

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted [*if applicable*]

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: CUSTOMERS

1. DECISION TAKEN

- 1.1 To approve the distribution of a non-repayable one-off payment of £400 to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment automatically but are still facing increased energy costs which has been allocated in relation to the Governments Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding.

2. DECISION TAKER

- 2.1 Jo Dufficy, Service Director Customers

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

- 3.1 27 February 2023

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To ensure that the funding under the energy bill support scheme is paid as quickly as possible to assist with the rising cost of energy bills.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 There are no alternative options to consider. This is a government scheme created to support those who were not eligible for the initial round of energy bill support payments in 2022. It is important that we can start making payments to qualifying households as soon as possible to assist with the rising cost of energy bills.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

- 6.1 The Executive Member for Finance & IT, Cllr Ian Albert, has been consulted and is in support of this scheme.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not considered a key decision.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Governments Energy Bill Support Scheme (EBSS) provides funding on energy bills of £400 for most households in Great Britain, this scheme is being delivered through domestic energy suppliers in six instalments from October 2022 to March 2023.

- 8.2 There are, however, a number of households who pay for energy in a different way and so will not receive support through EBSS, The Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding (EBSS Alternative Funding) has been created to provide a direct payment to these households.
- 8.3 The EBSS Alternative Funding is a non-repayable one-off payment of £400 to eligible households who have not received the main EBSS payment automatically but are still facing increased energy costs.
- 8.4 The scheme is being delivered jointly by Government and the Council and individuals will need to apply for the funding via the Gov.uk website. Eligibility will be assessed by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and the Council will be responsible for distributing payments to those eligible applicants.
- 8.5 Eligible applicants are expected to be those with a commercial landlord or intermediary, such as residents of; park homes, Gypsy and Traveller sites, care homes or assistive living facilities which are partially or fully self-funded.
- 8.6 The scheme will be open to applicants (via the GOV.uk website only) until 31 May 2023 and payments must be posted by 30 June 2023.
- 8.7 The funding allocation for North Herts Council is £680,000 which has been calculated at 1700 potential payments of £400 each.
- 8.8 Payment will be made via bank transfer using the bank account information provided at the application stage, confirmation of payment will be sent centrally by DESNZ.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The EBSS Alternative Funding is a one-off payment of £400 to support residents (who were not previously eligible for the EBSS funding) with the increase in energy costs Council in response to the Government's announcement of this scheme.
- 9.2 The decision taker signing the decision notice has delegated authority to take such a decision in accordance with the Council's Constitution under Section 14.6.6.(a)(i): *"To manage, direct and control all resources allocated to the Directorate in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures"*.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Council. The funding allocation for this scheme is £680,000 and costs associated with administering the scheme will be covered by the allocation of new burdens funding.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The scheme is open to receive applications from 27 February 2023, it is the intention of Government is that the Council can start making payments as soon as possible once applications have been processed.
- 11.2 There could be significant reputational risk to the Council if it is seen to be slow in implementing this financial assistance.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.2 The Council is implementing Government policy designed to provide financial assistance to eligible households in response to the increasing costs of energy.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no Human Resources implications in this report.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17. APPENDICES

17.1 Appendix 1 – Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding Policy

NOTIFICATION DATE: 03 March 2023

Signature of Executive Member Consulted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ian Albert', written over a horizontal dotted line.

(Ian Albert, Executive Member for Finance & IT)

Date: 27 February 2023

Signature of Decision Taker

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jo Dufficy', written in a cursive style.

Jo Dufficy, Service Director Customers

Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.