

**Bracknell Forest Council
Record of Decision**

Work Programme Reference	I116732
---------------------------------	----------------

1. **TITLE:** Community Support: Winter Update

2. **SERVICE AREA:** Chief Executive's Office

3. **PURPOSE OF DECISION**

To present the updated financial hardship plan, having reviewed this ahead of winter cost of living pressures and to align with emerging priorities.

4. **IS KEY DECISION** Yes

5. **DECISION MADE BY:** Executive

6. **DECISION:**

RESOLVED that:

- i. The updated financial hardship action plan is endorsed (appendix A of the report).
- ii. The COMF spending plan is agreed (appendix B of the report).

7. **REASON FOR DECISION**

- 1. In 2022, the council recognised a need for a strategic, sustainable, and preventative approach to supporting residents who may be at risk of, or experiencing, financial hardship. Support throughout this period has been facilitated in large part by one off government grant funding and the development of a financial hardship action plan. Since 2022, there has been a consistent period of high inflation on items such as domestic fuel and food. This emphasises a need to review the plan content for continued relevance, particularly ensuring the priorities are appropriate for the upcoming winter period.
- 2. More broadly, there also continues to be a lasting impact from the pandemic on health and wellbeing for communities across the borough. Local research was conducted exploring the impact of COVID during 2023, which has supported the identification of key areas of focus. The council seeks to identify opportunities to support community development and resilience. Specific funding has been identified from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to support programmes that address these challenges these are set out in appendix B.

8. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The review of community support process has considered a range of issues related to the pandemic and the cost-of-living. As part of the process of developing these recommendations, some issues were out of the scope of the action plan or grant funding conditions as this is a ring-fenced time limited grant provided by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities OHID. Some elements of health and hardship are also outside of the influence of the council and are therefore not recommended

for inclusion in the updated hardship action plan or COMF funded activities in appendix C.

9. **DOCUMENT CONSIDERED:** Report of the Assistant Director: Chief Executive's Officer

10. **DECLARED CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** None

Date Decision Made	Final Day of Call-in Period
12 December 2023	20 December 2023