



URGENT DELEGATED DECISION

Date: 9 March 2023.

Request to the Head of Paid Service to exercise delegated authority as per Responsibility of Functions in Part IV, page 28 of the Constitution.

“To determine any matter within the referred or delegated powers and duties of a Committee / Sub Committee / Board / Working Group which is so urgent that a decision must be made before the next meeting of that Committee / Sub-Committee/ Board / Working Group is due to be held.”

Limits on delegation: -

- Before making a decision using this delegated power, the Head of Paid Service shall consult with and take cognisance of the views of the Chairman (or in his absence the VC) of the relevant Committee / Sub-Committee etc; and
- Any decision taken by the Head of Paid Service under this delegated power shall be reported to Members within five working days of the decision being taken.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic we have also committed to consult with the Leader of the Opposition on such decisions.*

** The Leader of the Opposition was unavailable on this occasion but did receive all information relevant to the decision*

Usual Decision Maker: -

This decision would have been taken by Prosperous Communities Committee / Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

This decision needs to be made and implementation commence, before these Committees are due to meet in order that the most vulnerable residents can be financially supported as quickly as possible.

The decision is in response to receiving additional Government Funding (via Lincolnshire County Council) as part of an extension to the scheme called the Household Support Fund (HSF) originally implemented to support vulnerable families during Covid but now supporting families through the cost of living increases currently being experienced, with round two allocations having to be spent before 31 March 2023.

Call-in does not apply.

Background

The background to this decision is as detailed in the report titled “**Household Support Fund 3 – Phase 2**” which is appended to this decision.

Reason for Urgency and Rationale for use of urgent Delegated Decision

An urgent decision was required to seek approval to use this additional funding in accordance with the Scheme devised across Lincolnshire, and which is summarised in the appended report, to ensure the most vulnerable residents could be supported.

The full rationale for the decision, the additional criteria applied by Government, since rounds 1 and 2, the delivery mechanisms for each Group of customer identified, and the rationale for these mechanisms, were all contained within the report which is appended.

Financial Detail and Implications

Financial Ref : FIN/157/23/SL

Full financial details and implications are contained within the appended report – Section 3.7 onwards relates.

Grant Funding will be received from the County Council to cover payments and administrative costs.

Notes of Consultation Relevant to the Decision

Members noted that this funding was ‘Phase 2’ of the Scheme considered under delegated powers on 28 November 2022 (HSF – Round 3). The District Council had been awarded a further and unexpected £49,728 from Lincolnshire County Council. The funding would cover all administration costs for the full scheme and would allow the Council to distribute more funds to the District’s food banks and Voluntary and Charitable Organisations as per Round 3 (phase 1).

Due to the heavy administration burden (of both officer time and cost) and the reduction in funding for the second allocation, it was not being proposed to offer another ‘open application’, nor was it mandatory to do so on this occasion. As such, Officers re-affirmed that despite the obvious time limitations, the Scheme in the proposed form, was deliverable.

Referring to the West Lindsey trusted VCS partners, detailed in the table at paragraph 3.6 of the report, it was questioned and confirmed that this was in fact Age UK Lindsey, the local branch of Age UK, and who specifically dealt with the local area; this would be amended in the report when published with the decision.

Members indicated they were agreeable to the two funding streams identified in the report, given they were tried and tested and proven to work. There were always concerns that residents could be “missed” but Members noted the additional benefits the Cost of Living Group brought in spreading the network and understanding how organisations better worked together, with Round 4 of the Fund expected to be announced shortly.

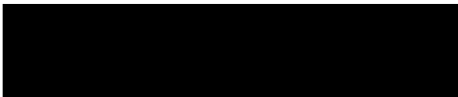
It was confirmed that all Elected Members had a role in promoting such Funding and were encouraged to do so.

Decision

1. The delivery of the Lincolnshire District Councils’ Household Support Fund 3 scheme (phase 2), which runs to 31 March 2023, as set out in the report, be approved.
2. In order to aid the Scheme to flex to requirements and need promptly, as well as remaining consistent with principles of the Lincolnshire Districts scheme, delegated authority be granted to the Benefits Manager in consultation with the Director of Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services to make minor amendments to the Scheme. Changes considered ‘significantly material’ would require further Member approval.

Caveats to the decision (as Per Round 3 – Phase1): -

- Should the delegation in 2 above be used, all Policy Committee Members to be made aware, by e-mail for information
- Changes considered ‘significantly material’ will require further Member approval.



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Ian Knowles
Head of Paid Service

As the Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee I have been fully consulted on this matter



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Anne Welburn
Chairman of Corporate Policy and Resources

As the Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee and Leader of the Council I have been fully consulted on this matter



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Owen Bierley

Leader of the Council / Chairman of the Prosperous Communities Committee

Date all Members were notified of the decision: 14 March 2023



MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT

SUBJECT: Household Support Fund 3 - Phase 2

REPORT AUTHOR: Angela Matthews

MT MEETING DATE: Monday, 20 February 2023

URGENT DD MEETING: Thursday 9 March 2023

COMMITTEE	DIRECTORS
N/A	Director of Change Management, ICT & Regulatory Services

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Grant Funding will be received from the County Council to cover payments and administrative costs.

FIN REF: FIN/157/23/SL

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS:

The fund will be administered by the Benefits Manager covering attendance at meetings, financial returns and general administration and the Communities Manager covering grant agreements with third parties and fund distribution. Capacity will be kept under review during delivery.

HR REF:

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: Any awarding of funding to Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) partner organisations will be treated as a grant award. All grant awards will be subject to a Grant Funding Agreement. Existing grant funding agreement templates used for Council funding activity will be used and have been approved for use by the Legal team.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER CONSIDERATIONS:

CLIMATE RELATED RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES:

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS: The delivery of Household Support Fund 3 will have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of identified households in West Lindsey facing financial hardship. The fund will provide support aimed at helping households with the increasing cost of food, energy and other household essentials. The scheme should not be seen as a complete solution, but it is part of a broader range of financial support being made available from the Government.

DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS: Information Sharing Agreement established for the sharing of data from DWP via Lincolnshire County Council to District Councils. Data protection included within grant funding agreements and any terms and conditions for voucher issuing providers.

RISKS AND MITIGATING ACTION: Not Applicable

DECISION(S) REQUIRED:
Report prepared for MT is for information only.

An urgent decision meeting will be arranged where the decisions required will be:

- 1. Approve the delivery of the Lincolnshire District Councils' Household Support Fund 3 scheme (Phase 2), which runs to March 2023**
- 2. Where there are relatively minor amendments made to the scheme, unless these are considered 'significantly material' then the Benefits Manager in consultation with the Director of Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services is delegated to implement these changes. This aids the scheme to flex to requirements and need promptly if required, as well as remaining consistent with principles of the Lincolnshire Districts scheme.**

1.Purpose of report

1.1 This report provides an update on the Household Support Fund and requests approval to continue delivery of a Lincolnshire District Councils' scheme covering the second round of Household Support Fund which runs to 31 March 2023 given the additional funding allocated by Lincolnshire County Council.

1.2 There are now three rounds of Household Support Fund and this report uses the following abbreviations to refer to each round: -

HSF1: First round of HSF – October 2021 to March 2022

HSF2: Second round of HSF – April 2022 to September 2022

HSF3: Third round of HSF – October 2022 to March 2023

1.3 West Lindsey District Council received an allocation of £71,041 as a phase 1 distribution of HSF3 funding – the distribution of this money was agreed by Delegated Decision on 28 November 2022

1.4 West Lindsey District Council has now received a further allocation of £49,728 as phase 2 of HSF3 and this report recommends how this funding should be distributed.

2. Background and previous HSF Delivery

2.1 **HSF1** ran from October 2021 to March 2022, with the Lincolnshire District Councils' scheme running from 1st December 2021 to 31st March 2022. For West Lindsey a total of £344,958 was paid in the form of support vouchers, broken down as follows:

	Food	Energy	Essential Linked to Energy	Wider Household essentials
Number	1,368	1,113	45	503
Amount	£180,800	£109,259	£4,500	£50,400

Total Households	Total residents	Number of Adults	Number of Children
870	2,327	1,209	1,118

2.2 **HSF2** ran from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 where the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) distributed a further £421m to Local Authorities in England and the Lincolnshire's allocation was £5,464,685.20.

2.3 For West Lindsey a total of £301,285.50 was paid in the form of support vouchers, broken down as follows:

	Households with Children	Other Households	Pensioners	Sub-total	Admin Costs ♦	TOTAL
Number	770*	580*	2,004			3,354
Amount	£39,000	£29,500	£220,440	£288,940	£12,346.50	£301,285.50

* Estimate number of support vouchers issued by foodbanks and VCS organisations.

♦ Admin costs for Post Office vouchers to pensioners, VCS Organisation admin and WLDC admin.

3.HSF3

3.1 Under HSF3, commencing 1 October 2022, Lincolnshire County Council are the receiving authority and have again been allocated £5,464,685 to distribute but with no ringfencing of funds for individual groups of people. The funding advice is for us to consider:

- using the funding ‘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 nevertheless in need’

And

- ‘people who are entitled to but not claiming qualifying benefits, people who are claiming Housing Benefit (HB) only’

And

- LAs are also encouraged to ‘consider providing support to disabled people in their area. Disabled people in particular may be facing acute challenges due to the disproportionate impact that rising costs bring for the additional services they need in order to manage their conditions, remain independent and avoid becoming socially isolated’

3.2 Lincolnshire County Council distributed £3m of the funding to schools and early years providers, based on the number of children eligible for Free School Meals and Early Years Pupil Premium and families with a 2-year-old eligible for the Early Years payment, this is a tried and tested mechanism and reaches over 30,000 children in the County

3.3 Lincolnshire County Council also allocated £64k to 16- and 17-year olds in semi-independent living environments and 18-20-year olds in supported living.

3.4 The HB-Only customers are being allocated £250 per household and this will account for approximately £1.35m of the total funding. West Lindsey has 567 of these households who have been paid via the Post Office ‘Payout’ process.

3.5 As a first phase of HSF3, District funding of £546,468 was allocated – which represents 10% of the total funding and will be divided between the seven Districts, split as per previous % HSF allocations as:

District Council	Proportionate allocation of funding phase 1	Allocation 10%
		£546,468.52
Boston	10%	£54,646.85
City of Lincoln	16%	£87,434.96
East Lindsey	24%	£131,152.44

North Kesteven	11%	£60,111.54
South Holland	12%	£65,576.22
South Kesteven	14%	£76,505.59
West Lindsey	13%	£71,040.91

3.6 It was agreed that the WLDC phase 1 funding would be distributed as follows:

Amount	Organisation(s)	How the funding will be spent																
£20,000 *	West Lindsey DC Customer Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open application (on-line & paper applications) £100 paid into the customers bank account if successful 																
£41,250	West Lindsey Food Banks: <table border="1" data-bbox="411 891 912 1182"> <thead> <tr> <th>Food Bank/Support</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Caistor</td> <td>£7000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Market Rasen</td> <td>£7000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Feeding Gainsborough</td> <td>£7000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bread & Roses</td> <td>£7000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salvation Army</td> <td>£9500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Admin (10%)</td> <td>£3750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£41,250</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Food Bank/Support	Amount	Caistor	£7000	Market Rasen	£7000	Feeding Gainsborough	£7000	Bread & Roses	£7000	Salvation Army	£9500	Admin (10%)	£3750	Total	£41,250	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding used to buy goods to make up food parcels or purchase a voucher to be spent on Fuel / warm clothing
Food Bank/Support	Amount																	
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Feeding Gainsborough	£7000																	
Bread & Roses	£7000																	
Salvation Army	£9500																	
Admin (10%)	£3750																	
Total	£41,250																	
£9790**	West Lindsey trusted VCS partners – e.g. Age UK Lindsey , Carers First, Barnardo’s for Care leavers, Wellbeing Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations can use the funding to help customers with food, fuel and household essentials in return for a report on what they have spent the funding on. 																

*Total spend on eligible applications is known now to be approximately £18.3k

** adjusted to allow for the food bank allocation to include 10% admin funding

3.7 On 18 January 2023 it was confirmed by LCC that the Lincolnshire Districts would be awarded a HSF3 ‘Phase 2’ allocation of funding. WLDC will receive £49,728 of the £382,528 remaining LCC HSF3 funding:

District Council	Proportionate allocation- phase 2	Allocation 7%
		£382,528
Boston	10%	£38,253
City of Lincoln	16%	£61,204
East Lindsey	24%	£91,807
North Kesteven	11%	£42,078
South Holland	12%	£45,903

South Kesteven	14%	£53,553
West Lindsey	13%	£49,728

3.8 Administration costs incurred by WLDC for HSF3 will be paid from the £49,728 funding and an approximate prediction of costs incurred is £12.5k although the scheme runs to 31 March 2023 so a definite figure will not be known until nearer this date. Allowing for £12.5k administration costs the balance of the funding is £37,228

3.9 In order to keep administration costs and administration burden low it is not proposed that an 'open application' process is offered again. The learning from phase 1 and from HSF1 is that an application process is labour intensive and can attract applications from residents who would not qualify for any funding but who still decide to make an application.

3.10 HSF1, 2 and HSF3 Phase 1 have proved that the most cost- effective Distribution of the funding is via 3rd party organisations (food banks and Voluntary Organisations) and it can be seen that these organisations can reach far more households than the 'open application' process did (it must be noted that LCC made an 'open application' a requirement of the Phase 1 funding but has not done this for the Phase 2 allocation)

3.11 Given our learning from all HSF distributions to date it is proposed that the balance of Phase 2 funding is distributed as follows:

Amount	Organisations	How Funding will be used
£30,250	West Lindsey Food Banks:	
	Food Bank/Support	Amount
	Caistor	£5000
	Market Rasen	£5000
	Feeding Gainsborough	£5000
	Bread & Roses	£5000
	Salvation Army	£7500
	Admin (10%)	£2750
	Total	£30,250
£6978	West Lindsey trusted VCS partners – e.g. Age UK, Carers First, Barnardo's for Care leavers, Wellbeing Service	Organisations can use the funding to help customers with food, fuel and household essentials in return for a report on what they

		have spent the funding on.
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4. Corporate Plan Priorities

4.1 The delivery of this scheme will directly contribute towards a number of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. Specifically, HSF3 will support the following priorities:

Our Council · Partnerships - The Lincolnshire Districts HSF is a positive example of strong partnership working. The delivery of the scheme will result in enhanced sharing of knowledge around HSF needs across Lincolnshire.

Our People · Health & Wellbeing · Vulnerable Groups & Communities - The funding will directly support maintaining and/or enhance individual and household wellbeing. Access to funding support for those facing financial hardship will ensure people are supported during Winter / Spring months and help prevent households reaching crisis.

5. Staff Resources

5.1 In attempting to keep administration of the Phase 2 funding distribution low the distribution will be managed by the Benefits Manager and the Communities Manager

5.2 The primary tasks that will be taking place include:

- HSF3 management and liaison with LCC and District Councils
- Establish grant agreements with foods banks for food voucher purchasing
- Complete monthly returns to LCC

6. Finance

6.1 The scheme is fully funded by Lincolnshire County Council through HSF monies. All administration costs associated with Phase 1 and Phase 2 distributions will be covered by HSF3 Phase 2 funds.