

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out an update arising from the continuation of the Household Support Fund Scheme (originally Winter 2021/22) in North Lincolnshire.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In October 2021 the government announced the launch of a £421 million Household Support Fund (HSF) to support those most in need over the winter during the economic recovery, covering the period 6 October to 31 March 2022. Councils were given discretion to use the funding flexibly, with the expectation that it is primarily used to support households in the most immediate need with food, energy, water and other essential household bills.
- 2.2 The local delivery model for the fund was approved by cabinet members and launched in North Lincolnshire on 29 November 2021. The model comprised the three core elements of welfare assistance, food vouchers and housing related support costs.
- 2.3 There have been two further allocations of Household Support Fund in 2022/23 each for a six-month period (HSF2 and HSF3) and with guidance that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food and water bills.
- 2.4 The delivery model was updated to add an energy payment for pensioner households in receipt of full or partial council tax support in addition to the elements outlined in 2.3 above.
- a) **Welfare Assistance:** A third sector organisation was commissioned to deliver a welfare assistance grant scheme, open to all North Lincolnshire households who meet the eligibility criteria to apply directly for support including a small proportion for specific housing related support in compliance with the national guidance.

- b) **Food Voucher Scheme:** An element of the grant was allocated to the direct provision of food vouchers. Data has been used to identify eligible families, and the local approach has also scoped in families with children outside of the free school meals cohort and also care leavers with immediate support needs.
- c) **Energy payment:** Data from the first allocation of HSF indicated a low rate of applications from pensioners despite the understood need so a proportion of the second and third allocations was allocated to c.5,000 financially vulnerable pensioner households. In total £1m of the £2.6m allocation has been distributed through issue of Post Office payout vouchers.

- 2.5 The delivery plan for HSF3, September 2022 to March 2023 is to support:
- 3,400 households through welfare assistance (targeted application administered by Citizen Advice)
 - 7,500 households through the food voucher scheme (£30 vouchers issued December 2022); and
 - 5,000 pensioner households through the energy payment (£100 post office pay out issued January 2023).

- 2.6 The funding for Household Support Fund was extended in the Autumn Statement. The guidance and allocations for schemes April 2023 are yet to be published therefore a further report and proposals will be brought to cabinet for consideration once the scheme guidance and North Lincolnshire allocation are available.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1: Note the update of the 2022/23 Household Support Fund scheme in North Lincolnshire.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Report for noting.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

- 5.1 The total funding allocation for North Lincolnshire for 2022/2023 was £2,647,786. Budgets were allocated and reprofiled in period 8 as follows:

	HSF2 April-Sept	HSF3 Oct-March	Total Allocation
Welfare Assistance:	£350,000	£555,000	£905,000
Food Vouchers:	£442,000	£268,000	£710,000
Energy Payment:	£500,000	£500,000	£1,000,000
Contingency	£31,893	£893	£32,786
Totals:	£1,323,893	£1,323,893	£2,647,786

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

- 6.1 The design of the scheme aligns local delivery with the principles and priorities set out in the Council Plan. They are aimed at the most vulnerable and enable and promote equality of opportunity and self-responsibility.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 7.1 No adverse impacts have been identified.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

- 8.1 None

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet members are invited to note the update and ongoing outcomes arising from the Household Support Fund Scheme in North Lincolnshire.

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

Cabinet Member Report – Household Support Fund 26 November 2021

Cabinet Member Report – Household Support Fund 17 May 2022

DWP Grant Letter and supporting National Guidance

Local Delivery Framework