

## Lancaster City Council | Report Cover Sheet

<b>Meeting</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
<b>Title</b>	Allocation of funding to support vulnerable people		
<b>Report of</b>	Director of Communities and Environment		
<b>Purpose of Report</b>			
To seek agreement for the principles for allocating the funding to support vulnerable people agreed by Council (18 <sup>th</sup> March 2020) as part of its COVID-19 pandemic response			
<b>Key Decision (Y/N)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Date of Notice</b>	<b>Exempt (Y/N)</b> <b>N</b>

### Report Summary

The report sets out the current approach and performance of the Council's delivery of emergency services to our most vulnerable. It proposes a set of guiding principles for allocation of the funding. It sets out the expected future context of the emergency and proposes how the funding should be best allocated.

### Recommendations of Councillor Lewis

1. That principles for allocation of the funding as set out in the report are agreed
2. That the outline proposal for allocation of the funding is agreed

### Relationship to Policy Framework

#### Ambition- An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy

- Using our finance to benefit local communities

#### Ambition- Health and Happy Communities

- Supporting wellbeing and ensuring local communities are engaged, involved and connected
- Addressing health and income inequality, food and fuel poverty, mental health needs, and loneliness
- Focused on early-intervention approaches and involving our communities in service design and delivery

**Conclusion of Impact Assessment(s) where applicable** – The impacts of the funding allocations will be consistent with the policy framework.

**Climate**

**Wellbeing & Social Value –**

**Digital**

**Health & Safety**

**Equality**

**Community Safety**

<b>Details of Consultation</b>	
Ongoing consultation is taking place via regular meetings with Elected Members, Community reps, Parish/ Town Councils, and voluntary sector partners	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	
Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments.	
<b>Financial Implications</b>	
The funding has already been agreed by Full Council. This report sets out the principles of allocation.  All expenditure will be closely monitored and be available to Members at regular intervals, in addition to the Council's usual monitoring arrangements.	
<b>Other Resource or Risk Implications</b>	
None identified at this stage	
<b>Section 151 Officer's Comments</b>	
The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.	
<b>Monitoring Officer's Comments</b>	
The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to make.	
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mark Davies
<b>Tel</b>	Tel: 01524 582401
<b>Email</b>	mdavies@lancaster.gov.uk
<b>Links to Background Papers</b>	

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Council agreed to make £1,000,000 available to support vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposal was that the money was 'to provide support to our most vulnerable residents. This will be allocated by the Council and will support coordinated effort with our many voluntary partners and community group'
- 1.2 Although the Council had already recognised this the Government later made clear that Local Authorities would be expected to support the most vulnerable during the crisis.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report to seek Cabinet's direction on the principles of the allocation of the funding

## 2.0 Current Position

- 2.1 In accord with the Government direction the Council set up a Lancaster District Community Hub

2.2 Main activities of this are-

- **Provision of food parcels (with Morecambe Bay Foodbank).** To April 28<sup>th</sup> 7,953 parcels have been delivered to 3,458 households.
- **Identifying and contacting vulnerable people to ensure their basic needs are being met.** To April 28<sup>th</sup> 6,269 calls have been made to residents. 1,428 welfare visits have taken place. 2,302 follow up calls have been made. 13,289 calls have been received and 3,277 emails have been replied to.
- **Coordination of volunteers and community, voluntary and Parish Council sector.** CVS have received applications from over 700 volunteers. To coordinate this there is a soon to be launched Lancaster District Support Line (with Hope Church and CVS) which is an electronic referral system that matches a request for help to an appropriate volunteer.

2.3 Other work to date includes-

- Letter sent to all households in district outlining various sources of help.
- All rough sleepers into accommodation by 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- Home Improvement Agency assisting with hospital discharge.
- Interactive GIS map of local businesses and other support services available on website.
- Supported CVS urgent response fund.
- Writing to all our council tenants offering support at start of pandemic. Contacting them again over the next week as a welfare check.
- Customer services relocated to a new Lancaster District Community Hub acting as the single contact line for residents requiring assistance or advice. Extended opening hours to weekends and now to 8am -8pm weekdays.
- Targeting of specific information to potentially vulnerable groups with key messages distributed by health, county and voluntary sector colleagues. To date, Gypsy and Traveller community, new parents, families via all schools.

### 3.0 Principles for Allocating the funding

3.1 The item that will consume the most spend is the food distribution project with Morecambe Bay Foodbank. This is now up and running. Expenditure on infrastructure and food is being incurred. Donations from the public and organisations are also being received. Ensuring our most vulnerable have food is obviously essential.

3.2 The remit for this funding as agreed by Council suggests that a variety of initiatives at different levels could also be supported, including developing and delivering projects and services in partnership with other groups at a more localised or targeted level to meet specific community needs.

- 3.3 Regular dialogue with VCSE partners over the last few weeks has helped inform a set of principles for allocation of the funding.
- 3.4 It is proposed that the following principles be used as a starting point to guide the council's decision-making in allocating the funding (although these may be refined and developed going forward):
- Supporting our residents' physical needs or helping them return to their homes after hospital.
  - Supporting our residents' emotional and wellbeing needs.
  - Supporting our residents in adapting to the pandemic and its consequences.
  - Supporting our residents in times of hardship.
  - Supporting the work linked to ensuring residents have access to food and medicine.
  - Supporting our residents in managing during the lockdown.
  - Supporting vulnerable young people.
  - Supporting our residents in proactive action to reduce crime, domestic abuse and hate crime.
  - Maintaining and developing useful connections among our communities.
  - Supporting our communities in the recovery of the pandemic.
  - Building the capacity of VCSE organisations, community groups and volunteers to successfully deliver the above.
- 3.5 As the pandemic has developed it is clear that without significant and sustained intervention the impacts on the most vulnerable will be severe, and result in a widening of inequality.
- 3.6 The emergency itself is like a slowly rising tide. The transition from the emergency phase to a 'recovery' phase will be protracted.
- 3.7 In this case agreement of what successful recovery looks like is important. The Council, in its priorities, is committed to reducing inequality. Therefore recovery cannot be considered successful if all it does is return our most vulnerable, and many more, to the position they were in before the crisis.
- 3.8 In this situation what is actually required is metamorphosis rather than recovery.
- 3.9 Work is currently taking place to start to develop a plan for how this may take place. What is already very clear is that the emergency work being undertaken in the Lancaster District Community Hub will need to continue taking place for many months.
- 3.10 At this point much of the resource for direct Council activities is being provided by reallocation of existing staff, buildings etc. As the Council gradually 're-opens' these staff, buildings etc will be required elsewhere.
- 3.11 The emergency and impact require consideration of how best to deliver the Council's agreed priorities in the future and how to support that with an appropriate budgetary framework. In the short -term the ability to utilise part of this funding in the planning for the future will be invaluable.

## 4.0 Outline Proposals for Allocation

4.1 It is of note that since the start of the emergency other sources of funding are available for community groups, partners etc. These include the CVS fund and Lancashire Community Foundation.

4.2 An outline of the proposed allocation is set out below-

Proposal	Comment	Amount
Funding of food distribution partnership	It is expected this will be required for a sustained period. To date £90,000 has been spent	£600,000
Allocate an amount for proposals that come forward that cannot be funded from elsewhere but meet the principles outlined above	Already some of these have come forward these include -  Funding of bereavement counselling Funding of additional CAB staffing Funding to support home education of vulnerable children  As these come it is recommended they are approved via officer delegation, in consultation with Cabinet Member(s)	£100,000
Supporting the transition from the emergency phase to the 'recovery' phase	There will be a need to continue contacting and supporting vulnerable people for a sustained period.  There will be a need to support the wider impacts on our most vulnerable people.  There will be a need to support the work of our partners and communities  Further details will be brought forward as plans are developed	£300,000

## 4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

<p><b>Option 1:</b> Agree the principles and outline proposals for allocation set out in the report</p>
<p><b>Advantages:</b> Based on the most up to date knowledge, government guidance and developed following extensive consultation.</p>
<p><b>Disadvantages:</b> None specifically at this time</p>

**Risks:**

No specific risks at this time.

**Option 2:**

**Recommend different principles and outline proposals for allocation**

**Advantages:**

None identified

**Disadvantages:**

Deviation from current strategy, government guidance and consultation

**Risks:**

Officer time allocated to dealing with the emergency is used developing further proposals.

**4. Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

4.1 The officer-preferred option is Option 1