

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Award of Funding from the Household Support Fund to the Local Welfare Provision Service to run an open application process for emergency support.
Date of decision:	15 February 2023
Decision maker:	Director of Resources and Assurance
Authority for delegated decision:	Chief Executive's Scheme of Delegation dated 29/09/2020 SA 92 – Financial services
Ward:	All Wards
Consultation:	Cabinet member for finance, corporate services and planning was consulted on the approach.
Decision made:	To arrange for up to £45k of funding from the Household Support Fund to the Local Welfare Provision service for the administration and provision of emergency support through an open application process for households experiencing financial hardship. Full details of the Local Welfare Provision (Household Support Fund) Policy can be found at Appendix 1.
Reasons for decision:	Herefordshire Council has received an allocation of £1,329,601.78 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) under the Household Support Fund. Part of the funding criteria states that an open application process must be available for all residents within the county to apply. The expectation is that it should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for other support the government has made available but who are nevertheless struggling due to the increased cost of living. The council already operates an application scheme for people requiring support in an emergency through its Local Welfare Provision (LWP) service. Utilising this funding enables the LWP service and eligibility criteria for emergency support to be enhanced, by providing additional staff resources to assess and administer applications and distribute the voucher payments. The attached policy provides the local eligibility framework for emergency support to meet crucial needs of a person or household experiencing financial hardship resulting in them struggling to feed themselves or their family, heat their home, or pay for other essential living costs.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	The cost of the scheme will be funded through the Household Support Fund allocation of £1,329,602. By providing an open application process that prioritises low income households with urgent needs due to rising living costs, there is likely to be a positive impact for people who are financially disadvantaged (although this is not in itself a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010)..
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	Not to approve spend to provide funding through the Local Welfare Provision. This is not recommended. The Household Support Fund is expected to support households in most need. Part of the Household Support Fund criteria is to provide residents with access to support through an open application process. By not proceeding we will not meet the guidelines set out by the DWP. .

Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed:

Date: 15 February 2023