

# WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## RECORD OF OFFICER EXECUTIVE DECISION

Item	Outcome
<b>Date Of Decision</b>	5 March 2024
<b>Decision Maker</b>	Mark Fitton – Strategic Director for People
<b>Brief Description Of Decision</b>	To modify the delivery plan of the Household Support Fund 2023/24 to redirect funds from the energy support scheme and uncommitted voucher funds to food provision.
<b>Reason(s) For Decision</b>	<p>Following on from the <a href="#">Cabinet decision</a> in March 2023 confirming the delivery plan for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund 2023/2024, ongoing budget and contract monitoring has identified that the original allocation for a scheme to support eligible households with energy bills, debts and new heating systems was not spending to profile as anticipated. The provider (Act on Energy) has indicated that it would not be able to spend or commit the full allocation to identified households before the end of the financial year (the end of the HSF programme), as the number of eligible applications hasn't been as high as anticipated.</p> <p>To ensure the council complies with the HSF grant requirements, all funding needs to be spent within the financial year. Therefore, after consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities and the Chief Finance Officer, it is proposed to reallocate the remaining funds from the Act on Energy scheme which totals £420k to free school meal vouchers in the Easter holidays for just under 16,000 eligible children. A small amount of funds from uncommitted voucher schemes will also provide additional budget required to meet the full costs of the vouchers over Easter and additional funds to district councils (£10k each) to support local food provision, which will total £500k.</p> <p>The district councils and key HSF delivery partners have identified that food provision would be their priority for any unallocated funds for the remainder of the HSF scheme.</p>
<b>Alternative Options Considered And Rejected</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do not make any changes to the HSF scheme – this would mean that all funds would not be spent or committed to identified eligible households within the grant period and therefore would mean the council has not met the DWP grant conditions and the</li> </ol>

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	<p>full grant available to Worcestershire would not be able to be claimed.</p> <p>2. Use the unallocated funding on alternative activities – the grant criteria states that food, energy and wider essentials linked to food and energy are the areas of eligible spend. District councils and key delivery partners have identified food as the priority for spend if any unallocated funds were identified.</p>
<p><b>Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments carried out</b></p>	<p><i>A. The JIA screening did not identify any potential considerations requiring further assessment during implementation.</i></p>
<p><b>Any Conflict of Interest declared by a consulted Cabinet Member/ any dispensation granted</b></p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Reference</b></p>	<p>01/2024</p>
<p><b>Signed and Date</b></p>	<p>Mark Fitton 5 March 2024</p>