

# Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

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Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at 2.00 pm  
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,  
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

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**Committee Members:** Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)  
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Kyle Abel, Councillor Pam Bosworth, Councillor James Denniston,  
Councillor Tim Harrison, Councillor Robert Leadenham, Councillor Habib Rahman  
and Councillor Lee Steptoe

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## Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, [via the SKDC Public-I Channel](#)

- 1. Public Speaking**  
The Council welcomes engagement from members of the public. To speak at this meeting please register no later than 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting via [democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southkesteven.gov.uk)
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Disclosure of Interest**  
Members are asked to disclose any interest in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. Minutes from the meeting held on 24 March 2026** (Pages 3 - 9)

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☎ 01476 406080

**Karen Bradford, Chief Executive**

[www.southkesteven.gov.uk](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk)

- 5. Updates from the previous meeting** (Page 11)  
To receive updates on actions agreed at the previous meeting.
- 6. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**
- 7. Crime Disorder and Local Partnership Working update - Presentation** - (To Follow)
- 8. Crisis and Resilience Fund** (Pages 13 - 27)  
To update the Committee on the progress of the development of the Crisis Resilience Fund scheme for implementation from 1 July 2026
- 9. Welfare and Financial Advice Team update - review of activities 2025/26** (Pages 29 - 62)  
To provide the Committee with an update regarding the support issued as part of the Household Support Fund during 2025/26 and the wrap around support provided by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team
- 10. Customer Service update 2025/26** (To Follow)  
To provide the Committee with an update regarding customer interactions within the Customer Service team and high contact service areas for 2025/26. As well as a review of completed actions from Year 1 of the Customer Experience Strategy and a forward look at the Year 2 action plan.
- 11. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

## Meeting of the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

Tuesday, 24 March 2026, 2.00 pm

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### Committee Members present

Councillor Nikki Manterfield (Chairman)  
Councillor Rhea Rayside (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Kyle Abel  
Councillor Pam Bosworth  
Councillor Tim Harrison  
Councillor Robert Leadenham  
Councillor Habib Rahman  
Councillor Elvis Stooke  
Councillor Rob Shorrock

### Cabinet Members present

Councillor Philip Knowles  
Councillor Virginia Moran  
Councillor Paul Stokes

### Officers

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)  
Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits, Customer Services and Community)  
Carol Drury, Community Engagement & Manager  
Bethany Goodman, Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead  
Joshua Mann, Democratic Services Officer

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### 54. Public Speaking

There were none.

### 55. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Denniston, substituted by Councillor Elvis Stooke, and Councillor Lee Steptoe, substituted by Councillor Rob Shorrock.

### 56. Disclosure of Interest

There were none.

**57. Minutes from the meeting held on 27 January 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2026 were proposed, seconded, and AGREED as an accurate record.

**58. Updates from the previous meeting**

The outstanding actions were completed prior to the meeting.

**59. Announcements or updates from the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members or the Head of Paid Service**

There were none.

**60. 'We are Undefeatable' Campaign - Presentation**

The 'We are Undefeatable' Campaign presentation was delivered by the Physical Activity and Wellbeing Lead.

Backed by Sport England and National Lottery funding, the campaign was a collaboration between 15 health and social care charities offering free guidance and resources to encourage physical activity. Such resources included short exercise videos and routines, as well as a 'move your mood' activity suggestion tool.

To inform the campaign, a survey was conducted in December 2024. Of the 311 responses, 30% had long-term physical or mental health conditions, 18% of respondents wanted specific sessions for people living with a disability or a long-term health condition, and 69% of respondents wanted to be more active.

During discussions, the following comments were made:

- It was noted that the profile of the campaign needed to be raised in order to accurately measure the campaign's success. The Physical Activity & Wellbeing Lead agreed to circulate further information about the campaign to all Members. **ACTION**
- Members requested greater data to be collected about the impact of the campaign. It was confirmed that a new dashboard was being developed to collate data about the campaign.
- The Physical Activity & Wellbeing Lead agreed to circulate information about the funding measures of the campaign. **ACTION**
- It was queried whether there were separate activity groups, depending on demographics. It was confirmed that the materials were primarily for completing individually remotely rather than in activity groups.
- Some Members of the Committee agreed to utilise the physical activity resources.

The 'We are Undefeatable' Campaign presentation was noted by the committee.

#### **61. Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update – review of activities 1 October to 31 December 2025**

The Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Housing.

The total amount of Household Support Fund funding for SKDC (2025-26) was £458,452, equating to 14% of the funding distribution across Lincolnshire.

The delivery plan as of 31 December 2025 was detailed within the report, outlining funding for the following organisations:

- Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)
- SKDC Administration and Preventative Measures
- Third-party Referrers
- Outreach Work/ Pensioners
- HSF7 Vouchers – LCF
- SKDC HSF7 Vouchers – Welfare & Financial Advice Team.

Open applications closed on the 28 February 2026 to enable processing of the 220 outstanding applications before 31 March 2026. The expected amount to be awarded was £37,000. Applications awaiting vouchers to be issued were 80 with an expected value of £12,000.

Applications continued to be received from third party trusted partners and teams within the council up to 31 March 2026. Assistance was predominantly provided by supermarket vouchers and Energy Vouchers.

From 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025, the team received and processed 1,608 referrals. The total value of financial support identified and awarded was £101,075.

The action plan for additional activities to be undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26 was detailed in Appendix One of the report.

During discussions, the following comments were made:

- A Member expressed concern that the scheme was reactive, especially considering Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) had only recorded issuing food vouchers.
- It was confirmed that the definition of resilience used by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team was the provision of ongoing lifestyle support.
- The Team also used Fusion21 given it was a national campaign ran by professions. A Member noted concerns about the ethical practices of

the provider. It was confirmed that the provider was on the national commercial services register and there had been no concerns in the service delivery.

- It was noted that the Team were considering a scheme to support residents requiring heating oil during the current market turbulence. Members expressed sympathy for residents effected and the suggestion was made for a co-operative purchasing to be orchestrated by Parish Councils.

The Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update – review of activities 1 October to 31 December 2025 was noted by the committee.

## **62. Crisis and Resilience Fund**

The Crisis and Resilience Fund was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Housing.

In June 2025, the Government announced a new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) which replaced the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). The new scheme covered the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 and represented a shift from short term emergency help towards a more preventative, needs based approach.

The expected outcomes of the fund were to provide effective crisis support, improve financial resilience, and build a strong local support system.

Current outline proposals for the delivery of the scheme were:

- Crisis Payment – application-based support
- Housing Payment – delivered in years one and two. Total funding for each year was £155,861 with administration funding of £22,853.
- Resilience Services - Funding to be used for new services or to increase capacity/fill gaps in existing services, programmes and activities that support building financial resilience.
- Community Co-ordination - Work was undertaken to help guide decisions on which activities to prioritise and the level of funding required for this strand to enhance or sustain effective co-ordination, referral pathways and local partnerships.

The proposed key dates for delivery were:

- 1 April 2026 – Housing Payments
- 1 April 2026 (or as soon after) – Resilience Services
- 1 July 2026 – Crisis Payments
- During 26/27 – Community co-ordination gap analysis activity were throughout Year 1 to shape any changes to delivery in years 2 and 3.

During discussions, the following comments were made:

- Members were pleased to note the flexibility of the Fund.
- The Cabinet Member for Housing was confident that the 1 April 2026 deadline would be met for the Housing Payments and Resilience Services.
- Given the rising energy costs caused by the international market turbulence, it was queried whether individual support payments would be increased. The Head of Service (Revenue, Benefits, Customer Service, and Community) confirmed that the £9.9 million programme funding was fixed with an additional amount for heating and oil support. However, the Head of Service highlighted the flexibility between the crisis and resilience aspects of the scheme allowed a level of autonomy over the distribution of the funding.
- It was confirmed that the mechanism for determining the district funding allocation would be presented at a future meeting.

The Crisis and Resilience Fund was noted by the committee.

*The Cabinet Member for Housing left the Chamber.*

### **63. Community Engagement Update 2024-2025**

The Community Engagement Update 2024-25 was introduced by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

The report provided an update on the work of the Community Engagement Team during the calendar years of 2024-2025. The work of the Team provided a 'bridge' between where a community group was and where it wanted to be. The Team's role was not to tell these groups what to do, it was to support them to do what they want to do. Once they had the skills the Team could withdraw – but with a clear understanding that, should they require support again, the support remained available.

Attached to the report at Appendix A was the 2024-2025 update on achievements against actions agreed under the Council's Community Engagement and Development Strategy – Our People, Our Place 2024-27.

Many actions within the Plan were listed as "active" whilst four were listed as completed. Actions listed as active remained ongoing simply because these projects or activities were delivered in order to provide continuing support to the voluntary and community sector.

During discussions, comments were made on the following:

- Reassurance was sought that officers were seeking to engage with more community groups and a higher proportion of the 500 community

groups already registered with the authority. Officers confirmed that they were being proactive in this.

- Members praised the important role of community engagement and thanked the officers providing the support.

The Community Engagement Update 2024-25 was noted by the committee.

#### **64. SK Community Fund**

The SK Community Fund was introduced by the Deputy Leader of the Council.

The fund was currently allocated across two schemes:

- Small Grants Scheme: £100 - £2,000

This was available to smaller groups with a maximum financial resource of £10,000. Groups could apply for 100% of project costs to the maximum £2,000

- Projects and Events Fund: £500 - £5,000

Groups could apply for up to 80% of project/event costs to a maximum of £5,000. A minimum of 10% match funding was required, and the remaining 10% contribution could be in-kind contribution and volunteer time if relevant to the project or event.

At the time of the report's publication, £855,651 of grants had been provided to Parish and Town Councils, voluntary, community, faith and sports-related groups across South Kesteven. The SK Community Fund was often used by groups to secure match funding for larger projects.

A growth bid of £100k was agreed by Full Council on 26 February 2026 increasing the SK Community Fund to a total of £200,000.

It was also timely to refresh the governance arrangements around the SK Community Fund given that these have been in place since 2015. It was therefore proposed that the Small Grants Fund remains in place, continuing to operate in the same manner save for two changes:

- To be eligible for support the maximum financial resource held by a voluntary or community group should be reduced to £5,000. This would ensure that funding is targeted to those community groups that have a genuine need and that newly established groups can be supported.
- The eligibility criteria be amended to include items requiring revenue funding. Small, newly formed groups often require financial assistance with basic running costs until they are established, e.g. utility bills, venue hire, office supplies, insurance premiums, volunteer training costs etc. Funding provided

would be for one-off support and groups would be required to become self-sufficient as they become established.

It was proposed that a Large Grants Fund be introduced to replace the existing Projects and Events Fund with the maximum grant value being increased. It is further proposed that the groups and organisations eligible to apply should have financial resources of no more than £100,000. The minimum grant available would be £2,000 and the maximum £10,000 for community events and £20,000 for projects which support parish and community assets. Match funding of a minimum of 10% would be required against all large grants.

During discussions, the following comments were made:

- Members expressed pride in the fund and its impact on the district.
- It was reiterated that a new cap was proposed for funding eligibility depending on the level of an applicant group's bank reserves.
- It was queried if there was a contingency plan should the community fund run out. It was confirmed that this had not happened before and officers were actively seeking to promote the relevant administrative dates to applicants via workshops and the Communications Officer.
- It was confirmed that the funding was only available to charities and causes that worked within and benefited South Kesteven.

Following discussions, it was proposed, seconded, and AGREED to:

1. Review the proposed changes to the SK Community Fund and provide comment.
2. Recommend to Cabinet that the delegation for decision making by the Chairs and, where necessary, Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be provided and that the proposed changes to the Fund's criteria were approved to allow for re-launch of the Fund for the 2026/27 financial year.

#### **65. Work Programme 2025 - 2026**

The Work Programme 2025-26 was noted by the committee.

#### **66. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

The Chairman gave a statement urging Members to make nominations for the upcoming SK Community Awards.

*The meeting concluded at 15.11.*

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# Action Sheet

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Actions from meeting of **24 March 2026**.

<b>Min no</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>	<b>Comments/Status</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
60	'We are Undefeatable' Campaign - Presentation	The Physical Activity & Wellbeing Lead agreed to circulate further information about the campaign to all Members.	Physical Activity & Wellbeing Lead	COMPLETED – email circulated to Members on 15 April 2026	
60	'We are Undefeatable' Campaign - Presentation	The Physical Activity & Wellbeing Lead agreed to circulate information about the funding measures of the campaign.	Physical Activity & Wellbeing Lead	COMPLETED – email circulated to Members on 15 April 2026	

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**SOUTH  
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## **Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**


Wednesday, 6 May 2026

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## **Crisis Resilience Fund**

### **Report Author**

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)

 [claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the Council's proposed approach to delivering the Governments Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF)

### **Recommendations**

#### **The Committee is asked to:**

- 1. Recommend to Cabinet the delegation of any operational and financial decisions required in regard to CRF scheme delivery to the Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer (as detailed in paragraph 2.7)**
- 2. Recommend to Cabinet that officers within the Welfare and Financial Advice Team deliver the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) scheme for 2026/27 and 2027/28 - in line with associated guidance (as detailed in paragraph 2.9).**
- 3. Recommend to Cabinet that officers within the Revenues and Benefits Technical Support Team deliver the Housing Payments (HP) element of CRF – in line with associated guidance (as detailed in paragraph 2.10).**
- 4. Note the recruitment of an additional full time Welfare and Financial Advice Officer for a fixed term contract (31 March 2028) to support the delivery of the scheme (as detailed in paragraph 2.28).**

## Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	Yes (Appendix 1 - Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 to the Local Government Act 1972)
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

## 1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) has confirmed the allocation of **£625,086** to South Kesteven District Council for the delivery of Crisis Payment.
- 1.2 Funding distribution for the delivery of Resilience has not yet been confirmed, however, indicative funding has been provided by LCC and assurance given it will be sufficient to fund the additional Welfare and Financial Advice Officer.

*Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer*

### ***Procurement***

- 1.3 Where services are specified and delivered in return for payment (including any commissioned districtwide resilience service), the arrangement is likely to constitute a public services contract and must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 1.4 The crisis payment scheme will be delivered through a third party organisation, which will be county-wide. Procurement is currently being led by Lincolnshire County Councils Legal Team.
- 1.5 Financial assistance provided to third sector organisations or other external providers, as proposed, will almost certainly constitute a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (SCA 22). To ensure compliance with the Act, each

funding stream should be properly assessed and documented to determine whether it falls outside the subsidy control regime or complies with an applicable route, such as Minimal Financial Assistance or the subsidy control principles.

*Completed by: Helen Baldwin (Procurement Lead)*

### **Legal and Governance**

- 1.6 The report is for scrutiny purposes only and seeks to make recommendations to Cabinet so there are no direct legal implications arising from noting the report or making recommendations. The Committee is exercising its scrutiny function under the Local Government Act 2000.
- 1.7 Legal and governance implications are currently under review by Lincolnshire County Council and the District Councils as part of the preparatory work being undertaken, utilising the framework and guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions. The CRF is a government funded scheme and must be administered in accordance with grant conditions and guidance with funding lawfully applied for its intended purpose.
- 1.8 Proportionate due diligence and eligibility checks, together with appropriate verification processes, audit trails, and data-sharing arrangements, should be implemented to safeguard public funds and ensure compliance with grant conditions.
- 1.9 The Council has the power to administer externally funded support schemes under its general power of competence (section 1, Localism Act 2011).
- 1.10 Implementation of the final CRF scheme must comply with the Council's financial regulations, grant conditions and relevant legal requirements, including equality and data protection obligations where applicable.
- 1.11 The recruitment of a fixed term officer is an operational staffing matter and must comply with employment law and internal HR procedures.

*Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)*

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.12 The funding directly supports a range of people experiencing financial crisis and includes a resilience component as a key mechanism to prevent future hardship. It is anticipated that the scheme will have a positive impact on a range of protected characteristic groups. An Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken by

LCC, with support from District Councils as the scheme is developed and will be reviewed and updated as the delivery plan is also developed.

*Completed by: Carol Druruy, Community Engagement Manager*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 On 24 March 2026, a report was presented to this committee detailing the announcement and background of the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) – item 62: [Agenda for Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026, 2.00 pm | South Kesteven District Council](#)
- 2.2 CRF covers the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029 and represents a shift from short term emergency help towards a more preventative, needs based approach. It will see a greater emphasis on providing support to households to better manage their finances, whilst still providing a safety net for anyone needing emergency support.
- 2.3 Funding will be used to establish a new **crisis payment fund** scheme and grant funding for **‘resilience services’** that contribute towards improving the financial resilience of individuals.

## **Delivery and management of the scheme**

- 2.4 Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in the guidance and the Grant Determination Letter (“the Grant Determination”)
- 2.5 The delivery and management of the CRF will be overseen by the following:
  - Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
  - Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer
  - Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)
  - Welfare and Financial Advice Team
  - Revenues and Benefits Technical Support Team
- 2.6 A quarterly update will be presented to Rural & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will include progress against the CRF action plan (this is currently being developed, in line with the objectives of the DWP guidance and will be presented at the next committee), management information, including details of funding awarded (value and number of residents support) and activities undertaken by resilience support organisations.

- 2.7 The Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer will have delegated authority for any operational and financial decisions regarding CRF scheme delivery, as provided to him by the Head of Service, in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, grant conditions and relevant legal requirements, including equality and data protection obligations where applicable.
- 2.8 The Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services) will have overall responsibility for the strategic oversight, management and administration of the Crisis Resilience Fund, in particular:
- Ensuring the fund is delivered in accordance with the Council's policy framework, eligibility criteria and relevant legislative requirements.
  - Be responsible for monitoring expenditure, ensuring the fund is managed within the approved budget, and that appropriate financial controls are in place.
  - Ensure regular performance and financial monitoring reports are provided to LCC, senior management and relevant committees, as required.
  - Liaise with internal and external partners to maximise the effectiveness and ensure the aims and objectives of their involvement is being met
- 2.9 The Welfare & Financial Advice Team will have operational responsibility for
- Day-to-day administration of the Crisis Payments, including application processing, assessment and award decisions; ensuring all applications are assessed in a consistent, fair and transparent manner, in line with agreed procedures and guidance.
  - Provide ongoing feedback to the Head of Service regarding the delivery of the fund, and any potential adjustments for year 2 (2027/28).
  - Liaison with internal teams to ensure awareness of the fund, eligibility and criteria.
  - Ensure activities within the action plan are delivered on time with the aims and objectives being met
- 2.10 The Revenues and Benefits Technical Support Team will have operational responsibility for:
- Day-to-day administration of the Housing Payments, including application processing, assessment and award decisions; ensuring all applications are assessed in a consistent, fair and transparent manner, in line with agreed procedures and guidance.

- Provide ongoing feedback to the Head of Service regarding the delivery of the fund, and any potential adjustments for year 2 (2027/28)

## Development of the Crisis Payment Scheme

- 2.11 The scheme will be administered by SKDC and across the county and will constitute 45% of the total CRF (£9.9m for 2026/27). SKDC have received **£625,086 funding for Crisis Payments for 2026/27.**
- 2.12 The county-wide CRF working group are currently continuing to develop the final scheme (which includes SKDC, LCC and the remaining District Councils). The scheme will see a significant change from delivery through Household Support Fund which has concentrated more on providing emergency food/essentials. The council's new approach will see more focus on providing help and support to improve the residents financial position, as part of the offer to meet crisis support.
- 2.13 The activities currently being undertaken by the working group are:
- Development of an online application form
  - Development of a case management system
  - Inter authority grant agreements (prepared by LCC legal team)
  - Procurement process to commission a partner(s) to administer and issue the payments
  - Development and maintenance of a resilience organisation database
  - Final district distribution of the resilience funding

## Eligibility criteria for CRF Lincolnshire

- 2.14 The DWP FAQs and main scheme guidance leave it to councils to determine how best to distribute the funding to those most effected, however, the scheme is neither intended to be universal nor limited to those in receipt of means tested benefits.
- 2.15 The introduction of the heating oil support resulted in local criteria being developed in conjunction with Lincolnshire district councils and the LCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee during a workshop on 17 March 2026, having regard to financial criteria in other established government schemes ( e.g. Warm Homes Local Grant and minimum allowable savings levels for means tested benefits).
- 2.16 Eligibility criteria for the Lincolnshire CRF continues to be developed jointly, utilising the approach to the heating oil support. This ensures a consistent approach, while still allowing districts to use discretion where needed. The draft proposed eligibility is included in **Appendix 1**. This is exempt and is not for

publication in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 to the Local Government Act 1972 because it relates to financial and business affairs of the Council. The information contained in this Exempt Annex should not be disclosed because the information may comprise the Council's financial position in relation to the provision of grant funding.

### **Distribution of the funding to our residents**

- 2.17 SKDC will distribute the funding through either the Welfare and Financial Advice Team, or their chosen delivery partner.

### **Resilience Services**

- 2.18 Financial resilience refers to the ability of individuals to withstand and recover from financial shocks – such as sudden income loss or unexpected expenses. The purpose of building financial resilience is to enable individuals to better manage future financial shocks and reduce the need for crisis support. with proposals to provide **grant funding to local resilience services** to help people better manage their finances.
- 2.19 We want to make sure that as well as responding to the immediate crisis, we can also offer some longer-term support to help avoid similar crisis in the future. To do this, we may offer a variety of resilience support as well as, or instead of, a crisis payment. In some cases, we may ask the resident to engage with this support as a condition of making a crisis payment.
- 2.20 To enable this through the Household Support Fund, the Welfare & Financial Advice Team and a partnership of voluntary and community sector organisations have established local community support that offer a range of services, most commonly emergency food, furniture, basic white goods and energy support. It is intended to continue to work with these partners as well as formalise grant agreements to develop the support provided
- 2.21 These organisations are trusted by residents and can provide a level of pastoral support that public sector services are often not able to achieve. As such, they can offer early identification of issues and provide low level advice or signposting to services.
- 2.22 Whilst there is a great deal of support from the voluntary and community sector, the support is not always joined up in its approach and can vary from location to location. However, we also recognise that community partners vary in their size and capacity and not all partners are able to offer the same provision.

2.23 Current county proposals to deliver this strand include:

- A single countywide service (commissioned by LCC), with a focus on reducing priority debt and serious debt issues, which require Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) accredited support. This will include targeted outreach, for example through Family Hubs and Food Banks and other services which target the most vulnerable.
- Enhancements to existing services, to extend provision of nonregulated financial support, such as household budgeting and income maximisation, alongside assistance to develop and implement plans, utilising the most appropriate support available.
- Match funding of £90,000 over the three years for a test a learn project to support care experienced young people to develop and enhance life skills, transition to independent living and increase employability skills and confidence.
- An allocation to be made available to Lincolnshire District Councils to fund local activity which may include support delivered via third sector partners to help people withstand and recover from financial shocks.

2.24 For SKDC, an internal 'Resilience working group' has been developed to identify where there are gaps in support and those community providers who may be able to help delivery resilience support to our residents – this can be in the form of:

- Being a 'trusted partner' to review application forms and process financial support (vouchers, direct ordering of goods etc)
- Providing access to food & essentials
- Providing access to furniture & white goods
- Bespoke support delivered by that particular organisation
- Outreach services across the district

2.25 Once the appropriate community providers have been identified, these will be mapped across the district – locality, type of support provided, and where there are existing gaps for need. Discussions will be undertaken with the organisation as to the aim and outcome of the support from the provide, alongside the level of support which can be provided:

- Crisis payment only – trusted partner to receive and assess applications
- Resilience service only
- Mix of both

2.26 Grant funding discussions will take place, and agreements will be produced in accordance with the aims, objectives and outcomes of the 'Resilience Strand' of the Crisis Resilience guidance as issued by the DWP.

2.27 Funding can be used to provide new services, supplement or expand existing provision, but cannot be used to deliver or maintain existing government funded activity. Given the emphasis on building financial resilience, the DWP have stated SKDC are expected to use a significant amount of their total allocation on this strand. Activity is expected to positively impact on one or more of the following:

- Increased savings
- Reduced priority debt
- Reduced need for emergency food parcels
- Reduced material deprivation (inability to afford essentials)
- Maximised income
- Fewer repeat Crisis Payment applications
- Increased access to appropriate and quality advice services

2.28 Due to the increased level of funding to be distributed and activity relating to the crisis payments and resilience services, agreement has been sought from LCC for additional resource to be recruited into Welfare & Financial Advice Team. As a result, a full time, fixed term (to 31 March 2028) role will be advertised.

### **3. Key Considerations**

3.1 LCC and Districts will be required to agree a three-year delivery plan. LCC will be responsible for providing the delivery plan to DWP.

3.2 The proposed key dates for delivery are:

- 1 July 2026 – Crisis Payment applications are live
- 1 July 2026 – Resilience Services identified and grant agreement discussions taking place / signed
- During 2026/27 – Community co-ordination gap analysis activity will be throughout Year 1 and will shape any changes to delivery in years 2 and 3

3.3 The South Kesteven Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme will be presented to Cabinet on 2 June 2026, requesting formal approval of the full scheme from 1 July 2026.

### **4. Other Options Considered**

4.1 Do nothing has been discounted as the funding has been provided, and the requirement of the funding is to provide residents with support during times of crisis.

## **5. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 5.1 The DWP expect authorities to commence delivery of the scheme from 1 April 2026 and submit a delivery plan by 1 July 2026. Joint working has been in place between Lincolnshire County Council, District Councils and Support organisations during all stages of Household Support Fund. It is recognised a joint approach to this level of support will achieve the desired outcomes as set out in the framework and guidance.

## **6. Background Papers**

- 6.1 Crisis and Resilience Fund: Guidance for Local Authorities in England 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2029: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crisis-and-resilience-fund-guidance-for-local-authorities-in-england-1-april-2026-to-31-march-2029>
- 6.2 Lincolnshire County Council Executive meeting – 3 March 2026 (item 6): [Agenda for Executive on Tuesday, 3rd March, 2026, 10.30 am](#)
- 6.3 Rural and Communities OSC – 24 March 2025 (item 62): [Agenda for Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026, 2.00 pm | South Kesteven District Council](#)

## **7. Appendix**

- 7.1 EXEMPT Appendix 1: Crisis Payments – Proposed eligibility criteria

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

## **Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Wednesday, 6 May 2026

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,  
Cabinet Member for Housing

### **Welfare and Financial Advice Team update - review of activities 2025/26**

#### **Report Author**

Claire Moses, Head of Service (Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service)

 [claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:claire.moses@southkesteven.gov.uk)

#### **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Committee with an update regarding the support issued as part of the Household Support Fund during the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and the wrap around support provided by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **The Committee is asked to:**

- 1. Note the report and is invited to ask questions regarding its content.**

#### **Decision Information**

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

## **1. Implications**

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The report sets out the specific schemes that are being implemented to support residents with the cost of living – both statutory and national initiatives. The Household Support Fund scheme identified in the report is not directly funded by the Council. The Welfare and Financial Advice team was added to the permanent staffing structure from 1 April 2025, and the work priorities will reflect both local and national issues that are facing the community.

*Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer*

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 There are no direct legal implications associated with noting this report. The Household Support Fund is administered in accordance with central government guidance and within the Council's existing legal framework, including duties relating to equality, data protection, and the fair and consistent allocation of financial support.

*Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)*

### ***Human Resources***

- 1.3 The increasing impact of low economic activity continues to affect mental health and emotional wellbeing of employees. The Welfare and Financial Advice Team workplan will therefore continue to link closely with the internal Wellbeing Group to support colleagues.

*Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Head of HR)*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1 The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to ensuring healthy and strong communities and being a high performing council. This report,

and the service provided through the Council’s Welfare and Financial Advice Team strives to deliver these priorities.

- 2.2 The fourth Welfare and Financial Advice report was presented to this committee on 24 March 2026, which can be found here at item 8: [Agenda for Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026, 2.00 pm | South Kesteven District Council](#)

### Household Support Fund – 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

- 2.3 The total amount of funding for SKDC (2025-26) was £458,452 with all funding distributed (£435,530) with £22,922 required for administrative costs.

District area	% of District allocation	Approx Allocation (£)
East Lindsey	24%	£785,917
Boston	10%	£327,465
South Holland	12%	£392,958
Lincoln	16%	£204,379
North Kesteven	11%	£360,212
<b>South Kesteven</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>£458,452</b>
West Lindsey	13%	£425,705
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£9,631,345</b>

### How funding was distributed for SKDC Residents

- 2.4 The delivery plan and funding distribution is detailed below:

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Confirmed use	Value awarded (£)
1	£9,000	2%	Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)	Contribution towards Warm Packs for 2025 – as part of county-wide ‘Warm welcome’ working group  This was removed at source with LCC making payment direct to LCF	Winter pack scheme started in November 2025. Charis account was set up with £9,000 to enable purchase of winter packs by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party Organisations within the district. £1000	<b>£9,000 (from LCC)</b>  <b>This was re-used for other support by SKDC</b>

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Confirmed use	Value awarded (£)
					was put towards the upkeep of the warm space hub.	
2	£22,922	5%	SKDC Administration + Preventative Measures	Various administration costs of the scheme – such as printing and posting of vouchers + costs towards Preventative measures workshops.	Administration of HSF for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026	<b>£22,922</b>
3	£45,845	10%	3 <sup>rd</sup> party Referrers	This will be set aside for referrals that have come from 3 <sup>rd</sup> party organisations distributed throughout the year.	<b>£45,845</b> Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed: October to December 2025 Mid-February to March 2026 This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.7	
4	£59,759	13%	Outreach Work/ Pensioners	Vouchers will be distributed as an outcome of outreach visits depending on the needs.  Priority will be given to pensioners.	<b>£59,759</b> Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed October to December 2025 Mid-February to March 2026 This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.8	
5	£91,690	20%	HSF7 Vouchers – Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)	Support for residents not in receipt of an income related Benefit that are struggling financially. The	Round 1 funding issued to LCF with referrals being open from 4 August 2025 to 26	<b>£91,690</b> This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.8

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Confirmed use	Value awarded (£)
				payment will be made in two instalments in July and December.	September 2025 and 12 January to 31 March 2026	
6	£229,236	50%	SKDC HSF7 Vouchers – Welfare & Financial Advice Team	Support for those specifically in receipt of an income related benefit that are struggling. This will be split over 2 intensive periods.	Distribution from 4 August to 26 September 2025 and 12 January 2026 to 31 March 2026	<b>£229,236</b>  This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.9

2.5 The distribution for **method 1 (warm packs)** changed for 2025. The packs were produced by Charis Grants Ltd who sent the pack directly to the resident. The pack was requested by an approved referral partner within the district, there were 33 from various organisations, including SKDC. Referrals were limited to a £100 spend limit to ensure the fund was managed effectively. Items available for purchase were heated throws, rechargeable hot water bottles, heated underblanket, self-heated mattress topper, 15 tog duvet, heated bodywarmers, heat the home pack (light bulbs, insulation tape , radiator heat reflector panels, winter warmth bundles (fleece blanket (non-electric), water bottle, hat, scarf and gloves) and complete warmth pack (energy efficient light bulbs, Insulation tape, radiator heat reflector panels, thermos flask and heated throw).

2.6 During 2025/26, a total of **2,601 HSF vouchers** were issued to the **value of £372,091**.

2.7 **Method 3:** Third Party Organisations have requested the following vouchers which have been administered by SKDC’s Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

Category	Number	Value
Food	<b>104</b>	<b>£12,500</b>
Energy	<b>0</b>	<b>£0</b>
Wider Household Essentials	<b>0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>£12,500</b>
<b>Total funding available</b>		<b>£45,845</b>
<b>Remaining funding to 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£33,345</b>

2.8 **Method 5:** Lincolnshire Community Foundation have issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	520	£77,936
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£77,936</b>
<b>Admin Costs</b>		<b>£13,754</b>
<b>Total funding available</b>		<b>£91,690</b>
<b>Remaining funding to 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£0</b>

2.9 **Method 4 and 6:** SKDCs Welfare and Financial Advice Team has issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	1,903	£260,871
Energy	8	£464
Wider Household Essentials	66	£6,566
<b>Total issued</b>	<b>1,977</b>	<b>£267,901</b>
<b>Total funding available</b>		<b>£288,995</b>
<b>Remaining funding to 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£21,094</b>

2.10 **The remaining funding** has been issued to Charis for ongoing voucher support.

#### **Welfare and Financial Advice Team – additional wrap around support (2025/26) - £117,199**

2.11 The team received and processed **2,566** referrals, with **£117,199** of financial support identified and provided.

2.12 Included within the additional wrap around is energy support, with **£117,199** of financial support identified and provided. The team are able to access energy vouchers through the HACT Energy Fund for pre-payment meters. A maximum of 3 x £49 vouchers can be requested per application. The fund can only support residents in social housing. An additional fund was open over the winter where up to £600 was allocated to resident's accounts to assist in clearing their arrears. Applications are subject to funding being available.

- 2.13 Each referral requires an initial 30 to 60 minute appointment with the resident to discuss their personal and household financial circumstances, to determine whether they are receiving all support available to them. As SKDC is a member of the Fusion 21 Network we can access energy vouchers through HACT Energy Fund. A maximum of three £49 vouchers can be requested at a time.
- 2.14 Following this, the officer will undertake further appointments and identify the wrap around support which is available – this can take the form of:
- Charity grants
  - Council Tax Support
  - Discretionary Council Tax and Housing Payments
  - Foodbank vouchers
  - White Goods
- Energy support – this makes up around **19% of the additional wrap around support** and includes energy vouchers from HACT, referral to Better Housing Better Health for support as well as applications to energy charities to apply for assistance in clear arrears.
- 2.15 The team will also liaise with SKDC tenancy support (if they are an SKDC tenant, they will be referred into the Tenancy Support Team) and other wider support organisations such as referrals into BBC Children in need, Better Housing Better Health, Bhive, Bourne United Charities, Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire, Department for Work and Pension, Job Clubs, NHS neighbourhood Teams, Len Pick Trust, Money and Pension Service, Percy Bilton Charity and Shine Lincolnshire. The support provided is in-depth and is always tailored to the individual's needs.
- 2.16 Once the referral has been completed and the triage discussion has been undertaken with the resident, details are then passed to the HSF Officer (within the Welfare and Financial Advice Team) who will process the HSF voucher. The vouchers are processed in bulk and issued on a weekly basis (unless urgent need has been established).

### **Action plan – 2025/26 and 2026/27**

- 2.17 The action plan for additional activities undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26 is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.18 An updated plan is currently being developed for 2026/27 and will be linked to the Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme, which is being presented to Cabinet on 2 June 2026.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1 Members of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

### **4. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 4.1 The recommendation will ensure Members are aware of the advice and financial support available to all residents of South Kesteven.

### **5. Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Welfare and Financial Advice Team action plan (2025/26)

**Welfare and Financial Advice Team (W&FA Team) – Action Plan**

This action plan shows the activities to be undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26. It is made up of key areas of activity

Action 1	Administration
Action 2	Awareness
Action 3	Proactive – internal & external
Action 4	Proactive Support
Action 5	Preventative

Activity 1: Administration		
1a) Case Management	<b>Purpose: Ensure Case management is up to date and provides clear outcomes – such as number of residents supported, value of support</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed case management to be available on all financial support provided:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wrap-around support</li> <li>○ Household Support Fund (HSF) – administered by SKDC</li> <li>○ Household Support Fund (HSF) – administered by Lincolnshire Community Foundation</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>2025/26 outturn:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A total of <b>2,601</b> HSF vouchers has been issued to the value of <b>£372,091</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Administered by SKDC = £267,901</li> <li>▪ Administered by Lincolnshire Community Foundation = £77,936</li> <li>▪ Administered by 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations = £12,500</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Wrap-around support = <b>£117,199</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Complete 31 March 2025

Activity 2: Awareness		
2a) Website update	<b>Purpose: Ensure the website is up to date, referencing the Welfare and Financial Advice Team</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Update all "Cost of Living pages" Existing pages can be found here: <a href="#">Cost of Living help and support   South Kesteven District Council</a>	Complete 30 June 2025
	Remove reference to old schemes	Complete 30 June 2025
	Include Food Support leaflets: <a href="#">Help and Support   South Kesteven District Council</a>	30 June 2025
2b) Co-Ordinate responses to government support initiatives	<b>Purpose: Ensure awareness of announcements and initiatives, understanding the impact for the Council and residents</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Continue to attend Lincolnshire Working Group to collaborate with County and District colleagues  <b>February 2026 update:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings are taking place – recent discussions regarding Criss Resilience Fun where one attendee is part of the national working group. Further updates are expected between now and March 2026</li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26

Activity 2: Awareness		
	Promotion and launch of Household Support Fund (HSF) from April 2025 to March 2026	Complete 30 May 2025
	Use of Emergency Fund - £71k  September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been fully utilised, awarding to those referrals received between 1 April and 3 August 2025 (prior to the start of Household Support Fund on 4 August 2025)</li> </ul>	Complete 3 August 2025
	Overview: <a href="#">Winter Fuel Payment: Overview - GOV.UK</a>  For winter 2025 to 2026, a Winter Fuel Payment is available to people born on or before September 21, 1959, who lived in England or Wales during the qualifying week of September 15-21, 2025.  Value of payments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If a person does not get Pension Credit or another qualifying benefit, the payment is £100.</li> <li>If a person does get Pension Credit, the payment is £200 or £300 depending on their age (and if they live with others).</li> <li>Payments are made to households, but if a person's income is above £35,000, the payment will be clawed back by HMRC through their tax.</li> </ul> When and how payment will be made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most eligible people will receive an automatic payment in their usual bank account in November or December 2025.</li> <li>They should receive a letter in October or November 2025 confirming the amount they will get and how it will be paid.</li> </ul>	Complete  Immediate (deadline 31 March 2026)  Awareness for all staff supporting residents of qualifying age

## Activity 2: Awareness

	<p>Those who need to claim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a person does not get the State Pension or another DWP benefit, or if they have deferred their State Pension.</li> <li>• The deadline for claiming the 2025-26 payment is March 31, 2026.</li> <li>• The claim form is available at <a href="https://www.gov.uk">GOV.UK</a>.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Awareness: <a href="https://www.gov.uk">Paying back the Winter Fuel Payment - GOV.UK</a></p> <p>To ensure staff are aware of the requirement to paying back the Winter Fuel Payment – directing residents to GOV website</p>	Complete 12 November 2025
	<p>Crisis and Resilience Fund - replacing HSF and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Announcement during the <a href="https://www.gov.uk">Spending Review 2025</a> on 11 June 2025</li> <li>○ <b>Para 3.21:</b> Cost of living: the government is providing direct assistance to families most at risk of poverty through the Healthy Start scheme, and establishing a new Crisis and Resilience Fund supported by £1 billion a year (including Barnett impact) through the SR period to replace the Household Support Fund</li> </ul> <p><b>April 2026 update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRF scheme will be presented to Rural &amp; Communities OSC on 6 May 2026, and Cabinet on 2 June 2026 for implementation from 1 July 2026</li> </ul> <p>February 2026 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance was released by the Department for Work and Pensions on 15 January 2026</li> </ul>	<b>Updated April 2026</b>

Activity 2: Awareness		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A separate report will be issued to the Rural &amp; Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 March 2026.</li> </ul>	
2c) Liaison with internal teams	<b>Purpose: Ensure awareness of support and related</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Provide updates regarding changes to the team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrange attendance at team meetings</li> <li>Updating on HSF stages – launch, referral period, award period</li> <li>Referral process for HSF and general support</li> <li>Presentation of Food Support leaflets</li> <li>Overview of outreach activities and areas within the district these are taking place</li> </ul> <b>February 2026 update:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at team meetings have taken place with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Tax</li> <li>Income Recovery (SKDC Rent Team)</li> <li>Repairs</li> <li>Housing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	Spotlight session to be organised  February 2026 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team will undertake a ‘Team Spotlight’ introducing themselves to all members of TeamSK, advising of their role and support available to residents. The update will also include details of the new Crisis and Resilience Fund</li> </ul>	To be planned for Q2 2026

<b>Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external</b>		
<b>3a) Single Point of Contact</b>	<b>Purpose: Be the Single Point of Contact for Welfare and Financial Advice enquiries via the Welfare and Financial Advice email address</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Welfare email box to be set up: <a href="mailto:welfare@southkesteven.gov.uk">welfare@southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	Complete
	Online referral form for Household Support Fund (for internal referrals from SKDC Officers and Members)	Complete
	Inclusion of W&FA Team in SKToday (Autumn edition) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An article was included in the Summer edition of SKToday</li> </ul>	Summer 2025
	All SKDC staff are aware of W&FA Team and how to contact	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	External support organisations are aware of W&FA Team and how to contact	Complete Throughout 2025/26

**Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external**

3b) Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Group	<b>Purpose: Actively contribute to the Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Group</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend and contribute to the quarterly meetings.</li> <li>Share any information to appropriate SKDC teams.</li> <li>Assist the organisers with the arrangements for the upcoming Lincolnshire Financial Inclusion Partnership Conference.</li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26
3c) Foodbanks	<b>Purpose: Develop and maintain a positive relationship with all foodbanks across SKDC</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Visits to Foodbank Coordinators within the district to share ideas on how best to help clients.  <b>February 2026 update:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referrals are being made and received from the foodbanks. The service is much in demand and the team have noticed the impact of DWP no longer issuing vouchers for parcels. Various SKDC staff have been trained on the use of the voucher system so they are able to support the W&amp;FA Team</li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	Actively seek referrals for clients that have used foodbanks that may benefit from additional financial advice.	Complete Throughout 2025/26

**Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external**

<b>3d) Warm Spaces</b>	<b>Purpose: Actively contribute to the Welcome Warm Spaces Working Group</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Attend and contribute to the meetings for actions relating to the warm spaces for 2025/26  <b>February 2026 update:</b> The packs are being produced by Charis Grants Ltd who send the pack directly to the resident. The pack can be requested by an approved referral partner within the District, there are currently 33 from various organisations, including SKDC. Referrals are limited to a £100 spend limit to ensure the fund is managed effectively. Items available for purchase are heated throws, rechargeable hot water bottles, heated underblanket, self-heated mattress topper, 15 tog duvet, heated bodywarmers, heat the home pack (light bulbs, insulation tape, radiator heat reflector panels, winter warmth bundles	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	Visit warm spaces to offer Welfare and Financial Advice as part of outreach	Not successful – to be reviewed for CRF if applicable
	Actively share ideas with the warm spaces working group to improve the offer for 2026/27 warm spaces	Not successful – to be reviewed for CRF if applicable

<b>Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external</b>		
	Promote and ensure full communications are issued in relation to warm packs  February 2026 update: Communications have been issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process	Complete
<b>3e) Information sharing</b>	<b>Purpose: Develop and manage information sharing protocol between SKDC and Support Organisations / advice agencies</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Develop and maintain relationships with support organisations by attending events, seminars and providing Welfare and Financial Advice updates / talks.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team have undertaken visits to the following locations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ St Annes Church</li> <li>○ Stamford Foodbank</li> <li>○ Bourne Foodbank</li> <li>○ Grantham Foodbank (not face to face)</li> <li>○ St Georges – Stamford – SHEP Project &amp; Cristians Against Poverty</li> <li>○ National Grief Charity</li> <li>○ Bhive Grantham</li> <li>○ Don't Lose Hope Café</li> <li>○ Bourne Library and customer service area</li> <li>○ Grantham JobCentre</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	Sharing information and ideas to improve delivery of service to our residents within the legal guidelines	Complete Throughout 2025/26

Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external		
	<p>Attend community engagement events in the form of Welfare and Financial Advice Clinics in Library's, Jobcentres, children's centres.</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team have attended the following community engagement events:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grantham Partnership meeting (monthly)</li> <li>○ Volunteering Everywhere (Dysart Park)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>November 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The team have attended the following community engagement events:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grow Your Skills Event, Jubilee Conference Centre, Grantham – Wednesday October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 - This was hosted by DWP and was well attended by Job centre Attendees with approx. 50 people coming through the door. Individual conversations were had with 8 people.</li> <li>○ Budget Cookery Class, Bourne United Charities 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025. This was hosted by Bourne United Charities .A total of 12 applicants attended this event, a group discussion was done before the cookery course discussing budgeting , priority bills etc Individual calls were then completed in the following days to discuss the participants individual needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Complete Throughout 2025/26</p>
	<p>Promote Talk Money Week – 3 to 7 November</p> <p>November 2025 update: Over the week the team ensure communication regarding the support available and the positive message of speaking about money. SKDC communications team issued messages on social media to support the Money and Pension Service. The services of the Welfare and Financial advice Team have also been advertised in the Customer service Centre with use of the banner screen</p>	<p>Complete</p>

<b>Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external</b>		
	advertising our services. Emails were sent out to all staff through the Wellbeing Team with key links put together by the welfare Team to check their financial wellbeing	
<b>3f) Liaison</b>	<b>Purpose: Liaison with partners and external support organisations</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Maintain relationship with those already established: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Neighbourhood and Wellbeing Teams</li> <li>• Grantham Mental Health Partnership</li> <li>• NACRO officers</li> <li>• Foodbanks</li> <li>• Bourne United Charities</li> <li>• Bread &amp; Butter Thing</li> <li>• Grantham College</li> <li>• Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Services</li> <li>• Lincolnshire District Councils – Warm Packs</li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	Meet with partners during 2025/26 to understand future support and explore opportunities to work together  September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning is underway for the Winter Warm Packs, which will include a ‘Homeless Pack’ this year</li> <li>• The team will be planning visits to the Warm Welcome Spaces across the district, promoting the advice and support which is available</li> <li>• The location of the Welcome Warm Spaces can be found here, clicking on “Find a space”: <a href="#">Warm Welcome Campaign</a></li> </ul>	Complete

**Activity 3: Proactive – internal and external**

	<p>November 2025 update: Communications will be issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process</p> <p>February 2026 update: Communications have been issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process</p>	
	<p>Meet regularly with local Job Centre and Department for Work and Pension (DWP) colleagues to discuss emerging issues and agree a joint up approach for support and potential resolution</p> <p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with DWP taking place in September 2025</li> </ul> <p>November 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting in September took place with DWP sharing information regarding events in the District</li> <li>• Liaison between the DWP and Welfare &amp; Financial Advice Team is ongoing with specific discussions talking place as and when needed</li> </ul> <p><b>February 2026 update:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next meeting will take place in March 2026</li> </ul>	<p>Complete Throughout 2025/26</p>

<b>Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support</b>		
<b>4a) Warm Spaces</b>	<b>Purpose: Increase the number of warm welcome spaces across the district</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Liaison with Members, Parish Clerks and potential warm welcome spaces venues  November 2025 update: Communications will be issued to ensure all staff and Members are aware of the referral process	Complete
<b>4b) Digital Inclusion</b>	<b>Purpose: To increase digital support and inclusion for vulnerable and elderly residents</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Assisting residents with digital forms such as pension credit checks and discretionary housing payments  September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be promoted as part of National Customer Service Week (6-10 October 2025)</li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26
<b>4c) Community Outreach</b>	<b>Purpose: To ensure support can be provided across all towns within the district and where possible, rural areas</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Arrange events within the community at libraries, warm spaces, Children centres, jobcentres to offer budgeting skills, benefit checks and basic financial education i.e. pension credit checks:  Bourne:	Complete  June 2025 – April 2026

**Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support**

Bourne Foodbank	2 North Road, Bourne, PE10 9AP	One to one
Don't Lose Hope	4 North Street, Bourne, Lincs. PE10 9EB.	One to one / preventative workshop
Bourne United Charity (AI Houses)	The Red Hall South Bourne	One to one
Len pick	5 Granby Court, Hereward Street, Bourne PE10 9AD	One to one
Salvation Army	5a Manning Road Bourne, PE01 9ET.	One to one / preventative workshop
Bread and Butter Thing	5a Manning Road Bourne, PE01 9ET.	One to one

Deepings:

Foodbank	63 Hereward Way, Deeping St James	One to one
The Green School Community Café	24 Church Street, Market Deeping, Lincolnshire, PE6 8DA,	One to one / preventative workshop
Bread and Butter Thing	Markt Deeping Scout and Guide Hall, Wellington Way, Deeping PE6 8LF.	One to one

**Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support**

	Open Door Baptist Church	5 Spalding Rd, Deeping St James, Peterborough PE6 8NJ	One to one / preventative workshop
	Community Centre	2 Douglas Rd, Peterborough PE6 8PA	One to one / preventative workshop
	Deeping United Charity	38 Church Street, Deeping St. James, PE6 8HD	One to one
	Age Concern	21 Tyghes Cl, Deeping St James, Peterborough PE6 8NS	One to one
	Odd Fellows	57 Church St, Market Deeping, Peterborough PE6 8AN	One to one
	British Legion	The Goat Inn, Frognall, PE6 8SA	One to one
	Grantham:		
	Jubilee Church	5 London Rd, Grantham NG31 6EY	One to one / preventative workshop
	Alive Church	Castlegate, Grantham, NG31 6SQ	One to one / preventative workshop
	Church Of Ascension	Harrowby Lane , Grantham	One to one / preventative workshop

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		The Passage	Grantham Passage Resource Centre	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Bread and Butter	Harrowby United Football Club, 13 Dickens Road, Grantham, NG31 9QY	One to one	
		Bread and Butter	West Grantham Community Centre, Grantham	One to one	
		St Johns Church	Station Road East, Grantham	One to one	
		Job 22	High St Grantham	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Bhive	11a Finkin St, Grantham	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Grief Charity	The Malting , Warf Rd , Grantham	One to one	
	Stamford:				
		2nd Helping	Orion House, 11 Barn Hill, Stamford, PE9 2AE.	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Georges Hub -	St Augustine's School, Kesteven Road PE9 1SR	One to one / preventative workshop	
	Georges Hub -	Free church, Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SU	One to one / preventative workshop		

Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support					
		Georges Hub -	Malcolm Sergeants School, Empingham Road, PE9 2SR	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Georges Hub -	St Georges School, Kesteven Road, Stamford, PE9 1SX	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Bread and Butter Thing	Christ Church, Green Lane, Stamford, PE9 1HE	One to one	
		SHEP	27-29 St George's Street, Stamford	One to one / preventative workshop	
		Stamford Market	Broad St, Stamford	One to one	
	Support the Housing Roadshow which will be taking place across the District				Complete
	September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27/08/25: Earlsfield Community Centre roadshow will be 10:00- 2:30               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3 people attended</li> <li>○ None of them spoke to WFAT team</li> <li>○ One of the attendees Emma is following up with and will be advising about our team and the HSF</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 04/09/25: Manor Court Community Centre Bourne roadshow will be 10:00- 2:30               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 5 people attended</li> <li>○ The team spoke to one person – completed HB, CTS and HSF form</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				August & September 2025

<b>Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10/09/25: Edmonds Close Community Centre Stamford roadshow will be 10:00 -2:30               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 10 people attended</li> <li>○ The team spoke to one person – completed HSF form and benefits calculator (with various actions arising from this)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 25/09/25: Deepings Community Centre Market Deeping roadshow will be 10:00 2:30               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Event has not taken place at the time of writing this report</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 30/09/25: Greyfriars Community Centre Grantham roadshow will be 1:00-6:00               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Event has not taken place at the time of writing this report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>4d) Furniture Aid</b>	<b>Purpose: Review ways to source assistance from other organisations to help residents in need of furniture</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Maintain relationships with charities and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Organisations to continue to source grants to be able to assist help for residents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percy Bilton</li> <li>• BBC Children in Need</li> <li>• Bourne United</li> <li>• Len Pick</li> <li>• Family Fund (advise only)</li> </ul> September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circa 30 grants of various levels of support have been</li> </ul>	Complete Throughout 2025/26

<b>Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support</b>		
<b>4e) New tenants</b>	<b>Purpose: To produce a new tenant Welfare and Financial Advice pack</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Liaise with Housing colleagues to ensure this complements the new tenant pack already given at sign up  September 2025 update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversations have started to take place with Housing colleagues</li> <li>• The team are working on the Welfare &amp; Financial Advice pack</li> <li>• This action will be extended to March 2026</li> </ul>	Not successful – to be moved to 2026-27 plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting Advice / referrals to external organisations for new tenants (appropriate additional support to that being provided by SKDC Tenancy Services Team)</li> <li>• Tick list of key actions for new tenant / budgeting</li> </ul>	Not successful – to be moved to 2026-27 plan
<b>4f) New residents</b>	<b>Purpose: To produce a new resident information pack (to include Welfare and Financial Advice)</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Include the same information as in the tenant pack	Not successful – to be moved to 2026-27 plan

<b>Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support</b>		
	Welcome to SKDC information:	Not successful – to be moved to 2026-27 plan
<b>4g) Leaflet of the support available</b>	<b>Purpose: Production of leaflets for each Town within the District to provide key food support information</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Issue to Cabinet Member, Members and Parish Clerks for distribution	Complete
	Inclusion within Council Tax reminders	Complete
	<p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the volume of reminders issued (between 600 and 1000 per month, it was felt the team may be overwhelmed with contact.</li> <li>• The decision was taken to review the information issued and reconsider either a targeted approach or issue general advice</li> <li>• This action has been amended to December 2025</li> </ul> <p>February 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information has been issued to all teams for awareness of support available and links to website</li> <li>• Welfare &amp; Financial Advice Team information has been included in the 26/27 council tax booklet: <a href="#">Welfare and Financial Advice   South Kesteven District Council</a></li> </ul>	Complete
Inclusion within Council Tax summonses	Complete	

<b>Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support</b>		
	<p>September 2025 update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the volume of summonses issued (between 400 and 800 per month, it was felt the team may be overwhelmed with contact.</li> <li>• The decision was taken to review the information issued and reconsider either a targeted approach or issue general advice</li> <li>• This action has been amended to December 2025</li> </ul> <p>February 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information has been issued to all teams for awareness of support available and links to website</li> <li>• Welfare &amp; Financial Advice Team information has been included in the 26/27 council tax booklet: <a href="#">Welfare and Financial Advice   South Kesteven District Council</a></li> </ul>	
	<p>Inclusion within rent statements</p> <p>February 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information has been issued to all teams for awareness of support available and links to website</li> <li>• Welfare &amp; Financial Advice Team information has been included in the annual rent increase letters: <a href="#">Welfare and Financial Advice   South Kesteven District Council</a></li> </ul>	Complete
	<p>Inclusion on intranet and staff notice board</p>	Ongoing
<b>4h) Credits on rent accounts</b>	<b>Purpose: To be reviewed to maximise tenant income</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>

<b>Activity 4: Proactive – Resident Support</b>		
		<p>Liaise with Income Recovery Team Leader to ascertain those accounts with credit and contact the tenant to arrange refund or transfer</p> <p>Not successful – to be moved to 2026-27 plan</p>
<b>4i) Credits on council tax accounts</b>	<b>Purpose: To be reviewed to maximise resident income</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	<p>Liaise with Business Rates and Council Tax Enforcement Team Leader to ascertain those accounts with credit and contact the resident to arrange refund or transfer</p>	<p>Not successful – to be moved to 2026-27 plan</p>

Activity 5: Preventative		
<b>5a) Consider the formation of a Welfare and Financial Advice Strategic Working Group</b>	<b>Purpose: To provide a collaborate cross-team approach to the welfare and financial issues facing our residents</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Invitations to be issued to relevant officers: W&FA Team, Communications, Community Engagement, Community Safety, Housing, Revenues & Benefits  February 2026 update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been superseded by the introduction of the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) – details are included in a separate report to Rural &amp; Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee taking place on 24 March 2026.</li> <li>• This action will be transferred to the CRF action plan</li> </ul>	Complete
	To revisit the original key themes which were introduced by the original Cost of Living Strategic Working Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communication</li> <li>○ Food insecurity and poverty</li> <li>○ Fuel &amp; Energy Poverty</li> <li>○ Financial – Benefits, Debt Support and Funding</li> <li>○ Health &amp; Wellbeing (inc Welcome Warm Spaces)</li> <li>○ Prevention of homelessness</li> <li>○ Skills, Employment &amp; Businesses</li> </ul> February 2026 update	Complete

Activity 5: Preventative		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been superseded by the introduction of the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) – details are included in a separate report to Rural &amp; Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee taking place on 24 March 2026.</li> <li>This action will be transferred to the CRF action plan</li> </ul>	
	Produce a holistic action plan, with the inclusion of all relevant SKDC Teams  February 2026 update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This has been superseded by the introduction of the Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF) – details are included in a separate report to Rural &amp; Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee taking place on 24 March 2026.</li> <li>This action will be transferred to the CRF action plan</li> </ul>	Complete
<b>5b) Consider budgeting workshops for residents</b>	<b>Purpose: Identify the specific financial challenges faced by attendees, such as debt, low income, or lack of financial literacy</b>	
	<b>Activities to be undertaken</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Every day conversations with regards to general wrap around support, HSF application	Complete Throughout 2025/26
	Liaison with relevant external organisations to discuss support in facilitating a budgeting workshop	Not successful – to be reviewed for CRF action plan
	Increase access to debt advice:	Complete

**Activity 5: Preventative**

	Expand the reach of debt advice services to individuals facing financial difficulties, ensuring timely access to help and support	Throughout 2025/26
	Emergency Assistance programmes:  Provide financial assistance to those facing immediate financial hardship, such as food or housing support.	Not successful – to be reviewed for CRF action plan
	Welfare Benefit Support:  Assist individuals in maximizing their welfare benefits and accessing other available support	Complete  Throughout 2025/26