

Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund (Excluding the Direct Voucher Scheme)

To: Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 11 November 2021

From: Service Director: Communities and Partnerships, Adrian Chapman

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: 2021/065

Outcome: The Committee is asked to agree the process for delivering the Household Support Fund, excluding the Direct Voucher Scheme, in line with the conditions set by the Government.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve the principles of the scheme, as outlined in section 2.3 of the report;
- b) Approve the eligibility criteria for the scheme, as outlined in section 2.4 of the report;
- c) Approve the means of accessing support, as outlined in section 2.5 of the report;
- d) Approve the arrangements for providing support, as outlined in section 2.6 of the report; and
- e) Approve the delivery arrangements, as outlined in section 2.7 of the report.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Government has announced a new Household Support Fund to run from 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. The Fund is designed to support those most in need over the winter months.
- 1.2 The indicative funding allocation for Cambridgeshire is £3,581,424. The funding will be paid to the County Council, but we are encouraged to work closely with district councils and other partners to identify a broad range of vulnerable households across our area.
- 1.3 Awards must be based on the following framework, which is set out in the Guidance issued by the Government:
 - (i) 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 genuinely in need of support this winter. This may include households not currently in receipt of Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) welfare benefits;
 - (ii) Eligible spend includes:
 - Food. The Fund should primarily be used to provide support with food whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
 - Energy and water. 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.
 - Essentials linked to energy and water. 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.
 - Wider essentials. 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 costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive.
 - Housing Costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. Where eligible, ongoing housing support for rent must be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit (UC) and Housing Benefit (HB) rather than the Household Support Fund. In addition, eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) must first be

considered before emergency housing support is offered through the Household Support Fund. The Authority must also first consider whether the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).

- In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, households in receipt of HB, UC, or DHPs can still receive housing cost support through the Household Support Fund if it is deemed necessary by their Authority. However, the Fund should not be used to provide housing support on an ongoing basis or to support unsustainable tenancies.
- Individuals in receipt of some other form of housing support could still qualify for the other elements of the Household Support Fund, such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials.
- The Fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the Fund (such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials). Where a homeowner is having difficulty with their mortgage payments, they should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances as lenders will have a set procedure to assist.
- The Fund can exceptionally and in genuine emergency be used to provide support for historic rent arrears built up prior to an existing benefit claim for households already in receipt of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. This is because these arrears are excluded from the criteria for Discretionary Housing Payments. However, support with rent arrears is not the primary intent of the fund and should not be the focus of spend.
- Reasonable administrative costs. This includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
 - staff costs
 - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
 - web page design
 - printing application forms
 - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production

(iii) Eligible spend does not include:

- Advice services such as debt advice;
- Mortgage costs.

(iv) It is expected that the focus of support should be on food and bills and that support for housing costs should only be given in exceptional cases of genuine emergency. Beyond this, Authorities have discretion to determine the most appropriate scheme for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.

(v) Individual awards can be whatever type and amount is deemed appropriate by Authorities for the receiving household, bearing in mind the overall spend eligibility priorities listed above and the risk of fraud and error. Awards to any given household can cover only one of the spend eligibility categories listed above or can cover several.

(vi) Authorities should not make Household Support Fund eligibility conditional on being employed or self-employed, or directly linked to a loss of earnings from employment or self-employment. This will ensure that there is no National Insurance Contribution liability payable on any payments by either the claimant, the Authority or employer.

- 1.4 At the Children and Young People Committee meeting on 19 October 2021, Members approved the recommendation to operate a Direct Voucher Scheme for eligible families over the October half-term, Christmas school holiday, and February half-term periods. The funding allocation for the Direct Voucher Scheme approved by Committee was £1,124,266, leaving a Fund balance of £2,457,158 to support households as part of a wider scheme. Of this balance, Children and Young People Committee Members approved a release of up to 18% to enable support to be provided ahead of the formal decision to operate the wider Fund scheme as set out in this report. However, this has not needed to be deployed to date as households in urgent need have been able to access help through our pre-existing support arrangements, specifically through the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme and earlier investment into our network of trusted partners.
- 1.5 This report therefore sets out detailed proposals for the design and implementation of the wider scheme to be funded by the £2,457,158 total Fund balance.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The new Household Support Fund follows on from two similar schemes – the Covid Winter Grant Scheme which ran over the winter months in 2020/21, and the Covid Local Support Grant Scheme which ran until 30 September 2021. Although there are many similarities between the three schemes, the new Household Support Fund provides greater flexibility to support more households without children and broadens out the scope of the type of support that can be offered.
- 2.2 In Cambridgeshire, the design of the previous two schemes was developed in close collaboration with our key partners, particularly the district councils and a range of voluntary sector organisations, including Citizens' Advice. To help shape the new Household Support Fund, we facilitated a partner workshop in October at which some core design principles were agreed, alongside a range of important linked opportunities for supporting households beyond the eligibility of the Household Support Fund.
- 2.3 Our proposed scheme – the Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund – is based on a number of principles:
- That the scheme is simple to understand and to access, given that it is designed to support households in urgent need.

- That it is delivered with as little bureaucracy as possible, to ensure as much of the funding as possible reaches vulnerable households.
- That we establish as many application routes as possible, and publicise it widely, so that anybody in need can seek support.
- That we work creatively to identify potentially vulnerable households that might not yet be known to services, and find ways of reaching out to them to offer support.
- That we continue to work in absolute collaboration with our partners across the public and voluntary sectors to reach as many households as possible, but to also make sure that ongoing support, where required, is available for households beyond that which can be provided by this Fund.
- That households can apply for support as many times as necessary, but that from the third application we will make direct contact with the household to have a broader discussion about need in order to seek to address the underlying causes of that need.

2.4 Eligibility

2.4.1 As described above, the Fund is designed to support any household in urgent need of help. Eligibility criteria is a matter of local choice, with the guidance stating that ‘Authorities have the flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are most in need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility’. The guidance goes on to say that there is no requirement for authorities to undertake a means test or conduct a benefits check unless we choose to include that in our criteria.

2.4.2 Although we want to implement a scheme that offers support to as many households in urgent need as possible, we also need to ensure the funding available lasts for the duration of the scheme. The Cambridgeshire Local Assistant Scheme (CLAS), which provides information, advice and one-off practical support and assistance for households in times of exceptional pressure, requires applicants to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- To be in receipt of a means tested benefit and have no savings, OR
- To have household income of less than £16,380 and have no savings
- To have lived in Cambridgeshire for at least 6 months
- To be aged 16 or over

2.4.3 CLAS is a service commissioned by the Council, which provides a combination of immediate support for many of the needs identified in section 1.3 (ii) above alongside debt and other forms of advice. Access to CLAS support for an individual household is via referral from a CLAS partner agency; households are not able to apply direct to the scheme. We have therefore discounted the use of CLAS for the vast majority of needs to be met via the Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund, as one of the core principles is the need to provide urgent and immediate help. However, CLAS services and support will be

included in an information pack that we are developing for both successful and unsuccessful applicants, particularly as it offers longer term solutions including debt advice.

- 2.4.4 However, the eligibility criteria set by CLAS offers us the opportunity to be broadly consistent in our approach for eligibility with the Household Support Fund, helping to ensure that if other forms of longer-term support are needed a household supported by the Household Support Fund can more easily transition to support from CLAS.
- 2.4.5 We are anticipating a significant number of applications for urgent financial help from households across Cambridgeshire, likely to be several thousand. We therefore need to strike the right balance between establishing eligibility criteria and delivering an efficient scheme that can help households in urgent and immediate need. We also need to ensure we profile the available budget to enable people who need urgent and immediate support to be able to access it throughout the whole period.
- 2.4.6 We are therefore proposing that applicants to the Fund for awards with a financial value equivalent to £50 or less (per voucher or resolution) will be required to provide evidence of low or no income (via written evidence or a discussion with our team or a Trusted Partner (section 2.5.2 refers)). The latest reporting from the Office for National Statistics shows that median household income in the UK is £29,900. A household is currently defined as being in poverty where their total household income is less than 60 per cent of this average, equating therefore to £17,940. We are therefore proposing to use this figure to set the eligibility threshold but apply it to every applicant in the household rather than the household in its entirety. This means that, if the applicant/s each earn £17,940 or less, they are eligible to apply to the fund. This helps to support both single people as well as whole families.

For awards with a financial value equivalent to £50.01 and above, applicants must be in receipt of one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit
- Working Tax Credit

Or, if all or part of the household is working, the total income for each applicant must be below the low-income threshold described above.

We will be able to quickly validate eligibility based on receipt of benefits via access to the DWP database specifically made available under the terms of this Fund. To evidence low income, we will request sight of payslips or other evidence.

In exceptional circumstances (for example, for people without payslips or who haven't yet applied for benefits) we will exercise appropriate discretion.

Members will note that the recommendation is **not** to limit access to the Fund for people who have lived for less than six months in Cambridgeshire. Doing so may restrict access to the Fund for some of the most vulnerable households, including more recent refugees, victims of domestic abuse who have fled their home area, or people who have relocated to

take up work or learning. (The guidance allows Authorities to use the Fund to provide basic safety net support to individuals with no recourse to public funds if there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution. Individuals with no recourse to public funds will be able to access the Fund but will need to have a conversation with our team or a Trusted Partner to establish this).

2.5 Accessing Funding

In our proposed scheme there will be two primary routes for households to get the support they need: a direct application process, and support facilitated via a trusted partner network.

2.5.1 Direct Applications

A simple, intuitive application form will be available via the council's web site which households can use to request the support they need. For households without internet access, or who might need help completing the form, a telephone hotline will also be available. We will make sure the application form is available in different languages and formats.

From our previous experience, and in line with the Fund rules, we anticipate that for the majority of the applications received the process to assess the application and make the award will be rapid, and we will set a standard of either making the decision or referring back to the applicant where more detail is required by the end of the working day following receipt of the application.

Households that need a food, fuel or essential supplies voucher should then receive that voucher within an average of 2-3 working days beyond that. For other remedies, delivery will be dependent on the item or service required, but we will maintain frequent contact with the applicant to ensure they are kept fully informed of progress. All applicants, whether successful or not, will also be sent an information pack setting out options for support beyond the Fund itself including details of CLAS and other forms of ongoing support as well as details of other sources of funding that they may be able to access. Wherever possible, we will make direct referrals into other schemes on behalf of the applicant with their permission.

2.5.2 Trusted Partner Network

A successful feature of the previous two funding schemes has been the development, via our district council partners, of a trusted partner network comprising a range of organisations that are already in touch with or supporting people who might be in urgent need of support, or who are locally available to households who might go to them for help. At present, this network consists of:

- Countywide
 - Care Network
 - Barnardo's
 - Early Help Teams

- Fenland
 - Wisbech Foodbank
- Cambridge City
 - Financial Inclusion team
 - Cambridge City Child and Family Centre
- South Cambridgeshire
 - SCDC Housing Advice
 - SCDC Duty Housing
 - SCDC Benefits
 - SCDC Community Team
 - South Cambridgeshire Child and Family Centre
- Huntingdonshire
 - Huntingdon Community Hub
 - Godmanchester Timebank
 - St Neots Community Support
 - St Ives Timebank
 - Huntingdon Community Group
 - Kimbolton Parish Council
 - Ramsey Neighbourhoods Trust
 - CARESCO
 - Somersham and Pidley Timebank
 - St Neots Timebank
 - St Ives and Huntingdonshire Child and Family Centre
 - St Neots Child and Family Centre

Prior to being agreed as a trusted partner, district council colleagues carry out necessary checks to ensure suitability, good governance and good decision-making arrangements are in place.

In this model, the trusted partner network has been able to consider a financial award to vulnerable households as part of their broader toolkit of support. Network organisations have been briefed on eligibility criteria and funding conditions and are trusted to make decisions on whether or not an award should be made. In the event that an award is deemed to be the right solution, the trusted partner organisation submits details to the council and the required solution is processed.

Alongside this model we have also created a reporting mechanism, providing a feedback loop with our districts and city councils. This enables districts to hold oversight of the activity linked to the trusted partner network and provide targeted support to groups and individuals where necessary.

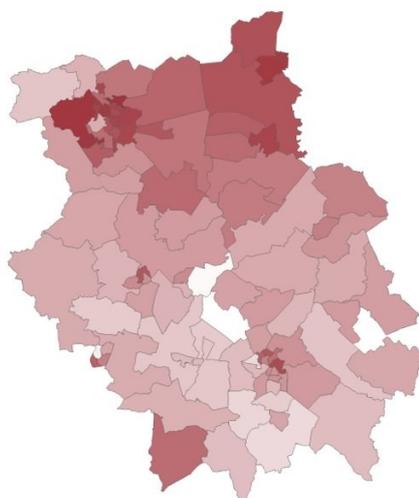
We propose to both continue and expand this model, to ensure that as many opportunities as possible are available to households.

2.5.3 Beyond these two main forms of accessing support from the Fund, it is also important that we use our best endeavours to identify households who may be eligible for and need urgent help and support. There will be many households who are facing financial hardship for the

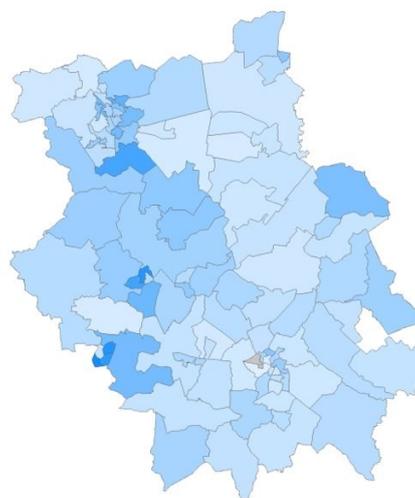
first time, for example as a result of the impacts of the pandemic or because of the rise in household utility costs. These households may not know how to access the support they are entitled to or may be embarrassed to seek out that help themselves. Others may be facing turmoil in their lives and not able to pause to seek the sort of help the Fund might offer.

- 2.5.4 We will therefore be developing and agreeing appropriate data sharing arrangements between council departments as well as with district councils, enabling us to search across multiple databases to identify households that might fall into this category. Recent council tax debt or rent arrears might signal immediate financial pressure for example, enabling us to target our support towards those households.
- 2.5.5 County and District Councillors too could play a vital role in helping to ensure the Fund reaches households in urgent and immediate need. This might include promoting the Fund to local residents and community organisations, signposting households to apply to the Fund, supporting households to practically apply to the Fund, and providing local intelligence to the Fund's administrative team to enable them to target communications and engagement activity where it is needed.
- 2.5.6 This approach will also ensure we identify and/or target support towards vulnerable people via our other services, including for example, victims of domestic abuse, asylum seekers, and people who are homeless.
- 2.5.7 In very general terms, the heat maps below show, on the left, levels of deprivation (as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation – the darker the area, the higher the level of deprivation), and, on the right, the rate of applications received for the two previous schemes (the darker the area the higher the level of applications received). Although a relatively crude assumption, we would expect applications for urgent financial help to broadly and primarily follow rates of deprivation (albeit that deprivation data is not always entirely up to date). However, as a tool it will assist in identifying where more concerted effort might be needed to promote the Fund based on high deprivation versus low application rates.

IMD by MSOA



Rate of Applications by Population



2.6 Practical Support Arrangements

2.6.1 As described in section 1 of this report, there is a range of practical support that can be funded through this Fund (food, fuel, essential supplies etc). We have developed the arrangements necessary to provide immediate support for all eventualities, and these are described in more detail below. The arrangements described will be deployed regardless of application route.

2.6.2 Food

A supermarket voucher will be issued to a household, with a value of £25 for a single person and £50 for a couple or family. We propose to use two providers for this part of the scheme, which broadens out the availability of supermarkets who will accept the vouchers.

2.6.3 Fuel and Water

Applicants seeking financial help with household energy and water bills will either pay their bills on demand, pay via direct debit, or pay as they use via a pre-payment meter. Many households also heat their homes using oil, and some use gas from containers.

- Where there is an urgent need, we will provide those on pre-payment meters with vouchers which can be redeemed at a Paypoint terminal and which tops up a pre-payment card. The value of these vouchers is currently capped by the provider at £49 and so we propose the value is £28 for a single applicant and £49 for a family.
- For households who pay via direct debit or on-demand, we will provide payment direct to the energy or water supplier via a BACS transfer. The amount of financial help needed to satisfy the urgent need criteria will be capped at the same level as the pre-payment vouchers. Where the request for urgent support exceeds this amount a more detailed assessment of need will be undertaken.
- The nature of the domestic oil and cylinder gas market means that £49 may be insufficient to secure a fuel delivery for those in need. We therefore do not propose a cap for this group. For households who need financial help to supply oil or gas in containers, we will assess the amount of financial help needed to satisfy the urgent need criteria, and credit that amount direct to the oil or gas supplier via a BACS transfer.

2.6.4 Other Household Energy and Water Costs

The Fund is able to support households with urgent repair costs relating to household energy and water, including boiler repairs and plumbing issues. We propose to access contractor support via established frameworks used by local authority Home Improvement Agencies wherever possible. We will pay the contractor direct on completion of the works via BACS transfer.

2.6.5 Furniture and White Goods

For households needing replacement white goods or furniture to satisfy an urgent need, we will arrange for the direct supply of the item/s from a pre-determined list. This list of items is based on nationally negotiated rates meaning we benefit from significant economies of scale.

2.6.6 Clothing, Blankets, Towels etc

Some items of clothing, as well as blankets, bedding and towels, are available from the pre-determined list referred to above. Where this is the case, we will arrange for that item to be supplied direct to the applicant. Where this isn't available, we will issue either a supermarket voucher (if the item is available in supermarkets) or an alternative high street shopping voucher.

2.6.7 Other Circumstances

There will be some circumstances where our pre-arranged solutions will not work – for example, where there are requests for specialist equipment, or where a household is so isolated or housebound that a voucher alone will not meet the urgent need. In these circumstances, we will do all we can to arrange for the direct supply of an item or service. Ultimately though, we do have the capability to issue a voucher which can be redeemed for cash, or to make BACS transfers direct to an applicant's bank account and, whilst this provides reassurance that every identified need can be met through the Fund, this solution will be deployed in exceptional cases only, and following our efforts to identify an alternative solution within our broader networks.

2.7 Delivering the Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund

2.7.1 We have explored and discounted the outsourcing of the administration and delivery of the Fund, for two primary reasons:

- (i) cost; it is likely that a provider would require at least 10% of the value of the fund to meet their costs
- (ii) speed; we are anxious to establish the Fund and to open up applications as swiftly as possible.

2.7.2 We are therefore recommending that we run the scheme in-house, via the Countywide Covid Coordination Hub. We will need to increase the capacity of the Hub team but can do so swiftly via a combination of agency staffing, redeployments and offering part time staff additional hours. We will seek to cap the staffing costs at 6% of the value of the scheme excluding the Direct Voucher Scheme (so, up to £147,429 in total). This allocation will also support the costs of administering the Direct Voucher Scheme already approved by the Children and Young People Committee, as well as provide some additional dedicated capacity to support the communications work that will be vital to promote the Fund (described below).

- 2.7.3 One of the significant benefits of this approach, aside from cost and expediency, is that the coordination hub continues to work alongside a wide range of other agencies and has access to other forms of help and support. It will enable us to gather and retain in-house information about applicants so that we can, with their permission, identify other forms of help from across council services and wider partners.
- 2.7.4 There is a requirement for the council to provide management information to the DWP, currently the 21 January 2022 and 22 April 2022. However, we have already established a more detailed set of management information arrangements from the two similar previous schemes, and we will adapt and implement these arrangements for the new Fund. This will enable us to report regularly on progress and take-up, whether funding is released via direct applications or via the trusted partner network, and to quickly identify areas where we would expect higher uptake so we can adapt our communications and engagement activity accordingly.
- 2.7.5 Communicating the scheme widely and across multiple domains will be essential to help ensure as many people in urgent need as possible can apply. We anticipate being able to identify potential households in need via the approach to analysing data described earlier in this report, but we also need households to be able to seek out and apply for the help they need themselves, either via our trusted partner network or via a direct application to the council. This will help those households feel in control.
- 2.7.6 Communicating the Fund in different, dynamic and accessible ways is therefore critical. We will:
- Rapidly develop and implement a communications strategy and action plan to ensure consistency and regularity of messaging, frequently refreshed and renewed, and themed where necessary (e.g., messaging aligned to post-Christmas debt)
 - Produce communications content (printed and digital) in multiple languages
 - Ensure the application form is available in multiple languages and formats
 - Extend the arrangements the countywide hub already has in place to support people by telephone for whom English is a second language
 - Ensure our Think Communities staff team are fully briefed on the Fund so that they and all those they work alongside are promoting the scheme and supporting eligible households at every opportunity
 - Secure the support of our key partnership networks to promote the Fund, including via schools, childcare and early years settings, the Community Resilience Group, district, parish and town councils
 - Work with our own internal colleagues to ensure we target our communications at households they support, including carers, young carers, care leavers, older people, those with a learning disability, and victims of domestic abuse
 - We will replicate this with our district council partners who are supporting other households and individuals who may be vulnerable or more isolated, including

homeless people, Gypsies and Travellers, council and social housing tenants at risk of homelessness, asylum seekers and refugees

- 2.7.7 Alongside a proportion of staffing costs to support this work, we will need to set aside a small communications budget to fund, for example, printed materials, translations, and social media content. We propose to cap this at 1% of the value of the scheme (so, up to £24,571 in total).
- 2.7.8 When taken as a total administrative cost to deliver both parts of the Household Support Fund (the Direct Voucher Scheme and the wider support scheme), this represents 4.8% of the total funding allocation.
- 2.7.9 Finally, subject to approval by the Committee, we anticipate being able to open the application process from 12 November 2021. Households wanting to apply direct to the Council will be able to do so via the County Council's web site, at:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/household-support-fund>

Applicants have also been able to continue to access support from our trusted partner network whilst this new scheme has been developed, although we anticipate applications under the *new* scheme via our trusted partner network also opening from 12 November.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund will work closely with district councils and a wide range of trusted partners at a community level, enabling a localised approach to be taken to support a household in need where appropriate.

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The Cambridgeshire Household Support Fund is designed to meet the urgent and immediate needs of households over the winter months. However, our scheme will also sit alongside broader support arrangements available via the countywide coordination hub, our district council partners, and a wide range of other service providers. Supporting Households out of crisis and onto a path of longer-term recovery will help to build capacity, resilience and self-reliance.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

At least 50% of the Fund is designed to support families with children. Alongside the direct voucher scheme, we will be identifying families in need and encouraging them to apply to the Fund.

3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

Helping households in immediate and urgent need will enable them to begin a pathway to longer term recovery. Our ability to connect supported people with other services, including

digital skills training or our climate change work, will ensure we retain a longer-term focus on those households achieving sustainability.

3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

The Fund will provide immediate relief for households in crisis, and our scheme, which will sit alongside a broader range of opportunities to provide support, coupled with our ability to identify households in need that may not yet be known to us, will ensure we focus our support on those most in need.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in section 1 and section 2.7.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Procurement and contract procedure rules will need to be followed when commissioning the new services described in the report. The Fund will be managed through the local authority and staff employed through Cambridgeshire County Council.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The council is required to provide management information to DWP as a condition of the funding.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

It will be important that the Fund is made widely available to any and all households who may be in immediate or urgent need. The report describes ways in which the Fund will be made available to households, and section 2.7 describes the work we will do to ensure the Fund is available to people in multiple languages and formats.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

Communicating this Fund, as well as engaging with district councils, parish and town councils and other trusted partners, will be essential if we are to ensure help reaches those people most in need. We have proposed the allocation of a dedicated budget for communications at section 2.7.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local Members will play a vital role in helping to promote the scheme, identify households who may need to apply to the scheme, and also to support those households with their applications. At both county and district levels they provide a significant opportunity to ensure our Fund targets those in greatest need.

4.7 Public Health Implications

Supporting households who are in immediate and urgent need to begin to resolve their issues will have a direct and longer-term positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There is unlikely to be any impact on buildings as a direct result of this Fund, although we will be seeking to support households into more efficient and greener energy deals as a broader benefit.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are unlikely to be any impacts on transport as a result of the scheme.

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are unlikely to be any impacts on land as a result of the scheme.

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are unlikely to be any impacts on waste management as a result of the scheme.

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There is unlikely to be any impact on water usage as a direct result of this Fund, although we will be seeking to support households into more efficient water usage as a wider benefit of the scheme.

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: There are unlikely to be any impacts on air pollution as a result of the scheme.

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Status: Neutral

Explanation: Although the scheme itself may not directly improve resilience and households' abilities to cope with climate change, we anticipate a set of broader support arrangements which we hope will deliver longer term benefits,

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Henry Swann

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Simon Cobby

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Val Thomas

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

5. Source documents

5.1 Source documents

"Household Support Fund: – Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England", *DWP 6 October 2021*

"Household Support Fund Grant Determination 2021 No 31", *DWP 6 October 2021*

5.2 Location

Service Director, Communities and Partnerships