



REPORT TO:	Leader of East Lindsey District Council
DATE:	5 th December 2022
SUBJECT:	HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND (third phase)
PURPOSE:	To accept the offer made by Lincolnshire County Council as part of the Department for Work and Pension's 'Household Support Fund' (third phase) and to establish and deliver support for our most vulnerable residents and communities.
KEY DECISION:	Yes
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Leader of the East Lindsey District Council, Councillor Craig Leyland
REPORT OF:	Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership, Emily Spicer
REPORT AUTHOR:	Strategic Lead – Prosperous Communities, Roxanne Warrick
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

Following acceptance of Lincolnshire County Councils proposal, this report outlines the administration of the Household Support Fund (third phase) across the sovereign council areas of Boston, East Lindsey and South Holland that make up the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

Due to the urgent need to administer the funding to our communities, each council is asked to support the recommendations as provided within this report. Whilst funding will be allocated to each sovereign council and dispersed to households in need within that district, a single policy and scheme has developed across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership to provide administrative efficiency and consistency in support for the most vulnerable residents in all our communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To accept the funding allocation from Lincolnshire County Council as part of the Department for Work and Pension's Household Support Fund to deliver the Household Support Fund at a local level.
- To give delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive (Communities) in consultation with the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder to implement the policy in respect of administration of the funding.
- To facilitate grants to low-income residents in receipt of Housing Benefit only living in the local authority area via postal voucher that is redeemable for cash at Post Office branches.
- To utilise any remaining funding to meet local gaps in welfare provision and support vulnerable households in-line with the Household Support Fund policy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Due to the urgent need to support struggling households with immediate increases in 'cost of living', delegation is required to sign off policy and procedure outside of the committee process in order to successfully deliver the local scheme from December 2022.
- The proposed scheme is a targeted approach to those in most need with consideration of households who did not benefit from other Government cost of living support as required in the national guidance.
- Officers working with people and communities have the relationships with third sector partners supporting vulnerable residents to offer wider welfare and cost of living advice.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- Not accept Lincolnshire County Council's proposal to accept the Household Support Fund for the purposes outlined within this report.
- To deliver through other grant and voucher providers.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In September 2022 the Government announced that through the Household Support Fund (third phase) £421 million would be made available in England to support vulnerable households identified as requiring support in respect to significantly rising living costs. This funding must be utilised between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023 inclusive.

- 1.2 The Household Support Fund will be distributed by councils in England to directly help those who need it most. The grant will be distributed through small grant payments to support vulnerable households to meet the cost of essentials and to assist in preventing an escalation of financial problems.
- 1.3 Whilst in two tier areas the funding will initially be allocated to County Councils, guidance specifically outlines expectation for County Councils to work with District Councils to provide support. This is to ensure the funding meets its objectives by identifying those most in need. The guidance sets out required collaboration with District Council and charitable organisations that have the reputation, knowledge and relationships that make them well placed to identify and help the most vulnerable residents.
- 1.4 The S&ELCP has been working with Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire District Councils to ensure a collective response to equitably distribute funds and co-ordinate the countywide scheme outlined in this report.

2. ALLOCATION OF HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND IN LINCOLNSHIRE

- 2.1 £5,464,685.20 has been awarded to Lincolnshire County Council under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2001, to administer the Household Support Fund (third phase) and to provide assistance to households most in need across Lincolnshire.
- 2.2 The objective of the fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support with significantly rising living costs. Although considered an extension of the previous Household Support Fund schemes, it is a new grant subject to its own grant conditions.
- 2.3 Household Support Fund eligibility is not restricted to households in receipt of benefits and is not conditional on employment or immigration status, but the expectation is that the fund should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those **who may not be eligible for the other support government** has recently made available but who are in need.
- 2.4 This includes prioritising residents who did not benefit from this year's £650 'cost of living support payment'. This was an additional payment made to people in receipt of certain means tested benefits and tax credits - paid in 2 instalments (in July and November) to residents in receipt of Universal credit, Income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.
- 2.5 The Department for Work and Pensions recognised that those in receipt of Housing Benefit only (and no DWP or HMRC administered benefit) were not included in the 'cost of living payment' list and have asked Local Authorities to consider supporting this cohort as part of this winter's funding.
- 2.6 Lincolnshire County Council have used an estimated **56%** of the county allocation to delegate to schools and Early Years Providers to provide additional support to families with children eligible for Free School Meals / Early Years Pupil Premium and families with 2-year-old eligible for Early Years Entitlement with a one-off winter payment of £100 per pupil.
- 2.7 In addition, Lincolnshire County Councils will direct **1%** of the funding to support children in care in supported living accommodation.

- 2.8 Each District has a provisional allocation proportionate to the number of low-income residents in their area in receipt of Housing Benefit only totalling an estimated **25%** of overall Lincolnshire funding.
- 2.9 Of the remaining countywide funds, an initial **10%** will be allocated to District Councils based on Indices of Multiple Deprivation methodology for local scheme to support vulnerable households to spend before the end January 2023.
- 2.10 The indicative allocation to the South & East Lincolnshire Council Partnership is Boston Borough Council **£182,397.00** East Lindsey District Council **£465,901.00** and South Holland District Council **£209,575.00** a potential total of **£857,873.00** for the sub-region. Allocations for South & East Lincolnshire Council's Partnership are shown in **Table 1**:

Table 1 – South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership's Household Support Fund Allocation

	District allocation to for residents in receipt of Housing Benefit only	District allocation to be allocation to be targeted at other vulnerable households	Total District allocation
Boston	£127,750	£54,647.00	£182,397.00
East Lindsey	£334,750	£131,151.00	£465,901.00
South Holland	£144,000	£65,575.00	£209,575.00
SELCP	£606,500.00	£251,373.00	£857,873.00

3. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND DELIVERY IN LINCOLNSHIRE

- 3.1 Due to limited timescales and pressure to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable residents, **Household Support Fund (third phase) is being delivered in 3 parts:**

1) Families with Children Eligible for Free School Meals/Early Years Pupil Premium – Provision of Vouchers via Lincolnshire County Council/Schools

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services have funded a one-off £100 voucher for parents or carers of children and young people eligible for Free School Meals and the Early Years Pupil Premium. This has been delivered via schools ahead of the summer holidays and is estimated to total 56% of the funding.

2) Low-income Households in receipt of Housing Benefit only – Provision of Vouchers via District Councils

District Councils will facilitate vouchers to low-income households in receipt of Housing Benefit only who did not receive the 'cost of living support payment'. PSPS Revenues and Benefits department are making local data available for this purpose which provides a defined co-hort of eligible residents.

Each Lincolnshire resident in recipient of Housing Benefit only will receive £250 grant. Analysis of caseload has initially identified **5,394** eligible households in Lincolnshire totalling **£1,348,500**. Indicative volumes for South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership based on available data are shown in **Table 2**:

Table 2 – South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership’s Housing Benefit only caseload

	Residents in receipt of Housing Benefit only	£
BBC	511	£127,750
ELDC	1339	£334,750
SHDC	576	£144,000
S&ELCP	2426	£606,500

Source: PSPS Revenues and Benefit Housing Benefit only caseload October 2022
(low-income households not in receipt of 7 main DWP/HMRC means tested benefits)

3. Vulnerable residents presenting in need

District Councils will agree consistent countywide principles for use of any remaining budget from the county allocation but will have discretion to meet local welfare in line with the national guidance. This will be progressed after the distribution of the vouchers to residents in receipt of Housing Benefit only. It will be delivered directly, though internal referrals on behalf of residents engaged with Council services or indirectly via third sector and health partners to support households in financial hardship with emergency food parcels, vouchers utility support or other household essentials such as winter clothes, emergency heating and warmth.

Following discussions with local stakeholders, community support partners and internal teams supporting vulnerable residents, the remaining local discretionary allocation for each District will be split over 3 key areas:

- Support for Community Hubs and Food Banks – including grants to provide emergency food parcels or ‘warm packs’ to residents referred for support.
- Local Welfare Support – including applications ‘trusted referral partners’ where residents present at their service in need and allocating S&ELCP Green Homes team with discretionary budget for emergency warmth.
- Grants by application – including public facing application with eligibility restricted to residents who did not benefit from other cost of living support payments or have health conditions exacerbated by cold homes. This will be delivered by the communities’ team or third party provider.

4. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND ADMINISTRATION IN SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

4.1 Whilst each council will receive its allocation separately, one process will be utilised across the Partnership to ensure administration efficiencies and consistency of approach. The basic outline being our approach is based on:

- We are building on our **previous experience** of delivering discretionary grants to vulnerable residents including lessons learnt around managing demand, fastest way to get support out to our communities whilst ensuring good governance
- Ensuring our scheme has as much **flexibility** for any remaining discretionary budget for us to support the most vulnerable in our communities
- Supporting our third sector **partners** to help the most vulnerable residents in our communities.

4.2 The administration of the scheme will be through the Prosperous Communities Team within the Wellbeing and Community Leadership Division (Communities Directorate).

4.3 Vouchers for residents in receipt of Housing Benefit only will be facilitated through the through the [Post Office 'Payout'](#) service as it is a reputable brand, familiar to residents which offer good value for money.

4.4 All Lincolnshire Districts will be using the same provider for this scheme. The process will be managed by District working group to ensure consistent communications and co-ordinated timing to minimise resident queries regarding when vouchers will be received.

4.5 There will be a single point of time for data extraction (single cut off for eligibility) for consistency and in-line with other cost of living support schemes.

4.6 The voucher letter will include signposting advice and information. A single point of contact 'community support' e-mail address will be provided for enquiries and queries.

4.7 Other vouchers and pre-paid utility top ups will continue to be purchased through third-party provider Charis Grants (also used by other Lincolnshire Districts and Wellbeing Lincs for distribution of welfare grants).

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Household Support Fund will provide valuable help to vulnerable households struggling with significant increases in living costs. Small payments received as vouchers through this funding will help meet household essentials such as food and utilities.

6. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

6.1 The following benefits are anticipated through delivery of the Household Support Fund:

- That the delivery of a comprehensive scheme can commence across the South & East Councils Partnership
- That vulnerable households are identified utilising local knowledge and understanding of the community
- That vulnerable, low-income households will be supported with significant rising living costs
- That the utilisation of community support partners will enable wider support to be provided to vulnerable households over and above the Household Support funding
- Single scheme ensures administration efficiencies and consistency of approach

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

7.1 Managing the Household Support Fund as a Partnership will ensure our previous experience of grant administration is utilised, that our local knowledge of our most

vulnerable communities is identified, and processing efficiencies are realised. A single policy and scheme across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership will provide administrative efficiency and consistency in support for the most vulnerable residents in our communities.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 The following Corporate Priorities are supported through the administration of the Household Support Fund:

Boston Borough Council – ‘Priority 1 - People Focused’

East Lindsey District Council – ‘Maximise healthy and active lives’

South Holland District Council – ‘Your health and wellbeing’

9. STAFFING

9.1 This fund will cover all staffing and associated administrative costs to support efficient and effective distribution of funds to the most vulnerable in our communities.

10. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Due to the urgency of the administration of the Household Support Fund this decision is made under general exemption rule with the appropriate notifications of intentions made to the Chair of the Overview Committee in line with the Council’s Constitution.

10.2 In line with the Constitution the Chairman of the Overview Committee has agreed that due to the above urgency reasons the decision may be taken outside of the budgetary framework. Details of the decision and urgency will be reported for noting at the next Full Council Meeting.

11. DATA PROTECTION

11.1 All personal data will be administered following data protection legislation.

11.2 Each Council has agreed an Information Sharing Agreement with Lincolnshire County Council to access Department for Work and Pension Data provided for this purpose.

12. FINANCIAL

12.1 Provisional allocations for each Council within the South & East Lincolnshire Council Partnership for spend up to end of January 2023 are shown in **Table 3** below:

Table 3 – SELCP – Provisional allocations for each Council (to be utilised by 31 January 2023)

	£
Boston	£ 182,397.00
East Lindsey	£ 465,901.00
South Holland	£ 209,575.00
SELCP	£ 857,873.00

- 12.2 The funding must be utilised by 31 January 2023 and will be paid in arrears of committed spend before this date. Payments and awards made by Districts will be submitted monthly from the end of November 2022. This will help track countywide spending to date and whether other options should be explored to ensure overall Lincolnshire allocation spent.
- 12.3 Standard returns template will be submitted splitting the spend by household type (with children, with pensioners, with disabled residents and other) and type of essential the grant have been provided for (energy, food and other essentials). All staffing and administrative costs to deliver this scheme are externally funded and must be taken from overall allocation.
- 12.4 The scheme is fully externally funded. Reimbursement of District spend will be made from LCC in arrears expected:

January 2023 (for spend from 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022)

April 2023 (for spend from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023)

13. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 13.1 By accepting the grant allocations through general exemption, the administration of the funding can commence. This will ensure the funding can be utilised by vulnerable households without delay whilst mitigating against the risk of not drawing down funding made available to Lincolnshire.

14. STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

- 14.1 Due to the need to make an urgent decision to proceed with delivery the appropriate Chairs of each Council's Overview or Scrutiny Committee have been notified and members have been briefed on the delivery of the Lincolnshire scheme.
- 14.2 Key stakeholders including local charities, food banks and internal services supporting vulnerable residents have been consulted as part of the development of this funding administration.

15. REPUTATION

- 15.1 By delivering the Household Support Fund to eligible households facing significant increases living costs, the Councils maintain their reputation of community leadership, for supporting vulnerable residents and delivering trusted welfare support.

16. CONTRACTS

- 16.1 All appropriate procurement exemption notices have been applied in line with the sovereign council's individual constitutions.

17. CRIME AND DISORDER

- 17.1 It is in the report authors opinion that there are no crime and disorder implications associated with accepting this grant funding.

18. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

18.1 The scheme is being developed with regard to the legislative duties of Equality Act 2010. Grants will be available to all residents regardless of their age, disability, gender, marital status, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation.

18.2 Supporting residents vulnerable to financial hardship is a preventative approach to safeguarding.

19. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

19.1 The Household Support Fund (third phase) will be available to help residents with poor physical or mental health. Support with household essentials will alleviate poor health related financial stress and fuel poverty.

20. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

20.1 It is in the report authors opinion that there are no climate change and environmental implications associated with accepting this grant funding.

21. LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS	
This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government’s Levelling Up White paper.	
Living Standards	By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Health	By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.
Wellbeing	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
Local Leadership	By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

22. ACRONYMS

DWP – The Department of Work and Pensions

LCC – Lincolnshire County Council



PSPS – Public Sector Partnership Services Ltd

SELCP – South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

APPENDICES
<i>NONE</i>
BACKGROUND PAPERS

(If none then insert the working 'No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.' Also delete the below text/boxes.)

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
<i>Household Support Fund Guidance</i>	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils
<i>Cost of Living Payment Guidance</i>	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment
<i>Lincolnshire County Council letter outlining countywide delivery of Household Support Scheme (21 November 2022)</i>	 DC letter HSF from LCC 211122.pdf
<i>Household Support Fund extension letter (30 September 2022)</i>	 FINAL Household Support Fund Launch

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Roxanne Warrick, Strategic Lead Prosperous Communities, Roxanne.warrick@e-lindsey.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Emily Spicer, Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership Samantha Knowles, Assistant Director – Finance (Deputy S115) John Medler, Assistant Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer John Leach, Deputy Chief Executive – Communities
Approved for publication:	Leader of East Lindsey District Council, Councillor Craig Leyland