

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 £200 to eligible households who use alternative fuels and have not received an automatic credit from their electricity supplier. This funding has been allocated in relation to the Governments Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fuel Payment – Alternative Fund (AFP AF).

2. DECISION TAKER

- 2.1 Jo Dufficy

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

- 3.1 03 March 2023

4. REASON FOR DECISION

- 4.1 To ensure that the funding under the AFP AF 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. AFP AF is a Mandatory Scheme due to launch on 06 March 2023. This scheme is to support those who will not receive an automatic credit of £200 on their electricity bill in February 2023. 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 use alternative fuels and therefore have not received funding under the EBSS.
- 8.3 The AFP AF is a non-repayable one-off payment of £200 to eligible households who use alternative fuels and have not had an automatic credit of £200 from their electricity supplier.
- 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 who heat their homes using alternative fuels such as tank or bottled gas, liquid petroleum gas (LPG), oil, wood, or solid fuel.
- 8.6 The scheme will be open to applicants (via the GOV.uk website only) from 6 March 2023 until 31 May 2023 and payments must be posted by 30 June 2023.
- 8.7 The funding allocation for North Herts Council is £131,000 which has been calculated at 655 potential payments of £200 each.
- 8.7 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 Fuel Payment – Alternative Fund is a one-off payment of £200 to support residents with the increase in energy costs.
- 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 £131,000 and costs associated with administering the scheme will be covered by the allocation of new burdens funding.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Whilst there is no specific date set to make this live, 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 – Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund (AFP AF) Policy

NOTIFICATION DATE: 10 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: 08 March 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.