

MINUTES OF URGENT DECISIONS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH JULY, 2021, 11.00 - 11.05 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Zena Brabazon, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, and Families.

In attendance: Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director for Commissioning; Florence Guppy, Strategic Lead – Community Enablement; and Fiona Rae, Principal Committee Co-ordinator.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. COVID ADDITIONAL WINTER GRANT SCHEME IN HARINGEY

The Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, and Families considered the report which sought approval for an additional government funding allocation.

The Government, through the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), has further extended the COVID Winter Grant Scheme/ 'Covid Local Support Grant.' The objective of the Scheme(s) is to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable. Local authorities are responsible for administering the Scheme and funding has been allocated to each authority. The Council was initially allocated £986,329.83. The spend for this was decided by Cabinet Member Decision in December 2020. The Council was subsequently awarded a further £342,895. This funding was referred to as the 'Additional Winter Grant.' The spend for this was decided by Cabinet Member Decision in March 2021. A third allocation of £232,078.00 referred to as the 'Covid Local Support Grant' and/or 'Winter Grant 3: April 2021' was allocated by Cabinet Member Decision in June 2021. The DWP has stated that this further tranche of £928,310.43 allocated to Haringey will be the last extension. This final tranche is referred to as 'Winter Grant 4: July 2021'.

The funding will enable the Council to provide support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals from 21 June 2021 and covers the period until 30 September 2021. The 'Covid Local Support Grant' will allow the Council to extend and expand its support to households in food or fuel poverty from the original three Winter Grant allocations. This report is seeking Cabinet member approval for the proposed arrangement for the delivery of additional funding as set out in the policy document (attached) and which is within the conditions stipulated by DWP.

In response to a question from the Cabinet Member, it was confirmed that there would be Free School Meals (FSM) holiday provision which consisted of voucher support to all households eligible for FSMs during the Summer holiday to the value of £15 per child. It was noted that this would be administered by schools and funding of £3 per child would be provided to each school to support with schools' localised food support offer.

The Cabinet Member RESOLVED

1. To approve the additional funding allocation from the Government.
2. To approve the Covid Local Support Grant/ Winter Grant 4: June 2021 Scheme Policy which sets out the Council's arrangement for administering the additional funding and is attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
3. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director Commissioning, in consultation with the Director of Children Services and the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families, 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 30 September 2021 unless terminated earlier or extended beyond this date by Cabinet or Cabinet Member decision.

Reasons for decision

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

The Scheme 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 Covid Local Support Grant Scheme Policy sets out how the Council will target and deliver support to residents in addition to the support agreed in the original and additional Winter Grant policies (December 2020, March 2021, April 2021). This spend is targeted to those that are most in need and in accordance with the Scheme.

The Covid Local Support Grant payments are expected to support households over the grant period and for funding to be spent between 21 June and 30 September 2021. Therefore, there is a need for an urgent decision to be taken on the recommendation in order to ensure that payments are made to support vulnerable people within the allotted time.

Alternative options considered

The alternative option considered was not to develop a Covid Local Support Grant Policy. This was discounted as it would not have made use of potential support to

Haringey residents and would have necessitated a return of the funds to central Government.

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 families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals in Haringey. Accordingly, 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 of the Council Constitution.

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Zena Brabazon

Signed by Cabinet Member

Date ...15 July 2021.....