



North Devon Council

Report Date: Monday, 7 April 2025

Topic: Household Fund Update

Report by: Sarah Higgins, Head of Customer Focus

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Household Support Fund (HSF) has been in place since 2021.
- 1.2. The objective of the fund is to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need with the cost of essentials.
- 1.3. The Secretary of State allocates funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities which then in turn award to District Councils to distribute locally.
- 1.4. To date North Devon Council has awarded over £2 million to over 20,000 households.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. To note the latest position of the HSF.
- 2.2. To approve a grant of £12,000 to the Northern Devon Foodbank (NDF) to facilitate gas & electric emergency top ups and the funds be released subject to a funding agreement upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed by the Senior Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for external projects.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To ensure Members have up to date information relating to the HSF.
- 3.2. To enable the NDF to award emergency fuel top-ups to those households most in need.

4. REPORT

- 4.1. The most recent HSF scheme ended on 31st March 2025 from which NDC awarded over £380k across just under 2,000 households.
- 4.2. This was a combination of direct awards to low income pensionable age households and an application scheme with referrals from 3rd party agencies working with vulnerable customers with immediate financial needs.
- 4.3. During each scheme we have a residual number of unredeemed vouchers which we reinvest into the application scheme, with any remaining rolling forward to the next scheme.
- 4.4. From the scheme which ended on 31st March we have a residual £12,000 to potentially roll forward.
- 4.5. NDC has supported NDF for a number of years by awarding grants to allow them to 'top up' fuel cards for those most in need in the community to ensure homes are not left without gas and/or electric.
- 4.6. The most recent grant period for NDF ended on 31st March 2025.
- 4.7. With this in mind it is recommended to award a new grant, utilising the £12,000 residual from the HSF.
- 4.8. It is proposed for this grant to cover two financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27.



4.9. The next HSF covers the period April 2025 – March 2026. Due to DCC elections, this scheme is likely not to be in place until June 2025.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Limited to putting a new grant agreement in place.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. No proposed changes to grant agreement already in place.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. Not required.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1. What impact, positive or negative, does the subject of this report have on:

8.1.1. Improving customer focus – Allows for continuing support for our most vulnerable households within North Devon.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. The decision in respect of the recommendations in this report can be made by this Committee pursuant to delegated powers provided in Part 3 Annexe 1, paragraph 1.

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Grant Agreement with Northern Devon Foodbank 2023/24 – 2024/25 (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers: Sarah Higgins Head of Customer Focus