

MINUTES OF MEETING Cabinet Member Signing HELD ON Tuesday, 28th March, 2023, 11.00 am

PRESENT:

Councillors: Seema Chandwani

ALSO ATTENDING: Sara Sutton (Assistant Director for Place Based Partnerships and Commissioning) and Felicity Foley (Committees Manager)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND IN HARINGEY

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services considered the report which sought approval for the Household Support Fund Scheme Policy (March 2023, Phase 1), and the acceptance of £4,813,343.44 from the government for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The objective of The Fund is to provide support to households in the most need; particularly those who may not be eligible for the other support government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need and who require crisis support. The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people, with an emphasis on supporting households with energy, food and water bills. This report also sought approval for the allocation for first phase of this funding to provide Free Schools Meal (FSM) Vouchers to households with children who are eligible for free school meals during the Easter half term 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services RESOLVED to

1. Approve the Household Support Fund allocation from the government of £4,813,343.44 for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.
2. Approve the Household Support Fund Scheme Policy: March 2023 Phase 1, which sets out the Council's arrangement for administering the first part of the funding, attached in Appendix 1.
3. Delegates authority to the Assistant Director for Place Based Partnerships and Commissioning 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. Agree that this policy is subject to the availability of government funding and will terminate on 31st March 2024 unless terminated earlier.
5. 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 April 2023 – 31st March 2024. 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 Easter school holiday period.

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.

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 in late February 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.

CHAIR: Councillor Seema Chandwani

Signed by Chair

Date