



# Decision Report

**ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL**

**DECISION UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

**DECISION CANNOT BE TAKEN BEFORE 31 JULY 2024**

Title

**COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE FUND**

Report of

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

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## Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed approach and offer for the Community Capacity and Resilience Fund (CCRF) across the Isle of Wight. This report seeks approval from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health for the mechanism to allocate CCRF grant funding to organisations in support of vulnerable households and community groups for this financial year.
2. Approval of the scheme will enable broader support to be offered specifically to intervene where there are gaps not fulfilled by other funding streams. Any application of the fund is intended to strengthen overall community capacity and resilience by working in partnership with community stakeholders, to aid residents and enable them to become self-sustaining and empowered to have better control of their lives both now and in the future.

## Recommendation

Option 1: To approve The Community Capacity & Resilience Fund to approve allocation of funding and distribution in accordance with the process outlined in Appendix 1 and 2 to this report.

Option 1(a): And to approve that Cabinet Member delegates authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to allocate the Community Capacity & Resilience Fund (including the reallocation of any underspend) to recipients that meet the criteria based on recommendations of the grants panel.

## Background

3. The Isle of Wight Council at its Full Council meeting on 28 February 2024 set its budget for 2024/2025. As part of the budget setting process a new fund to support the community was established.
4. The primary purpose of Community Capacity & Resilience Fund (CCRF) is to strengthen overall community capacity and resilience, working with partners and the voluntary sector to further build on the good work that has been achieved through other government funded programmes (Household Support Fund/Family Hubs etc.). It should be used to enable the voluntary and community sector to intervene where there are gaps in provision and supporting individuals and families to become self-sustaining; to empower residents to have better control over their lives.
5. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that the council in setting its budget noted concerns over the potential ending of the government funded Household Support Fund (HSF) in 2024 and sought a way of reinstating a mechanism of separate funding. The aim being that it could be applied to maintain support in addition to its existing commissioning of a range of services and support provisions to aid our Island community with support, advice and guidance.
6. A holistic and coordinated approach to administering and applying the funds is required to meet gaps in provision and evaluate the impact to ensure that it is beneficial to determining where additional support and funding is required.
7. The Isle of Wight Council allocated the sum of £250,000 to be spent between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
8. It has been necessary to consider how the CCRF can be allocated and administered separately to the HSF, along with any conditions that should be linked to its allocation, given the intended purpose and to support access to the additional fund. It is also intended to minimise duplication across other available funds, such as HSF, wherever possible to ensure other funding routes have been exhausted and applied for where appropriate.
9. The allocation and distribution proposal for the CCRF can be found at Appendix 1 and 2 to this report.
10. Discussion with Cabinet Members indicated that one of their key priorities is to address poverty and support needs for the Island. With the development of an Island Anti-Poverty strategy during 2024. The request was that any CCRF scheme has greater flexibility than that of the HSF and it is seen to be separate from HSF awards. It can also act as seed funding for extra support to aid community support provisions to become sustainable, that they may otherwise have been limited to access via other schemes.

11. It will be an application-based process available throughout the year but with two targeted tranches released over the year to invite appropriate applications. The second tranche could be released after any decision to end Household Support Fund scheme, currently due to end 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. A second tranche after this date provides the ability to support specific needs that may arise from loss of other funding mechanisms.
12. The CCRF is available to develop local initiatives where community and voluntary groups along with Town, Parish and Community Councils can apply for funding to support the community with essential support that may otherwise not be available. While there is a focus on cost of living and anti-poverty initiatives, other schemes can be considered. Applications for the CCRF should evidence where match funding can be demonstrated to aid a community provision of support e.g., Town, Parish and Community Councils match funding any financial support that demonstrates sustainability and mutual commitment to local community support initiatives.
13. Following initial consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader, they have recommended that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health delegates authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing Need in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to allocate and approve grant awards to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant (as set out in the IOW offer section of this report) for the Community Capacity & Resilience Fund (including the reallocation of any underspend) to recipients that meet the criteria. This will ensure that the allocation of the funding meets the approvals set out in this report, and the Isle of Wight Council can rapidly adapt the approach to ensure that local needs are met.

## **Corporate Priorities and Strategic Context**

14. This project links to the Economic Recovery aspect of the Corporate Plan 2021-2025, addressing poverty and working towards reducing the number of residents who are living in poverty.
15. The recommendations also help to meet the Corporate Plan aspirations relative to strategic partnerships and Covid-19 recovery of addressing poverty and inequalities in the Island's most deprived areas and improving the Island's resilience to wellbeing relative to its position when national lockdown ended in July 2021.
16. The proposed scheme would also help to address the Corporate Plan aspirations around strategic finance, transformational change, and corporate resources by providing greater support to those on low incomes.
17. Relative to the Corporate Plan aspirations around adult social care and public health, approval of the recommendations would link to placing the health and wellbeing of residents at the centre of what we do and support the development of a co-produced Island Anti-Poverty strategy.

## Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

18. The CCRF has a target to strengthen overall community capacity and resilience, working with partners and the voluntary sector and building on the good work that has been achieved through other grant funded schemes to date.
19. Support to the community, particularly those that require help in low-income households manage energy costs through use of measures such as insulation, efficient LED lighting, draught proofing and provision of Air Fryers. Reducing energy use via these measures and budgeting support will also help to decrease carbon emissions from households. However, a precise estimate of emissions reductions cannot be given at this stage and will need to be assessed further as the programme progresses.
20. Through our work with established community support provisions, such as pantries and additional pantries coordinating their activities through the Island Food Partnership Network, we will help to continue to explore opportunities to reduce the Island's food waste, working with Island supermarkets and food providers to promote the re-distribution of unused edible food.



## **Economic Recovery and Reducing Poverty**

21. The CCRF project links to the Economic Recovery aspect of the Corporate Plan 2021-2025, addressing poverty and working towards reducing the number of residents who are living in poverty.
22. The primary purpose is to provide extra support by means of seed funding provisions of support to become sustainable to aid local residents in need, working with community partners to achieve this. The council can support schemes that will deliver rapid benefit for Island residents through Third Party Organisations (TPO's) to help with the support of food, cost of living wider essentials and community support schemes.

## **Impact on Young People and Future Generations**

23. Allocation of the grant funds in line with the allocation and distribution processes should have a positive impact on reducing child poverty and applications that will address child poverty are welcomed. There is evidence in the past rounds of providing Household Support Fund grants that a reduction has been seen where those households have benefited from community support and direct voucher provisions. Whilst not all these households will be those with children, a number will be young families with children.
24. The CCRF provides scope and ability to continue to support Corporate Parenting responsibilities as part of our Local Offer where other funded options may not be available.

## **Corporate Aims**

25. The Corporate Plan is underpinned by the purpose to work with and support the Island's community, finding ways to help it to satisfy its needs independently or to provide services directly where necessary. In doing so the approach to this CCRF scheme set out in the recommendations support the core values of the corporate plan:
  - (a) **Becoming community focused** – putting the needs of our residents first by recognising that some are faced with poverty and cost of living challenges that requires both crisis support and sustainable support.
  - (b) **Working together** – engagement with range of community partners to make the most of opportunities to help communities to help themselves. Looking at the means and ways to develop emergency support and sustainable solutions with funds available.
  - (c) **Being effective and efficient** – Seeking to use our limited resources wisely and maximise the effect of funding available to aid our communities needs and required responses, while enabling community support to innovate and respond.
  - (d) **Being fair and transparent** – Making decisions based on data and evidence of need in an open and accountable way through administration of the criteria to aid access to funding that can best serve the Island people's needs and how to sustain these through initial funding opportunities that may seed fund.

## **IOW Offer – Community Capacity and Resilience Fund**

26. It is recommended that approval of the Community Capacity and Resilience Fund grant funding pot of £250,000 is to be divided into the categories set out within Appendix 1.
27. This will be applied through the proposed grant prospectus approach devised for the Fund as contained within Appendix 2 and can be summarised as:
  - (a) Top-Up Food Voucher Scheme for crisis intervention
  - (b) Community Grants to develop local initiatives where community and voluntary groups along with Town, Parish and Community Councils can apply for funding to support the community with food, fuel and wider support projects not otherwise in place.
  - (c) Administration costs to oversee, work with partners, and coordinate the prospectus, grant applications, reporting and grant monitoring arrangements.
28. The intention is that this source of funding should support gaps in provision that other grants funds either cannot or are not available. The use of the CCRF should complement and maximise opportunities to aid support to be provided to Island residents within their communities, providing a contingency offer beyond the life of any other grant funding schemes e.g. Household Support Fund.
29. The intention of CCRF is not to be too prescriptive but to provide an outline of criteria that enables applicants to demonstrate how it will support the key principles and corporate objectives outlined.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

30. We have, in past rounds of the Household Support grant funding allocation processes held a number of stakeholder consultation meetings, both with internal Council colleagues as well as Town, Parish and community council representatives, Citizens Advice IOW, Schools, Community and Voluntary Organisations to determine the wider need of specific cohorts and how best to utilise any funding to aid community responses to cost of living and wider pressures. The output of these consultation meetings continues to shape the proposals for both the Household support Fund and the Community Capacity and Resilience Fund.
31. In addition to these meetings, engagement has been undertaken with the existing community pantries both individually and via the Island Food Partnership Network to ascertain the required level of onward funding and considerations and concerns that should Household Support Funding end later in 2024 what financial support may need to be available to aid ongoing provisions within communities. Continued engagement and evaluation are undertaken throughout the life of Household Support Funding and the work underway via development of an Island Anti-Poverty strategy to aid wider considerations over the needs and use of CCRF.
32. Ongoing consultation and engagement will continue to aid shaping of specific grant needs for any funding rounds in terms of the Isle of Wight offer for these grant funds.

## **Financial / Budget Implications**

33. The Community Capacity and Resilience Fund is provided through provision set as part of the budget setting process by the council on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024, a new fund of £250,000 to support the community has been established, and the way these are intended to be distributed is set out within Appendix 1.
34. IWC is seeking to minimise administration costs and funding of up to £34,166 from Community Capacity & Resilience Fund to cover centralised administration costs which will include staff costs for overseeing the Community Capacity & Resilience Fund and Administration Support, communications and marketing over the course of the financial year. The support required to aid applicants to work up schemes, comply with grant conditions and reporting, and retain regular partnership liaison requires dedicated resources over the life of the schemes.
35. Allocation of funding will be monitored against the grant criteria to ensure spend remains compliant with the terms of the grant and delivers best value for the council.
36. As part of the CCRF grant scheme, the council will continue to capture, where possible, the number of individual households that have been assisted through the grant scheme. It is thought best to monitor this by individual organisation and then collated centrally.

## **Legal Implications**

37. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the council with a general power of competence which provides the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. Including power to do it for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area.
38. The council is not limited to the way it uses the CCRF funds, unlike Household Support Fund restrictions required of DWP. The CCRF therefore provides the council with additional flexibility in relation to allocation, and which can assist in providing support for areas which currently fall outside of the framework and grant conditions of the Household Support Fund and any wider grant provisions available.
39. All funding granted to third party organisations (including any schools, colleges, and early years providers) will be on condition of a signed grant agreement being entered into that sets out the conditions of the funding as well as reporting requirements.
40. Third party organisations will be required to report to the Council on how they have spent the funding provided, in line with the relevant grant criteria set out in the appendices to this report.

## **Equality and Diversity**

41. Consultation has been undertaken with community and voluntary organisations, town, parish and community council representatives, school representatives, internal council departments, and Citizens Advice IOW to explore the needs of

funding and support as part of the wider HSF considerations. As there remains a link between both HSF and CCRF in aiding communities to strengthen overall community capacity and resilience around cost-of-living needs, the consultation enables the ability to identify where there are gaps in the provisions of support - the ongoing consultation and engagement will support identifying needs of grant funding.

42. In addition, the CCRF scheme expectations has been consulted with The Leader (with responsibility Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships), Deputy Leader Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health.
43. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been jointly completed as part of the HSF scheme and the introduction of a CCRF provision and is included as Appendix 3 to this report. The results can be summarised that no negative impacts on the protected characteristics are expected from the provisions being recommended within the documents.

## **Property Implications**

44. There are no property implications associated with this funding due to the nature of the grant conditions.

## **Options**

45. The Cabinet Member delegated decision options are as follows:

Option 1: To approve The Community Capacity & Resilience Fund to approve allocation of funding and distribution in accordance with the process outlined in Appendix 1 and 2 to this report; and

Option 1(a): And to approve that Cabinet Member delegates approval to the Director of Adult Social Care and Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health to allocate the Community Capacity & Resilience Fund (including the reallocation of any underspend) to recipients that meet the criteria based on recommendations of the grants panel. This will ensure that the allocation of the funding meets the approvals set out in this report, the Isle of Wight Council can rapidly adapt the approach to ensure that local needs are met.

Option 2: Not to approve the recommendations proposed in this report but recommend an alternative delivery plan of CCRF.

Option 3: Not to approve the recommendations proposed in this report and to agree no further delivery of the CCRF.



## **Risk Management**

46. Community and Voluntary Organisations along with Charities, Town, Parish, and Community Councils must apply for funding, detailing the delivery of the project, estimated beneficiaries and eligibility criteria. The application will follow the process outlined in the scheme and if approved, a grant agreement confirming grant instructions will be issued before funds are released.
47. Intermittent checks will be undertaken by the council to ensure grant conditions are being followed, and audits carried out at the end of the grant period.
48. To mitigate risk of fraud as much as possible, we will ensure that any funded schemes are devised based on closed-loop vouchers or tangible items, as opposed to awarding cash or bank transfers.
49. There is a risk that if the delegated decision does not approve the proposed delivery plan that Isle of Wight residents will not be supported with the continued cost-of-living support needs, and the number of local people living in poverty will increase, particularly if the HSF does end in September 2024.
50. There is a risk that when the funding provided by DWP stops for HSF, residents that have become reliant on the support will find themselves unable to afford basics. Encouraging match funding from the Town, Parish and Community Council's as part of the CCRF application process to aid their local communities' needs will aid the mitigation of this risk slightly, provided they are willing to review financial contributions, as they will be able to continue past the end of the fund, as is the intention with community pantries. In addition, Pantries are asked to seek additional grants from alternative sources that could aid them beyond any ending of current funding arrangements as the Isle of Wight Council cannot guarantee what levels of support may be offered in the future.
51. As with the granting of other discretionary schemes, the programme will only be delivered in line with the identified grant conditions.

## **Evaluation**

52. The CCRF seeks to provide financial assistance to local community groups through the grant funding now available, which provides a diversity in the offer and alternative forms of support will help to provide longer-term and more sustainable support for the Island.
53. We are aware that local residents do run the risk of becoming dependent on the schemes of support supported via HSF provisions, which is why an additional focus on building resilience is of increasing importance. The ability to provide wider support where it is deemed necessary via a CCRF will help to strengthen overall community capacity and resilience. The CCRF will enable a continuing ability to work with partners and the voluntary sector in building on the good work that has been achieved to date to intervene where there are gaps in provision that continues to support our community to become self-sustaining and empowered to have better control over their lives.

54. The CCRF is designed to be less prescriptive than HSF to aid the flexibility for appropriate support of needs identified.

## **Appendices Attached**

Appendix 1 – Allocation and distribution proposal for Community Capacity and Resilience Fund  
Appendix 2 – Draft CCRF Grant Process  
Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

55. [IWC Budget and Council Tax Setting report 2024-25](#) paper 28 Feb 2024
56. [Support for local communities – Household Support Fund](#) paper 9 May 2024
57. Contact Point: Ian Lloyd, Strategic Manager Partnership and Support Services,  
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