



REPORT TITLE: Household Support Fund (HSF) Grant Extension (HSF5) – 01st April 2024 to 30th September 2024

Dates between which decision will be taken	Earliest date: 28 th May 2024 Latest date: 10 th June 2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Stephen Davies - Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years
Key Decision	Yes
Purpose of Report	<p>The Household Support Fund (HSF), first introduced in 2021/22, is being extended by the Government through 2024/25. Additional funding (the "Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding") has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. The Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding is intended for use in the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 inclusive.</p> <p>The Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding is being provided for the purpose of providing support to households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs (in exceptional cases of genuine emergency) to help them with living costs.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet Member's approval for the recommendations in relation to the distribution of the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding (amounting to £3,692,482) that is being provided by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for allocation in the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024.</p>
Recommendations	<p>That the Cabinet Member for Safeguarding and Early Years:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approves the allocation of the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding (amounting to £3,692,482) as follows:<ol style="list-style-type: none">(a) £369,248 to the recruitment and remuneration of additional council staff in order to provide administration support in relation to the distribution of such funding to qualifying households during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 as well as meet other necessary administration costs.(b) £812,500 to the six District Councils in Gloucestershire to be apportioned between them in accordance with the delegated authority sought under Recommendation 3 below, for the purpose

of them each providing their own localised schemes to target the needs of the most vulnerable during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (whilst complying with the grant conditions set by the DWP for delivery of the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding i.e., to provide support with food, energy and water bills, household items & other essential items).

- (c) £300,000 to be allocated to the Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) Programme for the purpose of extending the scope of the HAF Programme to provide support to vulnerable children and young people who would not otherwise be eligible under the criteria set by the national programme during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024.
- (d) £529,350 to be allocated to the Gloucestershire Food Network and the Eat Well Wagon in order to provide additional holiday support for food during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024
- (e) £150,000 to be allocated to the charity known as Severn Wye Energy Agency for the provision of energy related support to Gloucestershire residents and those in need following a referral by Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC's) HSF team and/or any of the District Councils during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024
- (f) £60,000 to be allocated to food banks for the supply of emergency food provision during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024.
- (g) £640,000 to be allocated to funding the supply and/or distribution of food vouchers, fuel vouchers, white goods, and household emergency support during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 under the call-off contract for which delegated authority is sought under Recommendation 2 below.
- (h) £794,675 to be allocated to provide food vouchers to those eligible for free school meals during the school holidays (Summer 2024 and October 2024) under the call-off contract for which delegated authority is sought under Recommendation 2 below.
- (i) £36,710 to be held in the 103524 cost centre to allow officers to assess progress with the above

	<p>schemes and make further allocations in response to need in accordance with the terms and conditions imposed on GCC by the DWP in relation to GCC's use of the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding.</p> <p>2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years to award a call-off contract, under the council's Welfare Support Services Framework Agreement, to the sole appointed provider thereunder, namely Auriga Services Limited, for the supply and/or distribution of the following food vouchers, fuel vouchers, white goods and household emergency support during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024:</p> <p>(a) £640,000 in fuel vouchers, food vouchers, white goods, and household emergency support in response to applications received from residents of Gloucestershire for such vouchers, white goods, and emergency support; and</p> <p>(b) £794,675 in food vouchers to children and young people who are eligible to receive free school meals, in order to provide holiday food support during school holidays and provide directly targeted support to low-income households.</p> <p>3. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Early Years to determine the proportions in which the funding described in Recommendation 1(b) shall be allocated to each of the six District Councils in Gloucestershire following the conclusion of a planning exercise to determine the most effective method for providing localised schemes to target the needs of the most vulnerable.</p>
<p>Reasons for Recommendations</p>	<p>On the 6th March 2024, the Chancellor announced a further HSF funding allocation (the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding) to Gloucestershire County Council amounting to £3,692,482.</p> <p>Allocations were confirmed on 26th March 2024. The purpose of providing such funding is to provide assistance to vulnerable households particularly affected by the rise in living costs during the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (the "Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding"). DWP made it a condition of such funding that the Council should start making immediate preparations to administer such funding.</p>

	<p>The recommendations in this report meet the criteria set by the DWP in respect of such funding. Those criteria provide GCC with a broad discretion as to the types of support that can be provided through the grant that focuses on those who are of particular concern such as (but not limited to) households with children, pensioners, those with a disability, unpaid carers, and care leavers.</p> <p>Based upon quantitative and qualitative data available to GCC through its experience of delivering previous HSF grants, the above recommendations have been made with a view to providing a balanced spectrum of support to the cohorts of people that are in need of financial support (i.e., households with children, pensioners, those with a disability, unpaid carers and care leavers) whilst endeavouring to ensure that such funding is also made accessible to a broad range of people who are in need.</p>
<p>Resource Implications</p>	<p>The Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding (amounting to £3,692,482) will be provided to GCC by the DWP (paid in arrears upon receipt of the management information returns). The allocation of such funding, on the basis described in this report, will be carried out in accordance with the DWP's grant conditions, under which progress on spend will need to be tightly monitored by GCC to ensure that the DWP's stipulated ratios of grant allocations to households are adhered to.</p> <p>Recommendation 1(a): The total amount of funding to be allocated to scheme administration costs described in Recommendation 1(a) is £369,248.</p> <p>Recommendation 1(b) to (f) above: The total amount of funding to be allocated to those eligible for support for the provision of fuel vouchers, food vouchers, white goods, and household emergency support described in Recommendations 1 1(b) to (f) above is £1,851,850.</p> <p>Recommendations 1(g) to (h) and 2 above: The total amount of funding to be allocated to those eligible for support for the provision of fuel vouchers, food vouchers, white goods, and household emergency support via the call off contract described in Recommendations 1(g) to (h), and Recommendation 2 above is £1,434,675.</p> <p>Recommendation 1(i): The total amount of funding £36,710 to be held in the 103524 cost centre to allow officers to assess progress with the above schemes and make further allocations described in Recommendation 1(i) is £36,710</p> <p>Such allocations will be reviewed by GCC as part of its management responsibilities in respect of the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding.</p>

Background Documents

Guidance document from the DWP:

- [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\) Household Support Fund: guidance for local councils](#)

Cost of living support scheme:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount>

Previous Cabinet Decisions:

- [COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund for Food and Essential Supplies \(Date of Decision: 30/07/2020\)](#)
- [COVID Winter Grant Scheme – 2020/21 \(Date of Decision: 26/04/21\)](#)
- [Government COVID Local Support Grant and Extension 2021 \(Date of Decision: 09/12/2021\)](#)
- [Household Support Fund \(HSF\) – 6th October 2021 to 31st March 2022 \(Special Urgency Rule\) \(Date of Decision: 26/11/2021\)](#)
- [Household Support Fund \(HSF\) Grant Extension – 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022 \(Date of Decision: 12/07/2022\)](#)
- [Household Support Fund \(HSF\) Grant Extension – 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022 – Award of a Call-off Contract to Auriga Services Ltd for Welfare Support Services \(Date of Decision: 25/07/2022\)](#)
- [Household Support Fund \(HSF\) Grant Extension \(HSF3\) – 01st October 2022 to 31st March 2023 \(Date of Decision: 01/11/2022\)](#)
- [Household Support Fund \(HSF\) Grant Extension \(HSF4\) – 01st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 \(Date of Decision: 29/03/2023\)](#)

Statutory Authority	The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families.
Divisional Councillor(s)	ALL
Officer	Any representations should be sent to: Name: Daniel Gillingham (Head of Service, Children's Commissioning) Tel. no: 01452 324135 Email: daniel.gillingham@gloucestershire.gov.uk By 5pm on: 28 May 2024
Timeline	N/A

Background

1. Since December 2020, the Government has provided funding to Local Authorities to provide hardship support for residents who have been affected by the pandemic and its recovery and the 'Cost of Living' crisis. This support was previously directed to Local Authorities through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Winter fund, and the Covid Local Support Grant. This finished on the 30th of September 2021 and was superseded by the Household Support Fund (HSF).
2. Household Support Fund has been provided to County Councils and Unitary Authorities since October 2021 and forms part of the Government's wider package of support for those most in need, to help with the cost of living. Locally, this funding has been used to support some of our most vulnerable households.
3. In previous phases, Household Support Fund could be used to support households with the cost of food and water bills, essential costs related to energy, food, and water, and with wider essential costs. Local Authorities have had some discretion on exactly how the funding has been used - but this has to be within the scope set out in the grant determination and guidance.
4. Previous announcements of Household Support Fund have been made at quite short notice and requirements of scheme have changed significantly between phases. These requirements can have a significant impact on how and what local authorities are able to deliver. For example:
 - 30th September 2021- 31st March 2022 allowed Local Authorities to spend up to 80% of their allocated funding on households with children and the remaining 20% on those without.
 - 1st April 2022- 30th September 2022 required Local Authorities to ensure that at least one third of the available funds was made available to pensioners.

- 1st October 2022 – 31st March 2023 required Local Authorities to operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis i.e. residents should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support.
 - 1st April 2023- 31 March 2024 continued to require Local Authorities to operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis i.e. residents should have the opportunity to come forward (self-referral) to ask for support and was also extended to being able to use the funding for advice service provision - where advice was linked to HSF practical support.
5. For the most recent phase (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024), we received £7.3 million and have delivered a mixed model of support to residents including:
 - Vouchers for Free School Meal eligible pupils in school holidays.
 - Support to the Holiday Activities & Food Programme
 - Self-Referral Online scheme for supermarket vouchers, energy vouchers and white goods
 - Increased capacity in local projects offering practical support to tackle fuel & food poverty and welfare advice provision.
 - Help with housing costs.
 6. On 6th March 2024, the Chancellor announced, as part of a number of measures to provide help with the continued global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living, that the Household Support Fund (HSF) would be extended for the fifth time from 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 (the “Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding”).
 7. Guidance was released by the Department for Work and Pensions on 26 March 2024. When administering the fund, authorities are expected to adopt the following principles: use the funding from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford household essentials including energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials. Authorities can also use funding to support households with housing costs where existing housing support does not meet this need, and to supplement support with signposting and advice.
 8. Local Authorities have discretion in deciding exactly how the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding will be used, provided it is used within the scope of the DWP grant determination and guidance. It is the DWP’s expectation that the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding should be used to support households in the most need.
 9. The Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding is intended to provide support for a wide range of low-income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers, and people with disabilities.
 10. Energy bills may be of particular concern to low-income households during the period of the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding, hence Local Authorities should prioritise supporting households with the cost of energy. Support which can make a quick but sustainable impact on energy costs is particularly encouraged – for example, insulation of hot water tanks, fitting draft excluders to a door, or replacing inefficient lightbulbs or white goods. The Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding can also be used to support households with the cost of food and water bills, essential costs related to energy, food, and water, and with wider essential costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to

support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.

11. Authorities have been granted a discretion by the DWP to deliver the HSF through a variety of routes including the provision of vouchers to households, making direct provision of food or goods, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of grants for advice provision). Every participating council must operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis i.e. residents should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support.
12. Gloucestershire County Council will receive Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding amounting to £3,692,482 which will cover the period 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 inclusive.
13. The Household Support Fund is additional funding from the Government as part of their wider package of 'Help for Households' - cost of living support. The funding is finite and therefore must be viewed as being part of the Government's wider package of 'Cost of Living' support and efforts to support residents through this period.
14. It is uncertain at this stage as to whether any further funding will be allocated to Local Authorities after 30th September 2024 when the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding grant period has come to an end.
15. Gloucestershire County Council does operate, in addition to the Household Support Fund, a Welfare Support Service. The local welfare budget is not a statutory service but a discretionary service that the Council currently offers, and, as part of the Household Support Fund exit considerations, officers responsible will continue to consider the impact of the cessation of the additional grant provided by the government, on the councils' current offer of this service when it is retendered in October 2024.
16. Officers will work with the communications team, and where possible, the Department for Work and Pensions, to consider the exit plan if there are no additional grants provided to local authorities.

Options

Option One:

17. To approve the proposals set out in the Recommendations section of this report.

Option Two:

18. The alternative option is to reject the recommendations in this report and instead allocate all funding to households eligible for free school meals and allocate all funding to the districts and to the voluntary sector (VCS). This is not recommended. This would disadvantage vulnerable residents and households who do not have children. The VCS and district councils have successfully delivered significant proportions of grants on our behalf in recent years, but this method of delivery is not without its challenges. We will continue to liaise with the sector about their capacity to support us and in our recommended option, have allocated a proportion of the grant to widen the support on offer, but will continue to engage with them on the distribution of the HSF throughout the year to ensure their valued insight

into the needs of our community are taken in to account and to engage them as delivery partners whenever practicable.

Option Three:

19. The Council may consider not accepting the grant funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. This is not recommended as the fund is designed to assist Local Authorities to help residents experiencing financial hardship and to be complementary to the Government's wider package of 'Help for Households' - cost of living support.

Preferred option: Option One

20. This option will enable the council to deliver the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding within the timescales set by the DWP.
21. The council's needs analysis has informed the proposed allocation, including in particular, the recommendation to extend HAF beyond the core Free School Meal (FSM) cohort, and to specifically allocate some of the funding to fuel poverty by distributing an allocation to Severn Wye Energy Agency due to the continued need for energy support.
22. The main reason for awarding the call-off contract described in Recommendation 2 is that the sole supplier under the council's Welfare Support Services Framework Agreement, is performing well. Moreover, the proposed call-off contract award would meet public procurement law requirements, hence a new competitive procurement process would be unnecessary. If the Council were to undertake a new procurement process in respect of the supply and/or distribution of food vouchers, fuel vouchers, white goods and household emergency support, there would be a significant delay in funds being distributed compared to the proposal under Recommendation 2 above to award a call-off contract to Auriga under the Welfare Support Services framework agreement with Auriga Services Limited.
23. Working with district councils and third-party organisations on the basis described in Recommendation 1(b) is strongly recommended by the DWP as per the guidance issued by the DWP and the grant determination letter. By distributing parts of the grant to our district councils and key partners, it ensures that support can be community based and targeted to those that may not come forward for support and also ensures support is county wide.
24. To ensure that the fund from the DWP is appropriately delivered by GCC, it is essential that we have additional council staff in order to provide administration support in relation to the distribution of such funding as describe in Recommendation 1(a). Necessary administration costs are an appropriate spend and the costs described in Recommendation 1(a) ensures we have the staff in place to administer the central fund held by GCC as well as the necessary admin costs associated with providing vouchers to beneficiaries.
25. Allocated funding to the Holiday, Activity and Food (HAF) programme described in Recommendation 1(c) will provide the Council's HAF team with the flexibility to continue to extend and enhance the programme, ensuring that all children and young people have access to nutritious food throughout the period 2024/2025.
26. The alternative options to working with district councils and third-party organisations are to distribute, fully, the grant to district councils and third-party organisations or by not distributing any funds and keeping the fund fully centralised by GCC. These options have

been rejected as the current and previous delivery plans for the distribution of the HSF have worked well and ensures both a targeted and universal approach which is in line with the DWP guidance.

Risks

27. Gloucestershire County Council has experience of administering previous Household Support Fund resources to residents. The timescales between receiving confirmation of the funding allocation and the new guidance and the delivery period of the scheme brings some practical challenges and may lead to a delay to full implementation, but officers will review the guidance and requirements and seek to implement a full scheme, following consultation with the Cabinet Member, as soon as is practical after the 1 April 2024.
28. Although this fund is designed to assist local authorities to help residents experiencing financial hardship linked to rises in the cost of living, there will be restrictions in the type of support that can be provided to residents. It may also be difficult to predict levels of need and demand, and residents' expectations of support available. The funding is finite and therefore must be viewed as being part of the Government's wider package of 'Cost of Living' support and efforts to support residents through this period.
29. With regard to the proposed grant described in Recommendation 1 (e), to the charity known as Severn Wye Energy Agency and for the proposed grant described in Recommendation 1 (d), to the charities known as Gloucestershire Food Network and Eat Well Wagon, it is acknowledged that there is a risk in respect of any award of grant funding that it might contravene UK Subsidy Control Regime requirements and, by consequence, result in legal challenge. Accordingly, officers shall give due consideration to the council's obligations under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 to determine whether it is compliant with the regime before the grant is awarded.

Do nothing.

30. The risk of doing nothing and thereby failing to respond to the allocation of grant to vulnerable families in a timely and appropriate manner is that service users will not get the support that they require, in the timescales necessary and the Council's reputation is negatively impacted.

Not using the grant for the purpose it was intended

31. It is a requirement of the Department for Work and Pensions that the Household Support Fund Grant should only be used by councils to provide support to households who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs.
32. Therefore, by incorporating the allocation of Household Support Fund Grant into already established and robust application processes within the GCC's Children and Families Commissioning team ensures that all applications from service users and/or agencies for emergency welfare are reviewed, with funding only being allocated when service users meet the grant criteria.

Risk of funding not being committed by the September 2024 deadline.

33. Most elements of the scheme are proactive issue of awards so do not need to be claimed by residents which reduces the risk of underspend.

34. Publicity will be undertaken to raise awareness, in particular with partners who are well placed to signpost low-income households to take up the vouchers.

35. Any unspent funds will be repurposed before September 2024

Full grant funding not received as a result of DWP determining that some spend was not eligible.

36. Payment of the grant from DWP will be made in arrears on a quarterly basis after the interim Management Information (MI) return in July 2024, and the final MI return at the end of grant period in October 2024 after the DWP has verified the final MI.

37. The final grant payment will be dependent on DWP being satisfied of the LA's MI submission evidence eligible spend within the scheme.

38. Gloucestershire County Council's approach takes full account of DWP guidance on spend to ensure its scheme is within the framework.

39. The delivery plan will be submitted to DWP in May 2024. As per DWP guidance, there is scope to change the expenditure in year, so long as DWP are informed of any major changes.

40. Any feedback from DWP in response to MI returns or changes to delivery plan will be considered and implemented as appropriate to ensure the scheme remains compliant.

41. There is flexibility within the scheme to adapt it and local discretion can be used to make changes to the allocation of funding across the different elements.

Fraudulent activity:

42. The risk of fraudulent applications or referrals to the fund is mitigated by the strict checking process overseen by the Household Support Fund central team, which is also reviewed against other schemes funded by the same grant.

43. Contact and liaison with the Council's Counter Fraud Team if fraud is suspected in any part of the scheme.

Procurement Risk

44. The Welfare Support framework agreement described in Recommendation 2 of this Report was procured and awarded in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("PCRs"), thereby minimising any procurement challenge risk. The residual risk of a successful challenge is therefore very low.

Financial implications

45. There is no net financial impact on the County Council. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will provide HSF funding to the County Council under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, who will administer the scheme.

46. Extended 2023/24 HSF Funding amounting to £3,692,482 has been provided by the DWP. The proposed spend is in accordance with the DWP's grant conditions, though progress on

spend will need to be tightly monitored to ensure that the ratios of grant spend to households with children and pensioners are adhered to.

47. Authorities will be required to provide four management information (MI) returns outlining their Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding spend and the volume of grant awards:

48. HSF funding payments will be made by the DWP to local authorities in arrears on receipt of a fully completed and verified MI returns as outlined.

MI Return	Reporting period: from	Reporting period: to	Deadline
Interim 1	1 April 2024	30 June 2024	19 July 2024
Final Return	1 April 2023	30 September 2024	25 October 2024

49. A requirement to complete MI returns will be part of each delivery partner agreement to ensure that funds are drawn down based on demand and that funding allocations are spent within the time restriction. District and Boroughs will submit this regularly to ensure that the level of demand can be tracked throughout the delivery period.

50. Allocations will be reviewed as part of management of the grant with final allocations being determined once the final cost of holiday food vouchers is confirmed and demand against other allocations. This will ensure that the grant is fully spent; however, each scheme will need to be monitored closely to ensure that expenditure is maintained within budget and that the grant is utilised or committed before 30th September 2024.

Climate Change and Ecological implications

Has the Climate Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) been completed? Yes

Has an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) been produced, or will one be undertaken at a later stage? No

51. No disproportionate impact has been identified. The Climate Impact Assessment Tool has been completed and positive areas towards the climate have been identified via decreased energy usage. Due to the nature of the project, it may be difficult to implement other climate initiatives such as encouraging alternative travel methods, installation of renewable technologies etc.

Equality implications

Has an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) been completed? Yes

52. The Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding continues to follow the inclusive qualification criteria as previously described in the assessment carried out under the Local Support Grant & extensions. This has been updated through a revised equality impact assessment to reflect the new schemes/cohorts of targeted services users within the perimeters of the Household

Support Grant. This will continue to be monitored for equality considerations, especially for those with protected characteristics.

53. This programme will be offered to households who fit the qualifying criteria to receive Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding and will also provide additional support to HAF programme.
54. The provision to vulnerable households in the form of essential items will constitute a positive intervention with families with low income and high levels of poverty and deprivation.
55. The provision reaches out to households from underrepresented communities, from diverse backgrounds accessing support in Gloucestershire.
56. Support will be available to applicants when making an application – largely through existing established routes.
57. Cabinet Member should read and consider the Equalities Impact Assessment to satisfy themselves as decision makers that due regard has been given.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) implications

58. There is already a DPIA in place and the original welfare contract and the DPIA has been updated to reflect the Household Support Grants. This DPIA has recently been reviewed by IMS in light of the single supplier framework which came into place in July 2022.

Social value implications

59. There is no new procurement taking place as part of the proposals outlined this paper, so the social value policy does not apply in that regard.
60. That said, it is recognised that the distribution of the grant is beneficial for recipients.

Consultation feedback

61. No consultation took place with the public as the support set out above has to be implemented within very short timescales.

Officer recommendations

62. That the Cabinet Member approves option one and the process for delivering such financial support in order to supplement financial support that has been allocated to the council to provide food and essential supplies

Performance management/follow-up

63. The council's Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding project team will be accountable to the Head of Service – Children's Commissioning and will follow daily, weekly, and monthly monitoring regime through dashboards that keep track of spend.

64. Expenditure against the Extended 2024/25 HSF Funding will be monitored and reported to a Strategic Steering Group that will meet quarterly to review this provision and to consider the best approaches for the commissioning of future activities.

65. Required Monitoring and Delivery plans returns will be provided in line with DWP requirements.

MI Return	Reporting period: from	Reporting period: to	Deadline
Interim 1	1 April 2024	30 June 2024	19 July 2024
Final Return	1 April 2024	30 September 2024	25 October 2024