

SPECIAL URGENCY Cabinet Report/Delegated Decision Form

Report/Decision Title	Approval of the use of the Household Support Fund (extended funding)
Date of request	21 Nov 2022
Date of meeting/decision	23 Nov 2022

In September 2022 Government announced an extension of the Household Support Fund of a further £421 million to be available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. This funding covers the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 inclusive. The expectation is that The Fund should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for the other support that the government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need. Energy bills are of particular concern to low-income households during the period of the fund and local authorities should prioritise supporting households with the cost of energy.

Proposed use of the discretionary fund

Households that qualify for and Council Tax Support will be eligible for assistance. An analysis of the current Council Tax Support caseload has identified that there are circa 3000 households with children receiving support (circa 6100 children live within those households), there are circa 5100 working age households without children that receive support and circa 5600 state pension age households without children that receive support. The total number of households in the borough is circa 65,500 with a population of circa 135,000.

It is proposed that Council Tax Support is a determiner for receiving a set rate assistance payment because it is means tested and households would be on low incomes in order to receive this support. Low income households are less

resilient to cost of living pressures due to them having less disposable income to absorb fluctuation. Payments made at set rates dependant on household composition i.e. Working Age and Pension Age households without children will be eligible for a set rate payment of £50. Households with children will be eligible for a set rate payment of £100.

A remaining fund, estimated at £400,000 will be used to assist residents that are struggling that are not entitled to Council Tax Support e.g. they are in credit deficit, have a low income, have other significant cost of living pressures or they have not been able to receive any other government cost of living assistance to date.

Residents wishing to claim this assistance will firstly need to discuss their circumstances with Citizens Advice, which is working in partnership with the Council in administering the scheme. Citizens Advice will establish the financial circumstances of eligible households. Approved cases will then be referred to the Council for assistance with one off payments of up to £200 per household being made to assist with, food and essentials and utility costs. It is anticipated that circa 2000 households will be assisted with this funding allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Circa £20,000 of the overall fund will be transferred to the social fund budget and will be used to assist residents finding themselves in financial crisis for any other reason.

In the event that assistance payments are underclaimed from predicted levels, the Council may, at a later date, decide to allocate additional payments to claimants in order to utilise the funding.

I confirm that I have sought agreement from the relevant chair of Scrutiny and Improvement Committee (or if there is no chair, or the chair is unable to act, the Mayor, or in their absence the Deputy Mayor) and the Cabinet Member and I am aware that any special urgency provisions must be reported to the Full Council by the Leader.

Officer name (Delegated Power Author)	Mike Oyston	Officer Signature		Date	21 Nov 2022
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Assistant Director Name	Phil Winstanley	Assistant Director signature		Date	24 Nov 2022
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This urgent report/decision has been seen and agreed by the following:

Officer / Member	Signature
Managing Director	
Section 151 Officer	
Monitoring Officer	
Leader/Chair of Cabinet (For Cabinet Decisions only)	N/a
Cabinet Member	4 Nov 2022
Scrutiny Chair	23 Nov 2022

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Are the details of the decision to be public or confidential?

Public

If the details of the decision are confidential, please select the category for exemption under the Local Government Act 1972

Reference	RES-22-210
Corporate Plan Priority	Meeting Residents' Needs
Delegation Title	Household Support Fund (Extension October 2022 – March 2023)
Delegated Power Number	184
Date of Exercise	25/11/2022
Cabinet Member	Cllr Glyn Nightingale
Assistant Director	Phil Winstanley

Type of Decision (Key/Executive/Non-Executive)	Key - Executive
FOR KEY DECISIONS ONLY	
Delegated Power Forward Plan Ref	N/A
Date Decision Published in Forward Plan	
Urgency (For Key Decisions not included in Forward Plan only)	Special Urgency - Forms Attached

Background to decision:

Approval of the use of the Household Support Fund (extended funding)

Decision Considerations:

For use of government funding to assist low-income households with cost-of-living pressures.

Full details of decision:

In September 2022 Government announced an extension of the Household Support Fund of a further £421 million to be available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. This funding covers the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 inclusive. The expectation is that The Fund should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for the other support that the government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need. Energy bills are of particular concern to low-income households during the period of the fund and local authorities should prioritise supporting households with the cost of energy.

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Circa £20,000 of the overall fund will be transferred to the social fund budget and will be used to assist residents finding themselves in financial crisis for any other reason.

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The table below illustrates the proposed spend:

Budget			£1,296,381
	anticipated number of households		amount
Pension age households	5566		£278,300

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(no children)			
Set award per household			£50
Households (with children)	3023	6144 (children)	£302,300
Set award per household			£100
Working Age (no children)	5113		£255,650
Set award per household			£50
administrative costs			£40,000
Credit Deficit Household Assistance	2,000		£400,000
Set award per household			up to £200
remaining balance (for new claims and other discretionary payments)	100		£20,131

Financial detail:
The Council's funding allocation is £1,296,381

Delivering Social Value:
Assisting residents with a payment towards cost-of-living pressures.

Reasons for Decision:
Approval of the use of the Household Support Fund (extended funding)

Details of alternative options considered (if any) and reasons for rejection:
Do not use the funding. This is not recommended due to the current cost of living pressures being experienced by all residents. Not using the funding would be against the government's intentions to deliver assistance a local authority level.

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<p>Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Elected Member consulted in relation to the decision:</p>	
<p>Details of any dispensation granted in respect of any conflict of interest:</p>	
<p>Background Papers: State where any additional papers may be held, any background information (if applicable) Household Support Fund (1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>	
Officer Name (Print)	Mike Oyston
Officer Signature	
Submission date	21/11/22
Procurement Approval	n/a

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Delegated Power Forward Plan Reference	
Corporate Plan Priority	Meeting Residents' Needs
Delegation Title	Household Support Fund (Extension October 2022 – March 2023)
Delegated Power Number	184
Date of Exercise	25/11/2022
Cabinet Member	Cllr Glyn Nightingale
Assistant Director	Phil Winstanley

Signatures

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER	Date 24/11/2022
MANAGING DIRECTOR	Date 24/11/2022

Call-In (Key Decisions Only)

Call-In Applies

Reasons for dis-applying Call-In due to urgency to be added here if relevant. This will need to be reported to the next meeting of the Borough Council and the reasons must demonstrate that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.

Date Decision will become effective	06/12/2022 To be completed by Democratic Services – date will be not less than expiry of 5 working days from publication unless urgency applies.
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