

MINUTES OF THE URGENT DECISIONS MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2021, 5.00 - 5.05 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Peray Ahmet, Leader of the Council.

In attendance: Thomas Skeen, Assistant Director of Finance; 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. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND IN HARINGEY

The Leader considered the report which concerned the allocation and management of Household Support Funding in Haringey. It was noted that the Government, through the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), had Launched the Household Support Fund. The objective of the Scheme was 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 were responsible for administering the Scheme and funding had been allocated to each authority. The Council had been allocated £2,406,671.72.

The funding would enable the Council to provide support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals from 6 October 2021 and covered the period until 31 March 2022. The 'Household Support Fund' would allow the Council to extend and expand its support to households in food or fuel poverty. This report sought Cabinet Member approval for the proposed initial arrangement for the delivery of funding as set out in the policy document (attached to the report) and which was within the conditions stipulated by DWP. This initial decision would be followed by a second decision to allocate the remaining funding available.

The Leader RESOLVED

1. To approve the additional funding allocation from the Government.
2. To approve the Household Support Fund Scheme Policy: October 2021 which sets out the Council's arrangement for administering part of the additional funding and is attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
3. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director Commissioning, in consultation with the Director of Children Services and the Leader of the Council, 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 31 March 2022 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 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 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 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 in accordance with the Scheme.

The Household Support Fund payments are expected to support households over the grant period and for funding to be spent between 6 October 2021 and 31 March 2022. 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 Haringey Support Fund 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 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. 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.

LEADER:

Signed by Leader ...19 October 2021.....

Date