



Surrey Heath Borough Council Scheme of Delegation of Functions to Officers

Urgent Action Form – Executive Function

Consultation by Chief Executive, Strategic Director or Head of Service involved with relevant Portfolio Holder or Leader of the Council and Chairman (or Vice Chairman) of the relevant Scrutiny Committee

To Councillor	Shaun Garrett
Portfolio Holder for	Support & Safeguarding
Background	<p>The government (DWP) has set up a scheme to provide additional funding to target financial support for vulnerable households over the winter months, to be known as the Household Support Grant. This new grant will run until the 31 March 2022 and totals £500m Nationally.</p> <p>Surrey County Council's allocation of the funding totalled £5,290,829.72, and this is based on the population of each authority weighted by a function of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation.</p> <p>The aim of the grant is designed to enable local Council's to support vulnerable households with the increasing costs of food, energy, water, and other essentials. In exceptional circumstances of genuine emergency, the grant can also be used to support with housing costs, but the main focus of support is the emergency need for immediate assistance with food and bills (vouchers can be awarded up until the 31st March 2022 and redeemed until the end of April).</p> <p>The criteria states that at least 50% of the total funding must be spent on families with children, beyond this local authorities have discretion to determine the appropriate schemes for their area, based on our understanding of local needs</p>
Proposal	<p>As outlined above the grant scheme is intended to help families therefore it's important that we get this scheme set up as quickly as possible so that the help gets to the people that need it.</p> <p>In order to deliver this scheme it is proposed that Citizens Advice Surrey Heath (CASH) deliver this on the Councils behalf. The scheme requires a quick time response to evaluate and turn around the applications promptly. Citizen's Advice have the necessary experience and knowledge to assist with ensuring the emergency funds are provided to those who are most vulnerable</p>

	<p>within Surrey Heath. SHBC and CASH will establish and agree a 'local eligibility framework' being fully compliant in its approach which will enable CASH to distribute grant funding that best supports the households who are in the most need locally. SHBC will also support CASH in promoting the scheme see Annex A which details the full action plan.</p> <p>Also a MI return is due to the DWP by the 21st January 2022 for the period ending 31st December 2021, this will be used to determine the level of eligible spend and an interim payment will be made upon verification. This is another reason why the need to agree the setting up an introduction of this scheme by urgent action as soon as possible.</p>
Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree to the setting up the Household Support Grant Scheme as proposed above or 2. Not to agree to the proposal and wait for the next Executive meeting on 7th December 2021.
Risk of delaying the decision	The scheme requires a quick time response to evaluate and turn around the applications promptly if we delay waiting until the next Executive meeting we risk not distributing the grant monies before 31 st December.
Legal advice	Not required
Resource implication	<p>Surrey County Council's allocation of the funding totalled £5,290,829.72, the total allocation for Surrey Heath is £176,820.17, which the first payment of 50% (£88,410.09) has been received and confirmed by the Chief Accountant.</p> <p>The second payment of the grant allocation is in arrears and will be subject to the submission of two Management Information (MI) returns to DWP outlining the authority's grant spend and the volume of awards for period 6 October – 31 December (due January '22) and for the period 1 January - 31 March (due April '22).</p> <p>Set out in Annex B is how the grant funding will be allocated further to the scheme set out above there is also a sum £10,000 proposed for the local food banks.</p> <p>Note the Councils Section 151 has been consulted on this matter.</p>

Contact Officer for further information	Louise Livingston – Head HR, Communications & Performance Jayne Boitault – Community Partnership Officer
Decision Marker (officer signing the Urgent Action Form)	Damian Roberts – Chief Executive

Signed *By email*

Dated 19/11/21

Name: Damian Roberts Chief Executive

I agree with the above action proposed

Signed

Shaun Garrett

Dated 19/11/21

Portfolio Holder for Support & Safeguarding – Cllr Shaun Garrett

On behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, I agree with the above action proposed. I recognise that if this decision is taken by the appropriate officer as a matter of urgency, there will be no opportunity for the decision to be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee before its implementation.

Signed

Sashi Mylvaganam

Dated 19/11/2021

Chairman/Vice Chairman of Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam

Annex A

Surrey Heath Action Plan November 2021 – March 2022

- A. Utilising the client data information that the Council has available from the Council's Tax Subsidy Scheme (2409 households). To send out a letter and easy to use application which advises of this new scheme and invites applications to be returned directly to Citizens Advice who will evaluate and process payments via various forms which will include vouchers for energy, or food etc.
- B. To print letters to leave at various locations within Surrey Heath, such as Job Centre Plus, Besom, weekly food stalls and plus others to promote the availability of the scheme.
- C. Promote the scheme to Revs & Bens, Housing, and the contact centre to direct any enquiries to Citizens Advice or send out letters and information.
- D. Devise a local communications/Social media campaign including the use of the Council's website.
- E. Work with our community and statutory partners to promote far and wide, via twitter/Instagram.
- F. To ensure that an open dialogue is retained with partners, and this will be managed via regular (virtual) monitoring meetings to ensure that we can be responsive to local change and offer a quick time flexible approach to bridge gaps and meet the community needs.
- G. For SHBC and CASH to establish and agree a 'local eligibility framework' being fully compliant in its approach which will enable CASH to distribute grant funding that best supports the households who are in the most need locally. The vouchers will be available until 31st March 2022, allowing redemption until end of April 2022.
- H. Undertake the Central Government returns as necessary to ensure the second payment.
- I. The Section 151 officer and Council's Chief Accountant to be kept fully informed during the time of that this fund is operational.
- J. The Council's Community Partnership Officer will be the named key contact for this scheme.

Annex B

Funding breakdown for tranche 1 & 2:

Area	Amount	Organisation
Admin Expenses	£9,000	Citizens Advice (Nov-March 2022)
Advertising/banners Printing costs, letters, information, and Postage Costs	£7,500	SHBC Dec 2021 – Feb 2022
Food bank top-up if necessary	£10,000	Camberley Besom, West End, and Woking
Direct awards to families and individuals who meet the criteria	£ 150,000	Citizens Advice this will be paid in two instalments.
Sub-Total	£176,500	

