

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 6 DECEMBER 2021

PART I - DELEGATED

14A. PROPOSALS FOR SPENDING OF THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND (DCES)

1 Summary

- 1.1 As part of efforts to recover following the pandemic, Hertfordshire County Council has been provided with £6.172m funding from the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF). This funding will be used to help people in need this winter with things like the cost of food and energy.
- 1.2 Hertfordshire County Council are working with a range of partners across the county to make sure we can get the right help to those who need it, at the right time. This targeted approach will mean that residents can be supported and get professional assistance from the county council, borough and district councils and organisations such as HertsHelp, our Money Advice Service and local Citizens Advice services.
- 1.3 Three Rivers District Council will receive a total of £33,000 for food support and £44,000 for fuel support.

2 Details

- 2.1 Three Rivers' District Council have received funding from the Government's new "House Support Fund" which aims to help families and households most in need this winter. At least 50% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, with up to 50% of the total funding to other households or individuals in need of support this winter.
- 2.2 The funding can support households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits.
- 2.3 **Eligible spend includes:**
- 2.4 **Food**
- 2.5 The Fund should primarily be used to provide support with food whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
- 2.6 **Energy and water.**
- 2.7 The Fund should also primarily be used to support with energy bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support with water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, and sanitary purposes and sewerage.
- 2.8 **Essentials linked to Food, energy and water.**
- 2.9 The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access food, energy and water.
- 2.10 **Wider essentials.**

2.11 The Fund can be used to support with wider essential needs not linked to energy and water should. Authorities consider this appropriate in their area. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related buying a bicycle or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive.

2.12 A breakdown of the proposed allocations of the Household Support Fund in Three Rivers can be seen below. We are proposing to fund a number of partner organisations to distribute the funds to families or individuals as well as our own Housing and Revenue and Benefits teams to ensure a wide reach and so that vulnerable people are identified.

2.13 **Food Support – Total Provided £33,000**

Partner/Distributing Agency	Total Amount	Details
Three Rivers District Council	£3000	Administrational costs
Three Rivers District Council Housing	£3000	Funding to provide food vouchers to residents that access Housing Household Fund for rent arrears who may be supported by the Vulnerable Renters Scheme.
Three River Miscellaneous	£2000	Miscellaneous funding to support identified residents cover essential items linked to food not supported by additional partners e.g. cookers
South Oxhey Food bank	£2000	Funding for additional food stock and essential food related items
Sewa Day	£1000	Funding to provide food support to vulnerable residents they are supporting in Three Rivers
Thrive Homes	£5000	Funding to support identified residents with food & essential items linked to food.
Watford Community Housing	£5000	Funding to support identified residents with food & essential items linked to food.
Home Group	£2000	Funding to support identified residents with food & essential items linked to food.
Herts Mind Network	£5000	Funding to support identified residents with food & essential items linked to food.

Hightown Housing Association	£1000	Funding to support identified residents with food & essential items linked to food.
Catalyst Housing	£1000	Funding to support identified residents with food & essential items linked to food.

2.14 Utility Support - £44,000

Partner/Distributing Agency	Total Amount	Details
Three Rivers District Council	£4000	Administrational costs
Three Rivers District Council Housing	£4000	To provide Utility Support for residents accessing Housing Household Fund for rent arrears
Three Rivers Revs & Bens	£10,000	Vouchers for people on DHP and the benefit Capped
Three Rivers Miscellaneous	£4000	Miscellaneous funding to support identified residents to cover essential items linked to energy & water who are not supported by additional partners linked to our Warmer Homes Scheme e.g boiler repairs.
South Oxhey Food bank	£3000	Funding to provide Utility vouchers support to vulnerable residents they are supporting in Three Rivers
Thrive Homes	£6000	Funding to support identified residents with Energy & water support and essential items linked to energy & water. This will included Sheltered Housing.
Watford Community Housing	£5000	Funding to support identified residents with Energy & water support and essential items linked to energy & water.
Home Group	£2000	Funding to support identified residents with Energy & water support and essential items linked to energy & water.
Hightown Housing Association	£1000	Funding to support identified residents with Energy & water support and essential

		items linked to energy & water.
Catalyst Housing	£1000	Funding to support identified residents with Energy & water support and essential items linked to energy & water. In particular we will look to focus on Supported Housing for young people.

2.15 Monitoring and Evaluation.

2.16 All distributing partner agencies will report back monthly monitoring and evaluation of the following

- Client No.
- Number of individuals within the household including adults, dependant adults and children under 18.
- Value Food Support Provided
- Value Energy & Water Support Provided
- Value of Essentials linked to food, energy and water
- Value of Wider essentials
- Details of items purchased under the category of essential
- Postcode (To trace whether any duplication has occurred)
- Total Value of grant For Household
- Names of any other services that are also working with the household if known
- Details of whether any onward referrals distributing partners have been made for the household
- Any Other Details/Information? Why is support required
- Good news/ Feedback received, if any?

2.17 Other Charitable Organisations

2.18 We have previously supported other organisations through the Local Covid Support Fund who are still spending their funds. We have targeting housing associations this round to have a wider reach. Schools are also still supported through the household fund directly from Herts County Council. If other partners and organisation need support for residents we will be able to use the miscellaneous fund outlined above to support them. For example through our Family Intervention Worker. The Rickmansworth Food bank currently have been offered and refused support from each of the Covid support grants and the household fund because they have their own resources in place.

2.19 The Herts Community Foundation grants are only available for Groups who can provide access to food and/or support with bills such as fuel and water and not for individuals to apply.

2.20 Grants of up to £5,000 are available to groups working in areas of deprivation in Hertfordshire that support vulnerable adults by providing access to food and/or support with bills such as fuel and water. It can also be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy and water.

- 2.21 Larger grants (up to £10,000) may be considered where a group can demonstrate an ability to work across a larger geography or support significant numbers of local residents. If you would like to apply for a grant in excess of £5,000 please contact grants@hertscf.org.uk before making an online application. The fund is primarily to be used to provide support with food and energy. Groups who can provide access to this are invited to apply.
- 2.22 Applications from charities, groups and non-profit organisations (including housing associations) supporting vulnerable adults that fall into any of the following categories are eligible to apply for funding:
- Individuals in crisis (e.g. people facing poverty, experiencing or at risk of homelessness, poor mental health, domestic violence, drug and alcohol addiction etc.) and their families, with or without children
 - Those facing food poverty
 - Those facing fuel poverty
 - Minority and marginalised groups who have been particularly impacted by Covid-19 including groups supporting those with disabilities or sensory needs
- 2.23 For more info visit the HCF website here: [Hertfordshire Household Support Fund \(hertscf.org.uk\)](http://hertscf.org.uk)
- 2.24 HCC will be giving supermarket vouchers for families receiving benefit related free school meals during the Christmas, February half-term and Easter holidays in 2021/22.
- 2.25 Support with the cost of food and household essentials will also be provided to families with children aged up to 19 who are identified through public and voluntary services as needing a little extra help; including young people leaving care. Services will contact families and young people directly about the help.
- 2.26 For more information on the Household Fund at HCC please visit the [Hertfordshire County Council](http://hertscf.org.uk) website.
- 2.27 HertsHelp offer advice and practical support to people across Hertfordshire. They may be able to offer emergency help with essentials like the cost of food, household utilities, water and energy bills. They can also help if you are worried about finances and with emotional support and wellbeing. Herts Help will where necessary make referrals to our local services as well.
- 2.28 HertsHelp can be contacted on: on 0300 123 4044, email info@hertshelp.net or visit www.hertshelp.net.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To agree the plan for spend of the Household fund so that funds can be accessed by vulnerable people during the winter to the end of March 2022 in Three Rivers through a range of partners as identified above.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are not within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. This is Government funding to support vulnerable people through the Covid pandemic. Clear guidance exists on how these monies should be spent.

5 Equal Opportunities, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, and Health & Safety Implications

5.1 None specific.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The funding must be spent by the end of March 2022.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None specific.

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	No
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	N/A

9 Staffing Implications

9.1 Staff in the Community Partnerships Team will administer the funding, and oversee the monitoring and evaluation.

10 Communications and Website Implications

10.1 The website will be updated to include this information. People will be contacted directly when identified so that they can receive support.

11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

11.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships service plan(s). Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Funding not distributed to	More issues in the community	To agree funding plan	Tolerate	6

Vulnerable residents	with people suffering from food and fuel poverty	and work with partner organisations to deliver the household fund		
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11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

11.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

12 Recommendation

12.1 To agree the plan for spend of the Household fund so that funds can accessed by vulnerable people during the winter to the end of March 2022 in Three Rivers through a range of partners as identified above.

Report prepared by: Rebecca Young, Head of Community Partnerships,

Freddy Chester, Partnerships Officer

Data Quality

Data sources: Household

Fund <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils>

Data checked by: Dami Fashakin, Health Inequalities Officer

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

Background Papers

Not applicable