

Public Document Pack



Please note that the following document was published separately from the main agenda for this meeting of the Shared Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee to be held on Tuesday, 27th June 2023 at 2.00 pm in Committee Rooms 1-2, City Hall.

7. Cost of Living Support (Pages 3 - 4)

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Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee – 27th June 2023 –

Addendum to ‘Cost of Living Support’ report.

Addition to paragraph 6.3:

Lincolnshire County Council has recently confirmed plans in respect of Households Support Fund wave 4 2023/24 (HSF4), and updated its HSF website page ([Household Support Fund – Lincolnshire County Council](#)), including the following:

- *Approximately 43% of the funding will be delegated to schools and early years providers to support for children eligible for benefit-related free school meals, early years pupil premium and families with a 2-year-old eligible for early years entitlement.*
- *Approximately 44% will be directed through Lincolnshire’s district councils to provide financial support to housing benefit only claimants not in receipt of other support provided via the national scheme.*
- *1% of the grant funding will be used to provide financial support to eligible care leavers in supported living accommodation.*
- *The remaining grant funding will be directed towards other vulnerable households via local schemes, with approximately 11% of the local grant made available to district councils on a proportionate basis. District councils and other third sector/voluntary organisations will work to provide an application-based process to ensure this funding is distributed through local channels in line with the grant conditions. Further details on this process will be published on district council websites once agreed.*

For Housing Benefit recipients in Lincolnshire who were not entitled to the national Cost of Living Payment 2023/24 ([Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)), the intention is that this payment will be replicated in three phases, the first payment (£301) potentially being made in August 2023.

For City of Lincoln and North Kesteven, where a tenant’s bank account information is already held, payments may be made direct into their bank account in a ‘cash first’ approach – promoting financial independence and empowering residents. For those where bank account details are not held (or cannot be verified), these payments may be issued through Post Office vouchers.

In terms of District Councils’ separate allocations of HSF4 to be utilised to work with partners to provide payments, including through an application-based process in part (a requirement of the national HSF4 guidance), these have now been communicated to District Councils’ HSF4 lead officers, - for City of Lincoln £202,676 has been allocated, and for North Kesteven £139,340.

Officers are to work with an established range of referral partners and application processes – as well as potentially some new partners/routes – to ensure these HSF4 monies (through vouchers, food parcels, energy top-ups, etc) are delivered to those identified as in need. A key focus will again be on reducing foodbank dependency wherever possible, working with

partners to help signpost residents to other means of support (e.g. money advice), - as well as supporting a drive to further increase usage of community groceries. A strategic aim of HSF4, is also to try and leave a 'legacy' of impact – as there is no guarantee of HSF5 (or of another form of local welfare provision) from 2024/25 onwards.

In terms of an 'open application' scheme, officers will continue to work other District Council colleagues to try and ensure a consistent approach wherever possible, but with reference to City of Lincoln and North Kesteven specific requirements and available funding too. It is envisaged that the best way to ensure HSF4 monies last throughout 2023/24, will be to open up the scheme in a number of phases.

Additional Recommendations:

- 13.2 Members note the updates with regard to Household Support Fund wave 4, approving and supporting implementation as outlined.
- 13.3 In respect of North Kesteven District Council Members present at Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee on 27th June 2023, to support that Executive Board receive an update on progress on 27th July 2023.