

Decision Notice

Delegated Decision

Decision No:	DD01
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Subject:	HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND - ROUND 5
Date of Decision:	3 June 2024
Notification Date:	5 June 2024
Implementation Date:	3 June 2024
Decision taken by:	Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Finance and Housing) & Section 151 Officer
Delegated Authority:	Delegation C48 to the Section 151 Officer of Section 6 (Scheme of Officer Delegations) of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Constitution: “To make application for and to accept grants or other assistance on behalf of the Council.” In accordance with Cabinet Decision CAB 98 of 1 March 2021, the Strategic Director (Corporate Resources) (now Strategic Director (Finance and Housing)) is authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Digital, to administer funding for local businesses and families as intended by Government.
Decision Type:	Non-Key Decision
Call-In to Apply?	No (<i>Call-in does not apply to non-Key Officer Decisions</i>)
Classification:	Unrestricted

Reason for the Decision:	To receive and implement Dover District Council’s share of the Household Support Fund Round 5, in accordance with the Government’s intentions and timetable for the grant.
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Decision:	(1) That Dover District Council accepts the award of £197,862.03 of Household Support Fund Round 5 from Kent County Council and applies it to make grants to local partners.
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1. Background

- 1.1 Kent County Council has been awarded an £11 million Household Support Fund Round 5 Extension from government for a 6-month duration from 1 April 2024. This grant is intended to be used to “support 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)”.
- 1.2 The expectation is that the HSF Round 5 extension should be used in a similar way as the original HSF scheme, although with a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills. Food and water bills also remain priorities.
- 1.3 A delivery plan on how the grant will be used and a signed acceptance grant letter must be returned by 3 May 2024 for the grant to be allocated.

- 1.4 The intention behind the grant is to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials. Funding can also be used to support households who are struggling to afford wider essentials. 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 (subject to certain conditions set out in the housing support grant).

Eligible spend includes:

- (a) Food.
 - (b) Energy and water (including sewerage).
 - (c) Essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.).
 - (d) Wider essentials including but are not limited to: support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing and essential transport related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel.
 - (e) Housing Costs in exceptional cases of genuine emergency (eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments must first be considered and whether the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant).
- 1.5 Government criteria requires all funding to be spent by 30 September 2024. It is proposed to allocate the funds to support families and pensioners in food and/or fuel poverty crisis by allocation of provisions or vouchers, to reach those residents and households most in need of financial support over the coming months, as follows:

- (a) Dover Foodbank - £55,000
- (b) Dover District Citizens' Advice Bureau - £55,000
- (c) Sandwich Age Concern – £30,000
- (d) Deal Centre (Age Concern) - £30,000
- (e) Dover Outreach Centre - £27,862.03

2. Identification of Options

- 2.1 The options identified are:

- (a) Decline the grant.
- (b) Set up a DDC-managed process for applications from individuals.
- (c) Use the grant to make payments to local partner organisations.

3. Evaluation of Options

Decline the Grant

- 3.1 This would mean forgoing £197,000 of support to hard-pressed individuals and families within the Dover district. For this reason, this is not the preferred option.

Set up a DDC-managed process for applications from individuals

- 3.2 This would entail establishing some form of means testing and grant award system. It would require staff resources and all grants would have to be made by 30 September 2024. There is a risk that this would be resource intensive and would struggle to meet the deadline, with possible clawback of the grant. For these reasons this is not the preferred option.

Use the grant to make payments to local partner organisations and retain an element to provide direct heating repairs and other mitigation methods

- 3.3 As set out above, the grant could be awarded to eight partner organisations to use for the government's specified purposes. These organisations are in close touch with the

needs of their clients and their work with clients will meet the requirements of the grant, as set out by government, thus utilising a tried, tested and successful mechanism used for Rounds 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the HSF by DDC.

3.4 By making the awards DDC would meet the government's timetable and avoid the risk of clawback.

3.5 For these reasons this is the preferred option.

4. **Any Conflicts of Interest Declared?**

4.1 None.

5. **Resource Implications**

5.1 The grants will be fully funded by the award from KCC. There are no resource implications.

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

6.1 There are no climate change or environmental implications.

7. **Corporate Implications**

7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance: Accountancy has been consulted on the report and have no further comments to add. (LS)"

7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make. (HR)

7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report relating to the Household Support Fund Round 5 does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149> (KM)

8. **Background Papers**

8.1 KCC confirmation letter to C/E dated 17th April 2024.

Contact Officer: Rebecca Dyer, Community Development Manager