

# **MINUTES OF CABINET MEMBER SIGNING MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 2022, 10.10 - 10.20 AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Seema Chandwani, Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services.

**In attendance:** Sara Sutton, Assistant Director Place Based Commissioning and Partnerships, and Fiona Rae, Acting Committees Manager.

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Seema Chandwani noted that she worked for the Selby Trust, a charitable organisation which could be eligible to apply for funding. It was highlighted that the decision in relation to the Household Support Fund Round 3 Allocations Policy related to the acceptance of government funding and the general allocations policy and therefore this interest was not considered to be material to the matter to be considered at this meeting. Councillor Chandwani noted that she would not be involved in the decisions for individual applications.

## **3. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND ROUND 3 ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services considered the report which noted that the Government, through the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), launched the Household Support Fund in October 2021, for the period October 2021 – March 2022. The Government had now announced that the Household Support Fund would be extended for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The objective of the Scheme was to provide support to vulnerable households struggling with the significant rise in living costs, with an emphasis on supporting households with energy, food and water bills. Local authorities were responsible for administering the Scheme and funding had been allocated to each authority.

It was noted that Haringey Council had been allocated £2,406,671.72, for the six-month period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

The funding would enable the Council to offer new support to families with children, other vulnerable households, and individuals. The Household Support Fund would also allow the Council to extend and expand its existing support to households in food or fuel poverty. In October 2022, a decision was taken to allocate an initial tranche of the funding to provide Free School Meals vouchers during the Autumn half term.

This decision would approve the allocation of the remaining £2,256,671.72 of the fund.

The Assistant Director for Place Based Commissioning and Partnerships highlighted that the recommendations in the report should be amended so that recommendations 3.3 and 3.4 included consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Life, rather than the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services.

The Cabinet Member asked about the process of letting organisations know about the availability of funding and requested that the information was spread as widely as possible. The Assistant Director for Place Based Commissioning and Partnerships explained that there had been some initial briefings for voluntary and community organisations to inform them about the Household Support Fund. It was added that there would be a press release about the new round of funding and this would be publicised on multiple platforms to ensure that the information was circulated as widely as possible.

### **The Cabinet Member RESOLVED**

1. To approve the expenditure of the remaining sum of the Household Support Fund of £2,256,671.72 for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
2. To approve the *Household Support Fund Scheme Policy - October 2022 – Phase 2* which sets out the Council's arrangements for administering part of the additional funding. The policy is attached at Appendix 1.
3. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Communities and Housing Support, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Life, 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 delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Communities and Housing Support, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Life, to award small grants to Voluntary and Community sector organisations to support the delivery of the scheme, in accordance with procurement regulations and local policy.
5. To agree that this policy is subject to the availability of government funding and will terminate on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

### **Reasons for decision**

The Government, via the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), has provided funding to local authorities to support vulnerable households, the Household Support Fund. It is acknowledged that local authorities have the local relationships and knowledge and are best placed to allocate funding according to local need.

The Guidance for the Scheme requires local authorities to determine eligibility in their area, and target support to those most in need, within the scope of conditions set by DWP. This report, and the policy at Appendix 1, sets out how the Council will target

and deliver this support to residents. The policy sets out an approach intended to help those that are most in need, which is in accordance with the guidance for the scheme.

Household Support Fund help, both in-kind and direct payments, are expected to support households throughout the grant period. Funding will be spent between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and 31st March 2023.

**Alternative options considered**

An alternative option considered was not to develop a Household Support Fund Policy. This was discounted as it would not have made use of additional support available to Haringey residents, and would have necessitated a return of the funds to DWP.

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Chandwani

Signed by Cabinet Member .....

Date ...1 December 2022.....