

## Isle of Anglesey County Council

<b>Report to:</b>	The Executive
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Cost of Living – Discretionary Scheme
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Robin W Williams – Portfolio Holder – Finance Alun W Mummery – Portfolio Holder - Housing
<b>Head of Service / Director:</b>	Marc Jones Director of Function (Resources) / Section 151 Officer
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<b>Local Members:</b>	n/a

### A –Recommendation/s and reason/s

1. The Welsh Government has provided additional funding to each local authority to enable support under a discretionary scheme, in order to help households considered to be in need of assistance with their living costs.

The schemes are intended to provide immediate support to households as Wales recovers from the pandemic, and to deal with the impact of increasing energy and other living costs.

In developing a local Discretionary Scheme, each local authority has complete autonomy to target the funds to best support its residents and to ensure its approach best suits the needs of individual households.

<https://gov.wales/cost-living-support-scheme-guide-local-authorities-html>

- 1.1 **The Main Scheme** – approximately 23,000 households on Anglesey will receive £150 payment if they are in Council Tax bands A to D, along with any households in receipt of assistance through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme living in properties in bands E to I. This is circa 75% to 80% of our household population.

- 1.2 **Local Authority Discretionary Scheme** – circa. £580,000 is available for the Council to administer based on local need & demand, in order to support households affected by the substantial increased costs of living. It should also be noted that any underspending from the main scheme is to be transferred into the discretionary scheme. It is unclear at this point what the level of underspending will be, if any, but this may result in a significant increase in the funding for the discretionary scheme.

**N.B** At the time of writing this report, the Chancellor has released additional funding information for households living in poverty. This should result in additional funding being allocated to the Welsh Government, but is unclear how the Welsh Government will use this funding and whether it will increase the Council's allocation under the main scheme or the discretionary scheme.

### 2. Phase One of the Discretionary Scheme

- 2.1 Phase One of the Discretionary Scheme will target specific groups of individuals which will be eligible to receive financial support which are as follows:-

**2.1.1** It is recommended that the Executive approves the following groups to be provided with £150, with a budget of £150,000 administered by IoACC Revenues & Benefits Section.

<b>GROUP</b>	<b>POTENTIAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS (if available)</b>
Providing or receiving care – Classes I and J	11 & 4
Severe Mental Impairment – Class U	135
Care Leavers – Class X	10
Residents living in emergency accommodation	70
Unpaid carers	Circa 100 registered with Carers Outreach
Those affected by the benefit cap	Not currently available
Residents living in supported accommodation settings	Circa 50
Social Housing sector bands E and above (larger properties)	Up to 20
<b>Council Tax Reduction Scheme entitlement condition</b>  If the householder(s) was / were in receipt of support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme on 15 February 2022, they are automatically assessed as being entitled to a payment of £150 regardless of the valuation band in which their property is placed.	406
Those who have moved into properties Band A-D or are in receipt of CTR in Band A-I after the qualifying date under the main scheme (15 February 2022), but did not qualify under the main scheme due to the qualifying date.	Circa 100

**2.1.2** It is recommended that the Executive approves hardship funding for residents moving out of emergency accommodation into settled accommodation:-

- Up to £300 of funding to cover food and / or fuel costs during their move on into more settled accommodation. Funding can be used to cover immediate fuel costs, such as oil. Additionally, this aspect can support furniture costs. This funding of £50,000 to be administered by our Statutory Homeless Service based on assessed need.

**2.1.3** It is recommended that the Executive approves £150 for Anglesey residents that are in Higher Education and rent or own accommodation on the Island that were exempt from phase one:-

- £5,000 to be provided to Grwp Llandrillo Menai to administer for the above group;
- £5,000 to be provided to Bangor University to administer for the above group.

**2.1.4** It is recommended that the Executive approves the following for phase two of the cost of living scheme for Anglesey residents that are ex-forces / veterans and are in financial hardship. This funding will be based on an assessed need for up to £300 payment per household in need:-

- £10,000 to be provided to the Anglesey British Legion & SAFFA as part of their offering when supporting veterans in hardship.

**2.1.5** It is recommended that the Executive approves the following group for Anglesey residents that are in financial hardship and have no access to additional hardship funding, such as the Discretionary Assistance Fund. Funding can support food & fuel costs.

This aspect will support residents that are 'in-work' poverty. This funding will be based on an assessed need for up to £300 payment that can be administered by our internal Welfare Rights Unit (O'Toole), our internal Financial Inclusion Team and CAB Ynys Môn.

This aspect will cover all socio-demographic backgrounds and is focused on the evidence of hardship.

- £100,000 to be administered by our internal Welfare Rights Unit (O'Toole), our internal Financial Inclusion Team and CAB Ynys Môn.

**2.1.6** The Isle of Anglesey County Council Section 151 Officer has the authority to increase budgets for organisations based on an accepted business case, demonstrating the need and demand.

### 3. Summary

**3.1** Based on the proposals set out above, the total sum allocated is as follows:-

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total Sum Allocated £</b>
Individuals not eligible under the main scheme	150,000
Residents moving out of emergency accommodation	50,000
Residents in Higher Education	10,000
Ex Forces / Veterans	10,000
Individuals experiencing hardship who do not have access to any other assistance funds	100,000
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATED</b>	<b>320,000</b>

**3.2** This leaves a balance of £260,000 to be allocated, although, depending on take up, this figure may change (as per paragraph 2.1.6 above). Once the rollout of the main scheme has been completed, it will be possible to determine how much of the funding transfers across to fund the discretionary scheme. Further work will be required to assess the impact of both the main scheme and phase 1 of the discretionary scheme and this will help to shape how to use the remaining funds.

**3.3** A further report will be submitted to the Executive in due course with recommendations as how to utilise the remaining funding (Phase 2 of the Discretionary Scheme). The options may include targeting funding to further categories of residents who are still experiencing financial hardship, awarding further payments to those who have already received a grant through the discretionary scheme, making a further payment to certain categories of households that have received the £150 through the main scheme or making grant payments to bodies which help and support individuals experiencing financial hardship.

**B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?**

The Main Scheme will cover 75%-80% of Anglesey households, to which each household will receive £150.

Phase 1 of the Discretionary Scheme covers vulnerable groups and allows Financial Inclusion, Welfare Rights and debt service providers to support households in need. Other categories were considered, but Officers were conscious that widening the criteria further could result in more applications being received than could be covered by the funding available.

Phase 2 of the Discretionary Scheme will allow the opportunity to provide financial support to other groups of residents who have not received support from the Main Scheme or from Phase 1 of the Discretionary Scheme.

**C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?**

This matter is viewed as a decision for the Executive.

**Ch – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**


Not applicable

**D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?**

Not applicable – Welsh Government funding

**Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):**

1	How does this decision impact on our long term needs as an Island?	For residents receiving financial inclusion and / or welfare rights and / or debt advice as part of this service, this can have a positive impact on personal budgeting and finances.
2	Is this a decision which it is envisaged will prevent future costs / dependencies on the Authority? If so, how?	Financial hardship can lead to demands for other Council services. Awarding the support to vulnerable groups who have not received funding through the main cost of living scheme, may reduce future costs for the Council.

<b>Dd – Assessing the potential impact (if relevant):</b>		
<b>3</b>	Have we been working collaboratively with other organisations to come to this decision? If so, please advise whom.	The design of the scheme is the responsibility of each individual Council in Wales, and they have the freedom to direct funding to those most in need in their area. Despite this, discussions have taken place at a local, regional and national level on which categories should be funded by the discretionary scheme.
<b>4</b>	Have Anglesey citizens played a part in drafting this way forward, including those directly affected by the decision? Please explain how.	No
<b>5</b>	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on the groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.	 Equality Impact Assessment Discretic  None assessed
<b>6</b>	If this is a strategic decision, note any potential impact that the decision would have on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.	All groups considered
<b>7</b>	Note any potential impact that this decision would have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.	No impact
<b>E – Who did you consult?</b>		<b>What did they say?</b>
<b>1</b>	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	Supported the recommendations set out in the report
<b>2</b>	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	This piece of work has been in full consultation with IoACC Section 151 Officer
<b>3</b>	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	No comments or objections from a legal perspective
<b>4</b>	Human Resources (HR)	Not applicable
<b>5</b>	Property	Not applicable
<b>6</b>	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	Not applicable
<b>7</b>	Procurement	Not applicable
<b>8</b>	Scrutiny	Not applicable
<b>9</b>	Local Members	Not applicable
<b>F - Appendices:</b>		
None		
<b>Ff - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):</b>		
None		