

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>Award of funding from the Household Support Fund to support low income pensioners identified by the Department for Work and Pensions</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Director of Resources and Assurance
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	Cabinet member decision on 30 June 2022 delegated operational matters in relation to the Household Support Fund to the Director of Resources and Assurance Link: <a href="#">Decision - Household Support Fund - Herefordshire Council</a>
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	Cabinet member for finance, corporate services and planning has been consulted about the approach outlined in this decision report.
<b>Decision made:</b>	To provide funding from the Household Support Fund for a one off payment to low income pensioners in receipt of Pension Credit Guarantee.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>Herefordshire Council has received an allocation of £1,329,601.78 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) under the Household Support Fund. The expectation is that the funding should be used primarily to support households in most need, with a requirement that the majority of the funding should support families with children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy, food and water bills as well as other essential costs. Specifically, at least one third of the allocation should be ring-fenced to support low income pensioner households.</p> <p>To help identify these households, DWP has provided information on pensioner households in receipt of pension credit. With this information the Council has set an eligibility requirement that to receive a payment under this element of the Household Support Fund, residents will be of state pension age, in receipt of Pension Credit Guarantee and living in Herefordshire, but not in a residential or nursing care home. Latest data indicates that there are about 3,200 single or couple households who meet this eligibility criteria. They will receive a one-off payment of £170.</p> <p>Low-income households spend a larger proportion than average on energy and food so will be more affected by price increases. Consumer prices, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 9.4% in the 12 months to June 2022, up from 9.1% in May. The Bank of England expects inflation to rise further to around 11% in 2022 before levels start to fall during 2023. There have been significant increases in the price of energy and food and this is likely to increase with a further rise in the price cap on energy in October 2022.</p> <p>By utilising the funding from government, this will have a positive impact on low income households by minimising the debt burden on those that struggle to pay essential bills.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality</b>	<p>The cost of the scheme will be funded through the Household Support Fund allocation of £1,329,602.</p> <p>This is one part of the allocation of funding through the Household Support</p>

<b>considerations:</b>	<p>Fund. To achieve the volume of at least one third of funding to pensioner households, data provided by DWP has been used to identify pensioners on the lowest incomes (on Pension Credit Guarantee). As Herefordshire Council has also funded third party organisations, they will be able to provide support to other households not covered by this decision.</p> <p>As a requirement of the overall Fund criteria, the Council has allocated at least one third of funding to low income families with children through provision of food vouchers during school holidays to children eligible for Free School Meals. Link: <a href="#">decision to support families with children entitled to free school meals by providing food vouchers during the school summer holidays 2022</a></p> <p>The Council has also made a decision to support third party organisations which will enable those organisations to support other Herefordshire households who are struggling to meet essential household bills. Link: <a href="#">Decision - Award of Funding from the Household Support Fund to third party organisations - Herefordshire Council</a></p>
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	<p>Not to approve spend to support low income pensioner households. This is not recommended. The Household Support Fund is expected to support households in most need, with at least one third of the funding for pensioner households living in Herefordshire.</p> <p>Another option considered was making contact with all known pensioner households from DWP and Herefordshire Council records and offering support through an application process that established those most in need, but due to the volumes, the administrative processes required and the short timescales, this was rejected.</p>
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

Signed

Date: