

# Surrey Heath Borough Council

## Executive

31<sup>st</sup> May 2022

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### Household Support Fund 2

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Sarah-Jane Croke, Housing Safeguarding & Support
<b>Strategic Director/Head of Service</b>	Louise Livingston, Head HR, Performance & Communication
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jayne Boitout - Community Partnership Officer
<b>Key Decision:</b>	no
<b>Date Portfolio Holder consulted</b>	20 May 2022
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All

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#### Summary and purpose

To agree the local approach to distribute the Household Support Fund as a matter of urgency, to those who are in the greatest need locally as the required criteria.

#### Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) The action plan outlined in 4.6 and the allocation of funding outlined in 4.5 of this report be agreed; and
- (ii) To delegate authority of the final details of this scheme and implementation of any further Household Support Grant Schemes to the Portfolio Holder Housing, Safeguarding and Support in conjunction with the Head of HR, Performance and Communications.

#### 1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 In October 2021, the government (DWP) introduced additional funding to target financial support for vulnerable households over the winter months, to be known as the Household Support Grant, this operated until 31st March 2022 and from a £500m National budget, Surrey County Council received an allocation that totalled £5,290,829.72, which is based on the population of each authority weighted by a function of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- 1.2 The grant is designed to enable local Council's to support vulnerable households with the increasing costs of food, energy, water, and other

essentials. During the initial period 1<sup>st</sup> October 21 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 22 £198,471 was distributed to those in need locally.

- 1.3 In the Government Spring Statement, a further Household Support Fund (2) was announced, to be operational from 1st April – 30th September 2022. This scheme has introduced changes in which the criteria now states that at least a 1/3rd is to be funded to residents of a pensionable age, and at least a further 1/3rd is to be funded to households with residents with children, with the remaining funds to other households genuinely in need of support.
- 1.4 Discussions are underway between SHBC and CASH to re-establish and agree a 'local eligibility framework and approach' to enable CASH to distribute grant funding that best supports the households who are in the most need locally.

## **2. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Executive reviews the proposed scheme and suggests any changes as appropriate.

## **3. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy**

- 3.1 Within the Council's Five Year Strategy this fund and we will take a positive approach to supporting all sectors of our community, including those who are most vulnerable and support our aims of:
  - Safeguard and support our vulnerable residents and support independent living for all.
  - Deliver projects that support young people and families.

## **4. Resource Implications**

- 4.1 The total allocation for Surrey Heath in this period is £159,183, which the first payment of 50% is in the process of being made from Surrey County Council.
- 4.2 The payment of the grant allocation retains the operational criteria as the previous scheme, in that it is in arrears and will be subject to the submission of the Management Information (MI) returns to DWP outlining the authority's grant spend and the volume of awards for period 1st April – 30th June 2022 (due 14th July) and for the period 1st April 2022 – 30th September 2022 due 14th October 2022. Please see annex A for a breakdown of the SCC Allocation.
- 4.3 Each Borough and District will have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes providing vouchers to households or making direct provision for food. The Government guidance sets out the required collaboration between partners and charitable organisations to successfully meet the policy intent within the agreed framework.
- 4.4 Surrey Heath Borough Council has an excellent working relationship with Surrey Heath Citizen's Advice who are both well placed and willing to deliver

this service for the period April – September 2022, with the Council contributing £10,000 towards staff costs, which is detailed in the funding breakdown.

4.5 4.5 Suggestions for the funding breakdown:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Admin Expenses	£10,000	Citizens Advice (May -30 <sup>th</sup> September)
Advertising/banners Printing costs, letters, information, and Postage Costs	£4,000	SHBC (May-30 <sup>th</sup> September)
Food bank top-up if necessary	£10,000	Camberley Besom, West End, and Woking
Direct awards to pensioners +families and individuals as set-out in the criteria	£ 135,183	Citizens Advice this will be paid in two instalments.
Sub-Total	£159,183	

4.6 4.6 Surrey Heath Proposed Action Plan April 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

- A. Utilising the client data information that the Council has readily available from the Council’s Tax Subsidy Scheme which gives 2322 households of which 1021 represent households where those of pensionable age reside. To send out a letter to this group providing them with all the options they can use to apply for this money including telephone, and online application. All others will also receive a letter with an application and details of the online form to enable application, also Citizens Advice will use the client details from the original HSF scheme to advise that the HSF2 has re-opened. All 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 and application forms 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. To promote via flyers through the meals at home service, and the social prescribers, and Surrey Heath Age Concern etc.
- D. Promote the scheme to Revs & Bens, Housing, and the contact centre to direct any enquiries to Citizens Advice or send out letters and information.
- E. Devise a local communications/Social media campaign that will look at other marketing tools such as advertising and update the Council website.
- F. Work with our community and statutory partners to promote everywhere, via twitter/Instagram.
- G. 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.
- H. For SHBC and CASH to finalise 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, allowing redemption until end of October 2022.
- I. Undertake the Central Government returns as necessary to ensure of the second payment.
- J. The Section 151 officer and Council's Chief Accountant to be kept fully informed during the time of that this fund is operational.
- K. The Council's Community Partnership Officer will be the named key contact for this scheme.

**5. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

- 5.1 This is ringfenced grant and as such any unspent grant will be returned to the originator. SCC require regular reconciliations and returns on spend to date."

**6. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 6.1 The scheme has been set up in accordance with the criteria stipulated in the guidance from central government.

**7. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 7.1 None

**8. Other Considerations and Impacts**

**Environment and Climate Change**

8.1 None

### **Equalities and Human Rights**

8.2 This grant is about supporting the more vulnerable groups in our community it's important that it is widely publicised to ensure that all those eligible apply for the assistance.

### **Risk Management**

8.3 There 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 within Surrey Heath.

8.4 If the monies are not distributed then the money will need to be returned to SCC, therefore there will be consistent review of what has been distributed and methods reviewed to ensure that all money in the fund is spent.

### **Community Engagement**

8.5 It's really important that the Community are fully engaged in this scheme to ensure that the funds are distributed, the action plan set out in 5.6 details the multiple mediums that will be used to reach different groups including, leaflets, social media posts, Heathscene article, letters, partner meetings, community events etc.

### **Annexes**

Annex A – SCC Fund Allocation and breakdown

### **Background Papers**

Insert text