

Executive decision taken by Leader/Cabinet portfolio holder



Decision taken by:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson

Date of decision:

23 November 2021

Subject of report:

On 6 October 2021 the government announced a package of support for vulnerable households. The £500 million Household Support Fund provides £421 million to help vulnerable people in England, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million. The funding is primarily being used to support households with the cost of essentials, although councils have flexibility to best address local needs. At least 50% of the funding is reserved for households with children. The scheme will run until 31 March 2022 when any unspent funds must be returned to the government.

East Sussex County Council received c£3.9m from this fund and has allocated the Council £120,000 to assist vulnerable households and to meet the Council's administrative costs.

As this is a new scheme, we are not able to estimate on the number of applications we are likely to receive.

The district and boroughs have worked together to design a county-wide scheme.

The scheme criteria is at appendix 1.

One of the qualifying criteria is that the resident is in receipt of a means-tested benefit, as these are likely to be the most financially challenged. If spend is not at the level expected, and as any unspent funds at 31 March have to be returned to government, we will look to remove this criterion and open up the scheme to more residents.

Exempt matter (if any as given under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972):

No

Key decision?:

Non-key decision

Open summary of decision made:

- (1) To approve the Local Authority's Household Support Fund Scheme.
- (2) To grant the Director of Service Delivery delegated authority, to implement, and if necessary, amend the Policy (in consultation with the Leader). Such delegated authority will include any measures necessary for or incidental to its management and administration

Reason(s) for decision:

This is a new scheme which needs to be implemented as a matter of urgency and so executive approval for the scheme is being sought from the Leader. The Leader is being asked to authorise the Director of Service Delivery to implement and administer the scheme as there is no existing officer delegation in place.

Alternative options considered:

The Council could choose not take part in the scheme, but this could lead to Lewes district residents not being able to benefit.

Was an executive councillor(s) consulted before decision was taken? If so, what was the result of this consultation?

Yes, there was agreement to the scheme.

Does the proposal involve any unplanned expenditure? If so, please confirm that you have consulted with the Chief Finance officer and include the date of consultation

East Sussex County Council have confirmed that the Council can deduct reasonable costs in implementing and administering the scheme from the £120,000 allocated.

Signed:

Councillor Zoe Nicholson

Leader