove City Mission who operate Brighton Food Bank are looking to expand their current offer by moving to a new premises. They would like to negotiate a 10 yr. lease on 5 Preston Circus (Council owned), when the existing lease to Lloyd's bank is terminated. The Brighton Food Bank, has been in existence for 22yrs, employs 5 staff and 25 volunteers, covers the largest geographical area in Brighton & Hove including the centre, currently open 3 full days a week, has over 70 organisations who refer clients for support. Therefore, they are well-trusted and established in the city. The new premises would incorporate a café and advice services. Supporting this proposal would bring much needed extra central capacity for the emergency food needs of residents, whilst also offering viable solutions to help people out of poverty rather than just providing food.
- 3.28 Therefore, we recommend that the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Subcommittee support Brighton & Hove City Mission's application for a lease of 5 Preston Circus, subject to the agreement of acceptable terms.
- 3.29 Council officers met Brighton City Mission on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. Since this point, we have been made aware of other interest in the Lloyds Bank building, by a group hoping to use it for a Climate Hub. These plans are less well-developed than the City Missions.

#### **Additional welfare provision from TBM improvement**

- 3.30 The 24th of Feb Budget Council agreed in Item 83 that up to £0.200m of any improvement to the council's year-end financial position (TBM) be ring-fenced to provide immediately available support during 2022/23 for:
- Food support (including food for children on free school meals in holidays)
  - Discretionary funds, e.g., Housing and council tax support

If this is identified, it needs to be prioritised to reach the groups most at risk of malnutrition in the city.

- 3.31 Free School Meal provision costs £135,000 per week to administer over each week of school holiday. Therefore, this budget would only cover one week of summer half-term with little left to spend on other priorities. Therefore, we are not recommending using this budget to cover free school meals over Summer half-term or over the Summer holidays.
- 3.32 These are the priorities that we need to spend money on for food:

<b>What</b>	<b>How much?</b>
Emergency 'on the day' budget for buying in food. Where the person has had no food and is unable to get to a food bank that day. Administered through Community Hub/LDSF & Impact Initiatives.	£6,000
Support to housebound residents who cannot afford to pay for food. Referrals with funding, to meal delivery services (10 people per month for 2 months referral @ £150 = £18,000) or deliveries from food banks (8	£20,000

people per month = £2,000). Administered through Community Hub, LDSF & Impact Initiatives.	
Top-up food budget for discretionary use e.g. emergency food providers in crisis (those that might need to close due to funding shortfalls, putting pressure on other services) or lack of surplus	£17,000
Cash-first leaflet	£2,000
TOTAL	£45,000

3.33 The remaining £155,000 would we best spend via the Local Discretionary Grant Scheme to stop people needing to access emergency food, instead being able to buy the food they need themselves.

#### 4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

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

Risk	Potential consequence
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>
Brighton & Hove residents forced to choose cheaper unhealthier food to fulfil calorie intake	Increased levels of obesity in the city
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> <li>• Resident's food needs not being met</li> </ul>
Disruptions in supply chain mean we have food shortages	Brighton & Hove Residents suffering hunger and greater food insecurity

#### 5. Community engagement and 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.
- 5.3 There have been several meetings about the cost-of-living crisis between council officers and partners working on advice, fuel, and food.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The cost of living will increase for Brighton & Hove residents, and this will mean that people who were 'just about managing' will be pushed into food poverty, increasing the numbers seeking support for emergency food. There is current capacity within emergency food providers, but this could be exceeded depending on the numbers seeking the support.
- 6.2 The most effective way of stopping people from needing to seek support for food is to provide adequate household income. Where this is not possible, due to funding shortfalls. We must try to provide support for the people who are most vulnerable to malnutrition.
- 6.3 Emergency food and crisis responses need to be incorporated into long-term strategic planning within the Council, to feed into food system transformation.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The report builds on the progress report of 4 November 2021 that identified several work streams to tackle food poverty in the city. This report identifies the projected impact on demand for support as a result of the cost of living, the cost of food and food insecurity influenced by international events. The report identifies a funding need of over £242,000 to be able to deliver all aspects of the 4 November 2021 report.
- 7.2 The report references several sources of finance that have supported food initiatives to date. The Household Support Fund provided £2.140m in 2021-22 and in the recent Spring Statement, the Chancellor announced a further £500m across the UK from April. The council's allocation has yet to be announced. In 2021-22 the £2.140m was distributed through school meal vouchers and discretionary hardship related funds and could do so again.
- 7.3 The report also refers to Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) of £74,000 that has been allocated in order to satisfy the approvals made by the Policy & Resources Recovery-Sub Committee on 4 November 2021 which allocated £68,542 from one-off resources. Since the report, the costs have increased to £74,000 which can be accommodated from COMF.
- 7.4 The report also references the agreement by Council as part of the 2022-23 revenue budget that £200,000 of underspend in the 2021/22 financial year be ringfenced for hardship support. The report identifies how £45,000 of the

total £200,000 could be applied as an emergency response, with the remainder being distributed through local discretionary funds. The year-end outturn position is as yet unknown, and the final position will not be confirmed for some weeks.

- 7.5 Recommendation 2.2 proposes that the Committee support Brighton and Hove City Mission's application for a 10-year lease of the council-owned property at 5 Preston Circus, subject to an agreement on acceptable terms. The Mission is well-established and keen to expand its offering. The Committee will want to ensure that such an agreement would not compromise any other strategic opportunities that are under consideration for the site: should the Committee agree to the 10-year lease, the financial implications and obligations upon the council as landlord would need to be clear, detail of which is not yet available. Such an arrangement would however be a step towards the longer-term strategic approach to food provision that may ultimately reduce overall costs that was highlighted in the previous report of 4 November 2021.
- 7.6 Recommendation 2.3 proposes a review of risk management procedures for food emergencies and incorporation into city plans and policies. Such a move would ensure increased visibility of food security risks that could place additional demands upon council finances if these are not supported by additional sources of funding. In this respect, any underspending of COMF schemes in 2021/22 may provide a source of funds, as could the new 2022/23 Household Support Fund, but both will be subject to competing priorities.

Name of finance officer consulted: Jill Scarfield Date consulted (06/03/2022):

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a local authority to dispose of land in any manner it sees fit subject to the condition that, except in the case of leases for less than 7 years, disposal must be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable. The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 permits a disposal at an undervalue provided that the amount foregone is less than £2 million and there would be economic, social or environmental benefits to be gained as a result of the disposal. The latter points should be considered when granting a lease of 5 Preston Circus.

Name of lawyer consulted: Joanne Dunnyaglo Date consulted (29/03/22):

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 Food cell has an Equality Impact Assessment.
- 9.2 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.

- 9.3 The Food Access commission for supporting Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities and Refugee & Asylum seekers will be gathering research and recommendations over 22/23 to feed into future policy.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

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

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Crime & disorder implications:**

- 11.1 There are implications for crime and disorder if residents do not have enough money to cover their basic living needs and may resort to crime to provide for their needs.

### **Public health implications:**

- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 There are risks of increases in obesity levels as people choose cheaper, unhealthier foods.

### **Corporate / Citywide Implications:**

- 11.4 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.





### Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee

**Subject:** Interim Report on Covid Funds and the new Household Support Fund

**Date of meeting:** 21 April 2022

**Report of:** Chief Finance Officer

**Contact Officer:** Name: Nigel Manvell  
Tel: 01273 293104  
Email: [nigel.manvell@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.manvell@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) affected:** All

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that due to a miscalculation of public holidays the report was not completed when the agenda was published.

#### For general release

#### **1 Purpose of the report and policy context**

1.1 This report provides an update on expenditure and commitments against the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Contain Outbreak Management Funds and the 2021/22 Household Support Fund and seeks interim approval to release funds from the recently announced 2022/23 Household Support Fund in advance of detailed proposals for allocation coming forward to Policy & Resources Committee in May 2022.

#### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee notes the current position on the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Contain Outbreak Management Funds (COMF) and the 2021/22 Household Support Fund.
- 2.2 That Committee Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee agree to an interim allocation of £0.100m from the 2022/23 Household Support Fund to augment the Local Discretionary Social Fund in advance of the full allocation of the fund to be agreed at May Policy & Resources Committee.

#### **3 Context and background information**

##### **Contain Outbreak Management Funds 2020/21 and 2021/22**

3.1 The government allocated 5 tranches of Contain Outbreak Management Funds (COMF) during 2020/21 to enable local authorities to provide a range of support during the pandemic. The funds amounted to £6.815m but, in the event, were carried forward in full to 2021/22. The funds could be allocated according to the following allowable categories:

- a) Targeted testing for hard-to-reach groups out of scope of other testing programmes.
- b) Additional contact tracing.
- c) Enhanced communication and marketing e.g. towards hard-to-reach groups and other localised messaging.
- d) Delivery of essentials for those in self-isolation.
- e) Targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces.
- f) Harnessing capacity within local sectors (voluntary, academic, commercial).
- g) Extension/introduction of specialist support (behavioural science, bespoke comms).
- h) Additional resource for compliance with, and enforcement of, restrictions and guidance.
- i) Measures to support the continued functioning of commercial areas and their compliance with public health guidance.
- j) Funding Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (marginal costs only).
- k) Targeted support for school/university outbreaks.
- l) Community-based support for those disproportionately impacted such as the BAME population.
- m) Support for engagement and analysis of regional areas to assess and learn from local initiatives.
- n) Providing initial support, as needed, to vulnerable people classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable who are following tier 3 guidance.
- o) Support for rough sleepers.

3.2 On 28 April 2021, Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee allocated the full £6.815m to priority areas that were compliant with the categories above to be spent during the 2021/22 financial year.

3.3 The government subsequently allocated another round of COMF for 2021/22 of £2.070m. This was allocated via a number of separate decisions as follows:

- i) £0.055m was set aside by Policy & Resources Committee on 1 July 2021 including:
  - £0.020m for a CVS Recovery fund to be allocated by the Members' Advisory Group (MAG), and;
  - £0.035m for one-to-one / small group catch up support/tuition of 1,000 hours to help address attainment gaps.
- ii) £0.300m was set aside by P&R (Recovery) Sub-Committee on 22 July 2021 for a new Brighton and Hove Contact Tracing Service.
- iii) On 12 July 2021 an officer Urgency Decision was made in consultation with the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee to double the financial support for Self-Isolation from £0.100m to £0.200m by using £0.100m from the 2021/22 COMF.
- iv) On 7 October 2021, Policy & Resources Committee agreed to allocate £1.615m to support growing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

pressures caused by the pandemic as recommended by Housing Committee.

- 3.4 Subsequent to these allocations, further decisions were made regarding the re-allocation of COMF monies as follows:
- i) On 4 November 2021, Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee re-allocated £0.190m COMF funding that had been applied to schemes subsequently funded by the 2021/22 Household Support Fund. The money was reallocated to top-up the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) budget which was over-subscribed.
  - ii) On 10 February 2022, Policy & Resources agreed to re-allocate £0.600m COMF from underspending schemes such as Covid Marshals to further support pressures on Homelessness and Emergency Accommodation which also helped to alleviate pressures on the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) position and thereby support a balanced 2022/23 budget.
  - iii) On 24 February 2022, Budget Council agreed to a further re-allocation of underspent COMF schemes of £0.138m to support the Housing First scheme in 2022/23 (i.e. through allowable carry forward).
  - iv) On 4 November, Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee had agreed to set aside £0.069m to support the Food Strategy in 2022/23 from either recurrent or available one-off funding. This estimate subsequently increased to £0.074m. Recurrent funding was not available but further underspending on COMF schemes has enabled re-allocation of funding to meet this approval (via allowable carry forward to 2022/23). The November report also highlighted further funding requirements for the food strategy in 2022/23 and that potential one-off funding sources should be considered to contribute to this, if available. In this respect, at the time of drafting, there are currently further underspends of approximately £0.075m on COMF schemes which could be re-allocated to food but this cannot be confirmed or approved until the final outturn position for 2021/22 is known in July.
- 3.5 In summary, the total available COMF is £8.885m made up of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 funding announcements. After re-allocating funds in accordance with the later approvals detailed above, the current allocation and projected spend for COMF is as shown in Table 1 below. A more detailed forecast is included at Appendix 1.

<b>Table 1: Current Allocation of 2020/21 and 2021/22 COMF</b>	<b>£m</b>
Outbreak Management and Surge Management	0.340
Extension of Local Welfare Assistance and Hardship Support	0.515
Re-allocation to Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)	0.190
Neighbourhood & Community Support	0.708
Support for Food Bank and Community Food Provision	0.100
Next Steps Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (P&R 18/03/21)	2.043
Managing the City Safely and Outdoor Events Programme 2021 (P&R 29/3/21)	0.677
Early Years Providers	0.107
Sports and Leisure Facilities (Freedom Leisure) support (P&R 29/3/21)	0.363

Support to Schools (pupil share)	0.703
Underpinning Council Services ensuring operational support for delivery of the Local Outbreak Plan including remote technology	0.418
Additional Homelessness support (Re-allocation TBM Month 9)	0.600
Food Strategy support (4 Nov 21 P&R Recovery Sub)	0.074
Brighton and Hove Contract Tracing Service	0.134
Additional Financial Support for Self-Isolation	0.030
1:1 / small group catch up support/tuition: 1000 hours	0.035
CVS Recovery Fund (for MAG allocation)	0.020
Additional Homelessness & Rough Sleeping support	1.615
Housing First 2022/23 (Budget Council)	0.138
Potential further re-allocation for Food Strategy (pending outturn)	0.075
<b>TOTAL 2020/21 and 2021/22 COMF ALLOCATIONS</b>	<b>8.885</b>

- 3.6 Please note that the final position for COMF expenditure in 2021/22 will not be known until the 2021/22 accounts are closed and carry forward requirements (e.g. to cover schemes where contracted staffing costs extend into 2022/23) have been confirmed. This will be reported as part of the TBM Provisional Outturn report to July Policy & Resources Committee which may provide further opportunities for re-allocation if any additional underspends emerge.

#### **Household Support Fund 2021/22**

- 3.7 The government provided £2.140m new funding to Brighton & Hove City Council in the form of the Household Support Fund (HSF) for 2021/22. The fund was part of the government's Covid response and was intended to provide support for food, fuel and other essential costs over the winter and up to the end of March 2022. The fund cannot be carried forward.

- 3.8 There was a broad discretion conferred on local authorities in spending this fund but with the following limitations:

At least 50% of the grant must be used for supporting households with children.

Up to 50% of the grant could be used to assist other households. Eligible spend included:

- 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.

- 3.9 On 4 November 2021, Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee allocated the HSF as follows:

<b>2021/22 Household Support Fund Allocations</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Free School Meals October H/T, Winter Holiday, February H/T, Easter (2022/23) – provision of vouchers	£0.810m
Children’s Centres – vouchers for under 5’s	£0.030m
Schools – additional flexibility	£0.050m
Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) for Feb Half-Term	£0.070m
Funding for Community Centres – support to local residents for food and energy bills	£0.050m
Funding for other organisations supporting groups with protected characteristics or vulnerability	£0.150m
Community Hub provision – to support struggling households not on DWP benefits	£0.100m
Winter Grant Fund package (support via CVS organisations)	£0.090m
Warmth for Wellbeing	£0.070m
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership	£0.090m
Council Tax Reduction Discretionary Fund top-up	£0.200m
Emergency Placement Service Charge – assistance with rent arrears	£0.015m
Local Discretionary Social Fund (LDSF)	£0.415m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2.140m</b>

3.10 At the time of drafting, the 2021/22 financial year has only just closed with the final issuing of vouchers, particularly via the Local Social Discretionary Fund (LDSF), continuing right up to the deadline on 31 March 2022. In addition, although the Easter Holidays fall after 31 March 2022, the payment over of funds (£0.270m) and issuing of vouchers by the vendor for Free School Meals was made prior to 31 March 2022 and is therefore eligible for the 2021/22 HSF.

3.11 The proposed allocation of the 2021/22 HSF in November was based on the best estimate of likely demands but, in the event, there have been higher demands on LDSF than estimated while some other allocations and requirements were slightly lower than expected. Overall, the 2021/22 HSF has been spent in full and in some areas has been over-subscribed (see 2022/23 HSF below). The final position for each scheme line will not be known until all expenditure has been processed through the accounts and will be reported as part of the TBM Provisional Outturn report to July Policy & Resources Committee. In the interim, the expected final allocation is included at Appendix 2.

### **2022/23 Household Support Fund**

3.12 The recently announced 2022/23 Housing Support Fund covers the first 6 months to September 2022 and is now positioned as supporting people with the cost of living increase. However, the government’s previous focus on providing support to families with free school meals (the Rashford campaign) may mean that the community expectation is for continued support for families through supermarket food vouchers. The overall allocation will be the same as in 2021/22 at £2.140m but the allocation requirements are different.

3.13 The biggest issue with the re-focused HSF is the apparent requirement that 1/3 should be spent on pensioners. However, the city’s proportion of

pensioners is less than 14% of the population. This issue is being raised widely by local authorities and further discussions are being held with DWP in the hope that the guidance may be reconsidered to enable a more proportionate distribution.

- 3.14 Proposals for the full allocation of the 2022/23 Household Support Fund will therefore require further consultation with stakeholders and possible re-working if the guidance changes. It is expected that proposals will be provided to the 12 May Policy & Resources Committee for consideration as part of a 'Cost of Living Response and Household Support Fund 2022/23' report.
- 3.15 In the interim, as noted earlier, the Local Discretionary Social Fund (LDSF) has been over-subscribed compared to the funding made available under the previous 2021/22 Household Support Fund and there is therefore pent up demand for support which continues to present week-on-week. 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. To ensure current demands can be met until the full allocation of the Household Support Fund in May, it is recommended to allocate £0.100m to top-up the LDSF to enable demand to be met in the meantime.

#### **4 Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 Not allocating an advance from the 2022/23 Household Support Fund may mean that some people or households applying for support from the Local Discretionary Social Fund cannot be supported in the short term. Allocations from the new fund will be agreed at the May 2022 Policy & Resources Committee but, as with the previous Household Support Fund, it is expected that a significant sum will be reserved for LDSF as this is a key fund for supporting people or households in hardship who may not be covered by Free School Meal vouchers.

#### **5 Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The allocations of COMF and HSF funds were designed collaboratively with officers from across Families, Children & Learning, Welfare, Revenues & Business Support (WRBS), and Housing.
- 5.2 Officers from WRBS also met with partners from Community Works and the Moneyworks / Advice Matters partnerships to discuss the proposals in detail and their feedback was incorporated in the final proposed allocations.
- 5.3 The principles of the HSF, and the general intentions around its allocation were also shared at the Equality and Inclusion Partnership meeting on 20 October 2021.

#### **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The report confirms that 2020/21 and 2021/22 Contain Outbreak Management Funds have been allocated in full and, after amending the original allocations for approved re-allocations, are expected to be fully spent. Similarly, the 2021/22 Household Support Fund has been fully allocated and is expected to have been fully expended by the 31 March 2022 as required by the grant conditions. The final positions on both funds will be confirmed in the TBM Provisional Outturn report to Policy & Resources Committee in July 2022.

- 6.2 In order to ensure current demands can be met, an advance allocation of £0.100m from the 2022/23 Household Support Fund is recommended in order to top-up the Local Discretionary Social Fund. Proposals for the full allocation of the fund are expected to be brought to the May 2022 Policy & Resources Committee.

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 The financial implications are set out in the body of the report. The council received an allocation of £2.140m from the Household Support Fund in 2021/22, which must be utilised by 31 March 2022. No carry forward is possible. The report indicates that the fund is expected to have been fully utilised as at 31 March 2022 in accordance with the terms and conditions of the fund.
- 7.2 The council received a number of tranches of Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) for 2020/21 and a further tranche for 2021/22 totalling £8.885m. The report details the allocations and re-allocations and the associated committee approvals. The 2020/21 COMF was fully carried forward to 2021/22. The funds have been fully utilised in accordance with the eligible criteria a) to o) set out in paragraph 3.1 including some commitments in 2022/23, which is possible through allowable carry forward.
- 7.3 The council will receive the same level of funding, £2.140m, for the new Household Support Fund (HSF) covering April to September 2022. However, the new HSF has been refocused to support the cost of living increase rather than Covid. Although official guidance is awaited, draft guidelines indicate that the fund will be targeted across a wide range of support including low income families with children, low income adult households without children, and pensioners. The advance allocation of £0.100m for the Local Discretionary Social Fund is therefore consistent with the draft terms and conditions.

Finance officer consulted: James Hengeveld Date consulted: 11/4/22

## **8 Legal implications**

- 8.1 The key legal and governance implications are to ensure that all funds are distributed in accordance with the funding criteria to avoid any claw back or loss of funding. Clear records of both the decision making and the detail of the allocations will assist with this. As set out in the report, all decisions regarding the allocation or re-allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Funds or the Household Support Fund have been through appropriate governance channels including Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee, Policy & Resources Committee or through the use of recorded Officer Urgency decisions requiring agreement of the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee.

Lawyer consulted: Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis Date consulted: 11/4/22

## **9 Equalities implications**

- 10 Contain Outbreak Management Funds were issued to councils to support them in managing the impacts of the pandemic across a wide range of services and interventions. However, the Household Support Fund was awarded to support individuals and therefore a detailed Equality Impact

Assessment was undertaken and provided to the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee on 4 November 2021 to ensure that equality impacts were fully considered in making allocation decisions.

## **11 Sustainability implications**

11.1 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from the report.

## **12 Crime & Disorder Implications**

12.1 Supporting vulnerability and reducing the impacts of poverty and hardship can have positive impacts on the drivers for crime and disorder.

## **13 Public Health Implications**

13.1 Similarly, supporting vulnerability and reducing the impacts of poverty and hardship can clearly have positive impacts on health and well-being, particularly as debt is linked to increased stress and mental health issues and food or fuel insecurity can have direct impacts on health and well-being.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **Appendices**

1. Contain Outbreak Management Funds 2020/21 and 2021/22 – Detailed Allocations and expected spend
2. Expected allocation of and spend against the 2021/22 Household Support Fund.

### **Background documents**

None



Item	2020/21 and 2021/22 Contain Outbreak Management Fund Allocations	Original Allocations	Approved Re-allocations	Expected Allocation / Spend
		£	£	£
1	Outbreak Management and Surge Management	566,000	(225,507)	340,493
2	Support to address barriers to self-isolation (replaced by PSP funding)	100,000	(100,000)	-
3a	Debt & Mental Health support	45,000	(204)	44,796
3b	Money and Health Case workers	80,000	0	80,000
3c	Debt Advisors	80,000	0	80,000
3d	Local lift-up scheme	175,000	0	175,000
3e	Discretionary Housing Payments (re-allocation of scheme now funded by HSF)	90,000	0	90,000
3f	Discretionary Housing Payments (re-allocation of schemes now funded by HSF)	100,000	0	100,000
3g	Commission innovative digital solutions in the voluntary sector for vulnerable people	50,000	45,252	95,252
3h	Data Insight Project contribution	40,000	0	40,000
4a	Communities Fund Allocation	300,000	0	300,000
4b	Funding for CVS infrastructure support	75,000	0	75,000
4c	Support to small community based organisations	125,000	0	125,000
4d	Healthy Neighbourhood Fund – incl. additional Senior Officer post - CETS team	40,000	(13,543)	26,457
4e	Advice and support for migrant residents	150,000	(28,841)	121,159
4f	Support resilience and recovery of communities - funding a pilot of 3 reporting centres	60,000	0	60,000
5	Support for Food Bank and Community Food Provision	100,000	0	100,000
6	Next Steps Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (P&R 18/03/21)	2,043,000	0	2,043,000
7a	COVID Information Officer Team – 3 staff members for 12 months	190,000	(123,365)	66,635
7b	COVID Marshalls - available seven days per week	450,000	(189,047)	260,953
7c	COVID Event Planning Officer – 1 officer	30,000	(23,660)	6,340
7d	Trading Standards Officer – 1 officer	30,000	4,432	34,432

Item	2020/21 and 2021/22 Contain Outbreak Management Fund Allocations	Original Allocations	Approved Re-allocations	Expected Allocation / Spend
		£	£	£
7e	Health and Safety Officers – 3 officers as H&S resource	90,000	(29,531)	60,469
7f	Training Provision – COVID safe practices for public facing businesses	20,000	5,303	25,303
7g	Provision of PPE to support small businesses who need it for events, arts and tourism	10,000	0	10,000
7h	Additional signage for public places (e.g. temp venues) hand sanitisers and equipment	20,000	0	20,000
7i	Preparing central city streets for the return of the public	120,000	0	120,000
7j	Additional public toilets – placing temporary toilets at key locations	50,000	22,791	72,791
8a	Early Years Providers – estimated 106 Nurseries at £750	79,500	720	80,220
8b	Early Years Providers – estimated 110 childminders at £250	27,500	(1,130)	26,370
9	Sports and Leisure Facilities (Freedom Leisure) support (P&R 29/3/21)	363,000	0	363,000
10	Support to Schools (pupil share)	703,000	0	703,000
11a	Remote Working Capacity and resilience – IT / Ways of Working support	413,000	0	418,340
12a	Brighton & Hove Contract Tracing Service (P&R Recovery Sub-Committee 22/7/21)	300,000	(165,796)	134,204
12b	Financial Support for Self-Isolation (Urgency Decision July 2021)	100,000	(70,000)	30,000
12c	1:1 / small group catch up support/tuition: 1000 hours (Amendment at July 2021 P&R)	35,000	0	35,000
12d	CVS Recovery Fund (Amendment at July 2021 P&R)	20,000	(128)	19,872
12e	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping (P&R 7/10/21)	1,615,000	0	1,615,000
13a	Re-allocation to meet additional Homelessness costs (P&R 10/2/22 – TBM Month 9)	-	600,000	600,000
13b	Food - to fund P&R Recovery Sub commitments (Recommendations 2.5.1 and 2.5.2)	-	74,000	£74,000
13c	Housing First (Budget Council approval)	-	138,000	138,000
14	Re-allocation for Food Strategy (P&R Recovery Sub 4/11/21 – pending outturn)	-	74,912	74,912
<b>TOTAL 2020/21 AND 2021/22 COMF ALLOCATIONS AND SPEND</b>		<b>8,885,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,885,000</b>

## Appendix 2

Item	2021/22 Household Support Fund	Original Allocations	Expected Spend
		£	£
1	Funding for other organisations supporting protected characteristics	150,000	148,160
2	B&H Food Partnership	90,000	90,000
3	Community Hub – for support to those not on DWP benefits	100,000	45,000
4	Funding for Community Centres – support to local residents for food and energy bills	50,000	50,000
5	Local Discretionary Social Fund top-up incl. admin costs	415,000	432,987
6	Warmth for Wellbeing	70,000	80,000
7	Discretionary CTR top-up	200,000	200,000
8	Free School Meals October H/T, Winter Holiday, February H/T – provision of vouchers	540,000	540,000
9	Free School Meals – Easter 2022	270,000	270,000
10	Schools	50,000	50,000
11	Children's Centres	30,000	45,000
12	Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) incl. admin costs	70,000	60,000
13	Emergency Placement	15,000	15,000
14	Winter Grant Package	90,000	113,853
	<b>Total 2021/22 Household Support Fund</b>	<b>2,140,000</b>	<b>2,140,000</b>

