



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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

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Purpose of Report

This report sets out the Council's proposed approach to delivering the Government's 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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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