

MINUTES OF MEETING Urgent Decisions HELD ON Tuesday, 17th October, 2023, 3.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillor: Seema Chandwani

ALSO ATTENDING: David Graaff and Ayshe Simsek

5. FILMING AT MEETINGS

Cllr Chandwani referred to the notice of filming at meetings and attendees noted this information.

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND IN HARINGEY

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services considered the report which was seeking approval for the allocation of this funding to provide Free Schools Meal (FSM) Vouchers to households with children who are eligible for free school meals during the October half term 2023, and to allocate £258,000 funding to the Haringey Support Fund. This figure would be reviewed in the next key decision report.

In accordance with the Household Support Fund Scheme Policy: March 2023 Phase 1, which set out the Council's arrangement for administering the first part of The Fund, which is within the conditions stipulated by DWP, this decision would be followed by a further decision in November to approve the allocations policy for the next phase of The Fund.

RESOLVED

1. To note the Household Support Fund allocation from the government of £4,813,343.44 for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.
2. To approve the initial allocation of this funding to provide Free Schools Meal (FSM) Vouchers to households with children who are eligible for free school

meals during the October half term 2023, and to allocate up to £258,000 funding to the Haringey Support Fund.

3. To note that a further set of recommendations for spend of the remaining funding will come forward shortly, within the conditions set out by the guidance.
4. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director Resident Experience 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.
5. To agree that this policy is subject to the availability of government funding and will terminate on 31st March 2024 unless terminated earlier.

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 October 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:

Signed by Chair

Date

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