

MINUTES OF MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Monday, 10th October, 2022, 11.15am to 11.25am.

PRESENT:

Councillor Seema Chandwani – Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Sara Sutton, Gill Taylor, Ayshe Simsek

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest put forward.

6. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND IN HARINGEY

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services considered the report which sought approval of the receipt of Household Support funding of £2,406,671.72 for the six month period October 2022 – March 2023 and a policy for allocation of the funding to provide support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals.

The Household Support Fund would allow the Council to continue and expand its support to households in food or fuel poverty.

The Cabinet Member noted that the initial tranche of funding support would be focused on households with children receiving Free School Meals. They would be provided with Free School Meals vouchers during the October 2022 half term. A separate decision would be made on the next tranche of support to be provided, using the additional funds available in early November.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the additional Housing Support Fund allocation from the Government of £2,406,671.72 for the period October 2022 – March 2023.
2. To approve the Household Support Fund Scheme Policy: October 2022 which sets out the Council's arrangement for administering part of the additional funding and is attached at Appendix 1.

3. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director Communities and Housing Related Support in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services to amend this policy to give effect to changes in legislation, statutory or non statutory guidance, or directives or instructions of a similar character issued by Government.
4. To agree that this policy is subject to the availability of government funding and will terminate on 30th March 2023 unless terminated earlier
5. To note that a further set of recommendations for spend of the existing funding will come forward in due course, within the conditions set out by the guidance.

Reasons for decision

The Government through the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) has provided funding to local authorities to administer the Household Support Fund. It is acknowledged that local authorities have the local ties and knowledge and are best placed to allocate funding according to local need.

The Guidance for The Fund, provides for local authorities to determine eligibility in their area and target support to those most in need but within the scope of conditions set by DWP. The proposed decision on the Household Support Fund sets out how the Council will target and deliver support to residents. This spend is targeted to those that are most in need and is in accordance with the Scheme.

The Household Support Fund payments are expected to support households over the grant period and for all funding to be spent between 1st October 2022 – 30th March 2023. The Council has identified that the cohort of low income households with children, who are eligible to receive free school meals vouchers, will be particularly impacted by the challenges presented by the significantly rising cost of living. Without support over the school holiday period, children in these households will not be able to access free meals. There is a need, therefore, for an urgent decision to be taken on the recommendations contained in this report, in order to ensure that payments are made to support families with children, to continue to access Free School Meals vouchers during the October half term school holiday.

Alternative options considered

The alternative option considered was not to develop a Haringey Support Fund Policy. This was discounted as it would not have made use of the funds available to support Haringey residents and would have necessitated a return of the funds to central government.

A further option was to bring forward plans to allocate the total amount of funding at this stage, but as the final guidance was only received on 30th September 2022 and more work needs to be carried out in order to ensure that the Fund is spent with maximum beneficial impact for local residents, this option was discounted.

Please be advised that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny has further agreed that the call-in procedure shall not apply to this urgent decision. This is because the decision is

urgent and any delay in implementation caused by the call-in procedure would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests due to the fact that any delay in decision making will impact on the ability to utilise available funding to support households with children, other vulnerable households and individuals in Haringey. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed that the decision is both reasonable in all circumstances, and that it should be treated as a matter of urgency. This is in accordance with Part 4, Section H, and Paragraph 18 (a) and (b) of the Council Constitution.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date