

**REPORT FROM: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

**TO: EXECUTIVE**

**DATE: 20<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025**

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## HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 7 (HSF): 2025/26

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request delegated authority to the Director of Resources, in conjunction with The Leader of the Council, to approve a 2025/26 HSF programme and any future re-profiling of the HSF grant.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Approve the proposed delivery mechanisms for HSF7, as set out in the report
- (2) Delegate authority to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree 2025/26 HSF programme and any future re-profiling of the HSF grant

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To enable effective and timely delivery of HSF7 and give sufficient flexibility to allow all funds to be spent in accordance with the Guidance.

### ISSUE

1. The Household Support Fund Scheme has been operating since September 2021. From September 2021 to March 2025, Pendle Council has received £2.83m HSF to support vulnerable households. The guidance allowed for the administration of the scheme and a proportion of the funding has been used internally and by partners to fund the associated staffing costs to deliver the scheme.

Household Support Fund Round	Pendle allocation
<b>Household Support Fund 1 (November 2021 to March 2022)</b>	£270,000
<b>Household Support Fund 2 (April 2022 to October 2022)</b>	£340,000
<b>Household Support Fund 3 (November 2022 to March 2023)</b>	£430,000
<b>Household Support Fund 4 (April 2023 to March 2024)</b>	£961,000
<b>Household Support Fund 5 (April 2024 to September 2024)</b>	£417,000

<b>Household Support Fund 6 (October-March 2025)</b>	<b>£417,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,835,000</b>

2. HSF (2024/25) is currently in the final stages of delivery- a progress report will be submitted to the Executive in May as part of the Annual Programmes Performance update.
3. The Autumn Budget allocated a total of £1bn for the HSF for 2025-26, together with discretionary housing payments (DHPs). However, at the time of writing this report, no further information and guidance has been released. The government guidance will determine the scope of delivery. District council involvement in HSF7 will be subject to a continuation of the current process operated by LCC, which is yet to be confirmed.
4. Despite not yet knowing Pendle's HSF allocation and indeed the requirements of the next HSF round, delegated authority for the HSF7 programme is being sought to enable Pendle Council to mobilise a programme swiftly and efficiently upon confirmation of the grant.
5. The ethos of HSF7 remains similar to previous schemes; to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford household essentials including energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials.
6. The 2024/25 HSF schemes consisted of the following elements:

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Spend (£)</b>
Direct payments to those on CTS	327,485
Community providers	360,990
Application based scheme (administered by East Lancas Citizens Advice)	60,000
Discretionary Housing Payment top up	20,000
Admin	65,577
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>834,052</b>

7. It is proposed that Pendle's HSF7 continues to utilise the community, voluntary and faith sector to access and support households in need.
8. Through discussions with neighbouring districts, fewer districts now issue direct payment awards with the majority of HSF funding allocated to community providers. Pendle Council has only issued direct payment awards to households in receipt of Council Tax Support; all but one of the direct payment award schemes targeted pensioners. CTS is the only data available to the Council to determine financial hardship. It is suggested that the direct payment award approach is reviewed in 2025/26 to enable other cohorts experiencing financial hardship access to HSF support.
9. Executive is asked to approve a delivery model for HSF 2025/26 which maximises the community, voluntary and faith sector and give delegated authority to the Director of Resources, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, to agree the detail of any scheme, subject to confirmation of HSF funding for Pendle Council. By doing so, Pendle

Council can mobilise quickly upon any funding confirmation and ensure a launch of the HSF7 in April/ May 2025.

10. Delegated authority is also sought to make any adjustments to the HSF7 scheme to enable funds to be reprofiled, to ensure effective and timely management of this short-term funding.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** As set out in the report.

**Financial:** At the time of writing this report, Pendle Council was still awaiting formal confirmation of the HSF grant. It is anticipated the 2025/26 grant will be similar to 2023/24; £830,000 up until March 2026.

**Legal:** None arising from the report.

**Risk Management:** None arising from the report.

**Health and Safety:** None arising from the report.

**Sustainability:** None arising from the report.

**Community Safety:** None arising from the report.

**Equality and Diversity:** None arising from the report.

## **APPENDICES**

None

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**