

## Urgent Decision Taken on Behalf of Cabinet

### Report to the Leader of the Council

Report submitted by: Director of Corporate Services

**Part I**

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

### Support for Lancashire COVID-19 Community Support Fund

Contact for further information:

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#### Executive Summary

This report considers a request submitted to the Lancashire Resilience Forum by 'Community Foundations Lancashire and Merseyside' for a contribution of funding to help kick-start a fundraising appeal for community groups and organisations across Lancashire. The fund will support communities on the front line dealing with the impact of the outbreak who have been affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

#### Reason for Urgency

This decision is urgent and cannot await the next meeting of Cabinet. The reason for this is that all formal meetings of the council, including Cabinet, have been cancelled for the foreseeable future and this decision has been deemed to be business critical by Corporate Management Team. This decision is therefore being taken on behalf of Cabinet by the Leader of the Council in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order C16(1).

#### Recommendation

The Leader of the County Council is asked to:

- a) approve the release of a financial contribution to Community Foundations Lancashire and Merseyside of £170,000 (which has already been transferred to the charity and is being held to the county council's order pending completion of the legal agreement referred to at (b)), comprising of:
  - (i) a £50,000 contribution from the county council and
  - (ii) a £120,000 contribution on behalf of the 12 district and borough councils in Lancashire (£10,000 per district/borough).
- b) delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services to finalise and agree the arrangements and enter into such agreement with:

- (i) The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside,
- (ii) Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and
- (iii) Blackpool Borough Council as is necessary to give effect to the arrangements.

This decision should be implemented immediately for the purpose of Standing Order C29 as any delay could adversely affect the execution of the County Council's responsibilities. The reason for this is that the decision has been designated as business critical by Corporate Management Team, and any delay in its implementation would have an adverse effect on the operations of the county council.

### **Background and Advice**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is an exceptional public health emergency which has had a significant impact on groups and organisations who are supporting communities on the front line dealing with the impact of the outbreak.

The National Emergencies Trust in conjunction with the British Red Cross have launched a fundraising appeal to help those most affected by the virus. Working with UK Community Foundations the National Emergencies Trust have distributed funds to the 46 local community foundations who have an in-depth understanding of their local area to distribute funds through grants. The fund for Lancashire has been given a kick-start with £50,000 from the National Emergencies Trust and a further injection of £127,000 was announced by the Trust again on the 6 April.

The community foundation for Lancashire is known as Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside, a registered charity. The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside is now working closely with the Lancashire Resilience Forum to further expand the Lancashire wide fund to address the needs of the most vulnerable in Lancashire and through the Lancashire Resilience Forum have approached the county council, all district and borough councils and the unitary authorities in Lancashire to support phase one of this fund. Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside have suggested a financial contribution of £50,000 for the county council and unitary authorities and a contribution of £10,000 per district and borough council.

The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside was established in 2007 and since then has distributed in excess of £13 million to organisations in Lancashire. The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside has worked with the county council previously in 2015 when they set up a Flood Recovery Fund and raised and distributed over £1 million to those with immediate need. The organisation is well established and has experience and expertise to manage a large emergency fund such as this.

To support this county-wide effort and to ensure the response and package for community organisations and groups is joined up and coordinated across Lancashire, it is recommended that the county council work with the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside through the Lancashire Resilience

Forum and provide a financial contribution of £50,000 to help further expand the fund in Lancashire. In addition to this, the Leader of the County Council has offered to fund the district contribution of £10,000 per district (a total of £120,000) in recognition of the challenging cash flow position that district and borough councils will find themselves in during the COVID-19 pandemic. This would result in the county council contributing a total of £170,000 to help further expand the emergency grant fund for Lancashire.

To aid the speed at which community groups and organisations can be supported and benefit from the emergency grant, funds have been transferred to the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside on the understanding that they will be held to the county council's order until an agreement between all parties has been executed.

The fund has already been launched on the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside website and is available for organisations to apply to. On a regular basis the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside will hold a grants Funding Panel consisting of senior representatives from the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside Programmes Team and chaired by a Trustee of the organisation. The Funding Panel will consider applications fairly and objectively based on the information provided, make informed recommendations and will offer valid declination reasons and supportive feedback to those applicants that are not recommended for funding.

The recommendations of the Funding Panel will then be passed to a Ratification Panel to agree and approve the recommended decisions of the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside Funding Panel. Membership of the Ratification Panel will consist of Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside Trustees and officers and will include a representative each from the Lancashire Resilience Forum, the county council and a third sector representative for Lancashire. The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside will be responsible for all governance arrangements including application, assessment and enacting due diligence. The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside will also be responsible for managing funding agreements with recipient organisations, payments, monitoring projects and end of project reports/evaluations. Criteria for funding applications may be subject to negotiation between applicants and the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside, however the initial priorities for distributing the fund are:

- Getting food to people who are isolated and in greatest need
- Protecting our most vulnerable children while schools are closed
- Helping people who have recently left the hospital to recover at home
- Supporting people with their mental wellbeing
- Helping people who are struggling with debt.

The transfer of funds will be managed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside, the county council and the two unitary authorities. The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside will report to the county council on a regular basis about funding that has been allocated.

The Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside have requested that the contribution is to be treated as an absolute gift to the charity. Accordingly, at the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, any funds remaining from the county council's contribution will not be returned to the county council but will be spent in accordance with the charity's charitable objects. Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside have confirmed that the county council's financial contribution will only be spent for the benefit of those living within the administrative areas of Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen.

There is a management charge of 5.5% to the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside to cover the cost of running and distributing the fund.

This phase is phase one of the process and it is possible that in the future further phases will be launched as and when required by the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside, this may result in further requests for financial support from the county council.

### **Consultations**

N/A

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

The impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is significant for groups and organisations who are supporting communities on the front line dealing with the impact of the outbreak. Significant and immediate support is required for organisations to try and limit the long lasting effects of the outbreak. In order for this to happen a joined up and coordinated effort is required across all authorities in Lancashire.

### **Financial**

This proposal entails the approval of £170,000 funding to be offered to the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside to help further expand a Lancashire wide fund. This would include a £50,000 contribution on behalf of the county council and a further £120,000 to cover a £10,000 contribution on behalf of each of the 12 districts in Lancashire. This contribution will be funded from the COVID-19 cost centre and will be allocated against the Emergency Funding advanced by Government.

### **Legal**

Payment of the county council's contribution has been made to the Community Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside and has been paid on the basis that it is to be held by the organisation, subject to the parties agreeing an appropriate Memorandum of Understanding. A draft Memorandum of Understanding reflecting the principles set out in this report is currently being finalised by Community

Foundations for Lancashire and Merseyside, the county council's Legal Services and the two unitary authorities.

**List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None		
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Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

**Urgent Decision Taken on behalf of Cabinet: Declarations**

**Leader of the County Council**

**Support for Lancashire COVID-19 Community Support Fund**

Original recommendation, as set out in the report, approved without amendment. Yes/No \*

Original recommendation amended and decision as follows: Yes/No \*

I have a pecuniary/non-pecuniary interest in this matter. Yes/No \*

If an interest is declared please give details below:

.....  
Leader of the County Council

insert date

**Chief Officer**

I certify that this is an appropriate and accurate record within the terms of Standing Order C30(2) and (3) of the decision taken by the Cabinet Member.

.....  
insert title of authorising officer

insert date

\*Delete as appropriate

**This decision is to be taken by more than one Cabinet Member and all relevant Cabinet Members must be in agreement with the decision**

**Urgent Decision Taken on behalf of Cabinet: Declarations**

**insert Leader of the Council (or in his absence the Deputy Leader) and the relevant Cabinet Member for (title) - as appropriate**

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.....  
insert Leader, Deputy Leader or Cabinet Member for (title) - as appropriate

insert date

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