

**Briefing Paper to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 24 October 2025**

**Wards:** ALL

<b>Household Support Fund 7– Update on distribution of funds</b>
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**Report of the** Director of Finance and Transformation

**Report Status:** This item is not exempt  
Therefore exempt reasons are not applicable

This is a non-key decision.

**1. Purpose of the Report and Summary**

1.1 To update members on the distribution of Household Support Funding (HSF) for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025.

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 To note the expenditure and performance of the Household Support Fund 7 for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025. Appendix 1.

2.2 To note the allocation increase of £14,000 for School Uniforms has been committed by Decision Record (MR/050/2025) through urgent implementation due to the need for provision for the start of the new school year.

**3. Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 To provide members with an update on Household Support Fund 7 expenditure and the support it has provided between 1 April 2025 and 31 August 2025 to the residents of the city.

3.2 To confirm expenditure to date has utilised £2,423,798 (45%) of the available funding (£5,354,902) for the scheme for the period of 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025. Appendix 1.

**4. Key Organisational Impacts**

4.1 Ensuring allocation of the Household Support Fund aligns with Hull City Council's broader organisational strategies such as the Community Plan and Council Plan

and associated six ambitions. Allocating funds in a manner that supports these plans and ambitions and providing support to residents of need within the city.

- 4.3 Addressing urgent issues is crucial, it's equally important to consider the sustainability of the initiatives funded by the Household Support Fund to ensure lasting impact.

## **5. Impact on other Executive Committees (including Area Committees) and decision makers:**

- 5.1 The decisions made within this report are City wide and do not impact specifically on any Executive Committees (including Area Committees).

## **6. Contribution to the delivery of the Community Plan, the Council Plan and/or Area Plans:**

- 6.1 Following a report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025, members agreed a framework for the commitment of funds provided by the Government which aligned with the Council's strategic response to the cost-of-living crisis.
- 6.2 This decision supports the Community Plan ambitions, with a specific focus to ambition two - a healthier and fairer Hull, by providing financial support to the VCS to enable food support (food banks), provision of direct payments and vouchers along with practical support, financial support for meals for school children in the school holidays who are eligible for free school meals which will inform our approach to service delivery and support people to be healthy and aid prevention by providing advice with money and energy management.
- 6.3 The scheme will continue to work in partnership with the VCS and support organisations in order to extend reach and provide a holistic approach to supporting vulnerable households.

## **7. Equalities Impact Information**

- 7.1 An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been carried out to provide evidence that "due regard" has been paid to the different protected characteristics when administering the Household Support Fund and meet the aims of the general equality duty; eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. This was provided to Cabinet on 19 May 2025.

## **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 Consultation continually takes place through a number of engagement methods including the Financial Inclusion Network, VCS colleagues and wider council forums.
- 8.2 Continuous review and consideration of opportunities to further support communities and key groups through the HSF is undertaken throughout the year via the Financial Inclusion Network.

## 8. **Background**

- 9.1 Residents of the City continue to be severely impacted by the on-going increases in the cost of living.
- 9.2 The Council's strategic response was to establish a cross organisational Cost of Living Network with six areas of focus for the development of practical solutions to support the community through the impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The areas of focus have been:
- Food
  - Fuel and Energy
  - Health
  - Employment
  - Money and debt
  - Housing
- 9.3 The Government has provided Household Support Funding since October 2021. For 2025/26 the Government awarded funding of £5,354,902.
- 9.4 The total funding available to support those in need with their living expenses for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 is £5,354,902, which must be fully spent by the 31 March 2026.

## 10 **Issues for Consideration**

- 10.1 The funding available is not enough to meet the level of demand that exists and there are time and resource constraints that limit the practical options available.
- 10.2 Agreements for VCS community food distribution are being put in place with our VCS partner Hull Food Inequalities Alliance. Decision Record DLSP/2025/016 provides for grant agreements with Hull Council for Voluntary Services to distribute the amount allocated by Cabinet on 19 May 2025 for food support. Operations are due to commence in October.
- 10.3 There are 21 general needs community food organisations that have signed up to the scheme covering 27 locations across the city and 7 organisations catering for special dietary needs.
- 10.4 EMS Ready Meals for the provision of microwave ready meals commenced on 22 September to ensure a more flexible food offering to those within the city without access to cooking facilities. This was a key development following previous HSF scheme responses from the community.

- 10.5 Warm spaces incorporating energy advice, and Money Matters debt and budgeting advice is due to start in October. Agreements have been put in place with Northbank Forum for Voluntary Organisations. Decision Record DLSP/2025/018 provides for the transfer of part of the fund to facilitate the programmes of work agreed at Cabinet on 19 May. To note that local company, Ideal Heating, is also providing financial and practical assistance to this community grants scheme.
- 10.6 To note that organisations are spread across the city, dealing with different demographics. Organisations have been able to bid for either provision of a warm space, Money and Debt Advice, or both.
- 10.7 The profiling of HSF7 funding for Free School Meals largely followed the pattern of school holidays, this being May half term (1 week), Summer holidays (6 weeks), October half term (1 week), Christmas (2 weeks) February 2026 half term (1 week). The current fund allocation of £2,656,500 is on track to be spent in full by February half term. £1.6M (63%) of the fund has been spent.
- 10.8 £375,500 was allocated to support pensioners who are affected by the loss of the winter fuel payment. Using a targeted approach of pensioners entitlement to the higher rate of Council Tax Reduction. A £200 credit is to be paid onto the Council Tax account of those identified as being the most financially disadvantaged. However, this proposal will be subject to review within a future Cabinet report following the changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance announced by Government in June 2025.
- 10.9 Administration of the applications for crisis payments under the Local Assistance Scheme (LAS) has been carried out by 4 Officers employed on temporary contracts throughout the majority of Household Support Fund.

## **11. Options and Risk Assessment**

- 11.1 There is a risk that applications and referrals may exceed the funding available therefore progress will continue to be monitored closely to prevent overspending that would have to be fully funded by the Council.

## **12. Performance Monitoring**

- 12.1 Each fund owner is responsible for collecting the data applicable to their scheme and returning the information for inclusion into the overall Hull City Council return to the Government. Government returns must be authorised by the S151 Officer.
- 12.2 Wider performance monitoring is carried out with our VCS partners to understand the fund reach and impact it has on the community. This

information continues to be utilised to inform the prioritisation of Household Support Funding for the city.

- 12.3 Future fund distribution briefing papers will be provided to overview and scrutiny throughout the financial year and any funding surplus or deficit will updated through decision reporting.

**David Bell**

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Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: - None

## Implications Matrix

**This section must be completed and you must ensure that you have fully considered all potential implications**

This matrix provides a simple check list for the things you need to have considered within your report

If there are no implications please state

I have informed and sought advice from HR, Legal, Finance, Overview and Scrutiny and the Climate Change Advisor and any other key stakeholders i.e. Portfolio Holder, relevant Ward Members etc prior to submitting this report for official comments	Yes
I have considered whether this report requests a decision that is outside the Budget and Policy Framework approved by Council	Yes
Value for money considerations have been accounted for within the report	Yes
The report is approved by the relevant Director/Assistant Director	Yes
I have included any procurement/commercial issues/implications within the report	Yes
I have considered the potential media interest in this report and liaised with the Media Team to ensure that they are briefed to respond to media interest.	Yes
I have included any equalities and diversity implications within the report and where necessary I have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment and the outcomes are included within the report	Yes
Any Health and Safety implications are included within the report	No
Any human rights implications are included within the report	No

I have included any community safety implications and paid regard to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act within the report	No
I have liaised with the Climate Change Advisor and any environmental and climate change issues/sustainability implications are included within the report	No
I have considered how the decision may contribute or impact on culture and heritage within the city.	No
I have included information about how this report contributes to the Community Plan/ Area priorities within the report	Yes
I have considered the impact on air quality, carried out an appropriate assessment and included any resulting actions or opportunities necessary to improve air quality in the report.	No