

Public Document Pack



Corporate Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 25 January 2022 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David WR'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ged Philbin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Noel Hutchinson	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Angela Teeling	Labour
Councillor Sharon Thornton	Labour Party
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on a date to be agreed.*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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1. MINUTES	1 - 6
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 2 November 2021 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Hutchinson, P. Lloyd Jones, A. Lowe, G. Stockton, Angela Teeling, Wainwright and Wall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor N. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, C. Hill, I. Leivesley, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, S. Baker, P. Garnett, L Pennington-Ramsden and J. Yates

Also in attendance: None

**ITEM DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

Action

The Board took part in a minute's silence in honour of Councillor Howard, who had sadly passed away last month. The Chair paid tribute to him on behalf of members and colleagues.

CS16 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CS17 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

CS18 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

CS19 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES

The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meeting held on 15 July 2021.

The Board discussed:

- the possibility of future Member Induction Days being held in the evening and also including a tour of the Borough; and
- future Member seminars relating to planning and the Liverpool City Region.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CS20 ENERGY/CARBON REDUCTION UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on related activities aimed at reducing the Council's impact on the environment and CO2 emissions from Council activities. The Council started to measure its baseline for carbon emissions in 2006/7, emissions stood at 26338 tonnes of CO2. For 2020/21, the overall emissions had reduced to 9770 tonnes, a further reduction of 13.9%. To date, since 2008, the Council had reduced its carbon footprint by a total of 43%. The report highlighted the key figures for this year across each Council sector and provided an update on the following initiatives:

- street lighting LED programme;
- roof top solar on Council buildings and biomass boilers at Brookvale Leisure Centre and Norton Priory;
- solar farm on the former St Michael's Golf Course;
- public Sector Decarbonisation Fund;
- transport projects; and
- the Council's Climate Change Action Plan

Arising from the discussion, the Board:

- requested further information on the street lighting quality corridor and the street lights in the Hough Green Ward;
- discussed the Council plans to install electric car charging points and requested that Ward Councillors are included in future public consultation exercises around the location of these points; and
- commented that, where possible, consideration should also be given to including electric car

charging points as part of future planning applications.

RESOLVED: The report and the ongoing work be noted.

CS21 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1.4.21 TO 31.8.21

The Board was provided with a report from the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented details of corporate accident statistics with associated trends, from 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Officers commented that the report highlighted the national and local health and safety information, and together with performance and incident trends, these formed the basis for the recommended actions for 2019/20. In order to be proactive in health and safety management the report also indicated the number of completed risk assessments.

The report highlighted:

- Covid-19 still remained as the focal point for a large part of Local Authority working as the Council moved towards a cautious return to office buildings for some staff;
- Covid risk control measures were still in place across the authority to protect staff with the added protection of requests to regularly test and encouragement to take up the offer of vaccination. There was also the continued availability of the wellbeing programmes and courses;
- there was continued demand for personal protective equipment with central distribution still available;
- the pandemic reflection on this report showed a significant reduction in accidents and violent incidents compared to pre-pandemic years;
- lone working contact centre monitoring – registered users had increased from the same period as last year but actual use had decreased. An audit was currently taking place to understand non-use;
- fire audits were being actioned across all corporate buildings; and
- a review of security risk assessments for the 4 main council buildings as also taking place in light of the forthcoming Martyn's Law.

The Board discussed Member surgeries and it was suggested that when they re-commenced in the community,

risk assessments could be carried out. Also near misses – staff would be reminded of the reporting procedures for near misses in the next staff safety bulletin.

Strategic Director
– Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS22 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an analysis of Corporate Complaints received during the 2020/21 financial year.

The report outlined the two stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints; a corporate complaints trend analysis from 2012 to 2021; the nature of those complaints received and outcomes. In addition, the report also provided a summary on complaints and queries that had been received by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2020/21. It was noted that the Ombudsman had made 17 decisions during the year and upheld 6 complaints.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted.

CS23 PROGRESS UPDATES REGARDING THE DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME, DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Board received an update regarding the delivery of the Discretionary Support Scheme (DSS), Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and Universal Credit (UC).

With regard to the DSS, it was in its ninth year of operation. During 2020/21, 610 awards were made totalling £170,554. In addition it was noted that during the first half of 2021/22 (1 April to 30 September) the DSS had made 162 awards with a total value of £66,592. An analysis of applications by type and awards granted was set out in the report.

In respect of DHP, Members were advised that in 2020/21 grant funding of £527,810 was received and actual expenditure totalled £527,810 representing 1,645 DHP awards. This compared with 2019/20 where 1,391 awards were made and a total expenditure of £469,579. It was reported that the increase in the number of awards and total expenditure compared to the previous year had been caused by an increase in Government funding of £58,223. In 2021/22 the Council had received DHP grant funding of £394,099 which was a reduction of £133,711 compared to

the previous year.

In addition, Members received an update on the numbers of Halton residents claiming UC in Halton. According to the DWP as at 12 August 2021 there were 15,968 Halton residents now claiming UC. The report provided details on the UC caseload in Halton since April 2015.

It was agreed that a Working Party would be set up to review the DSS criteria for awarding payments.

RESOLVED: That the latest position regarding the Discretionary Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments and Universal Credit, be noted.

Strategic Director
– Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

CS24 COLLECTION FUND PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received a report on the Council's Collection Fund position on council tax and business rates. For the Year to 31 March 2022 it was currently forecast the income generated from council tax and business rates would be in line with budgeted expectations.

It was noted that the 2020/21 council tax net collectible debit (the billed amount) was £69.512m, to date £37.940m of this had been collected which resulted in a collection rate of 54.58%, down by 0.69% on the same period last year.

Members were advised that comparing the in-year collection rate to the same period last year was arguably misleading due to the number of payment deferral plans which were agreed due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. A more meaningful comparison would be the same period in 2019 which showed a decrease of 0.47% to the collection rate.

As well as in-year collections the Council also actively pursued council tax debt from previous years. For the year to date the Council had collected £1.116m of old year debt. This enabled the Council to reach the target council tax collection rate of 96%, used in setting the Council's net budget. For a number of years this had been set at 97% but had been reduced to the unknown impact of the pandemic.

In addition the report provided an update on the:

- Council Tax Reduction Scheme up to 30 September;
- Business Rates Position Statement up to 30

- September;
- Covid19 – Business Rate Reliefs; and
- Collection Fund Recovery Procedures.

RESOLVED: That the latest position regarding the Collection Fund be noted.

CS25 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2021/22

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets, and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

- Finance;
- Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services.

The Board:

- discussed the issues around recruitment of staff;
- thanked the ICT team for all their excellent work over the past months; and
- congratulated the Market staff for their fantastic work organising the recent craft market.

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring reports be received and noted.

Meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 25 January 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or

- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 25 January 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

**8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB42 2021/22 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, advising of the Council’s overall revenue net spending position as at 30 September 2021, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2021 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by between £4.0m and £5.843m. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2021, highlighting the schemes which had been revised.

It was noted that the forecast overspend position was inclusive of operational day to day net spend and cost and loss of income attributable to Covid. Operational net spend was forecast to be up to £5.108m above budget at year end; this figure being approximately 9.6% higher than the figure of £4.661m forecast at quarter one. All forecasts were based on current service demand and estimated future costs and income levels, as described in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and
- 3) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.16.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB43 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT 2021-22

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20 and Half Year Report 2020/21.

These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB44 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the Tax Base for its area and the Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

The Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent Band 'D' dwellings.

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2022/23 gave a base figure of 35,831 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council set the 2022/23 Council Tax Base at 35,831 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) Council set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	664
Halebank	526
Daresbury	186
Moore	333
Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,417

EXB45 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 –
2024/25 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The MTFS sets out a three-year projection of the Council's resources and spending and was based on information that was currently available. It was reported that limited financial information was available for 2022/23, with the Public Sector Spending Review being the first indicator of funding resources. The Spending Review was published at the end of October 2021 and covered the next three financial years. It was noted that details of the 2022/23 Local Government Grant Settlement were expected to be released in December 2021 on a provisional basis, with a final settlement expected in January 2022.

The Board was advised that the delay and uncertainty regarding 2022/2023 financial resources meant the financial information included within the MTFS was based on a large number of assumptions and best estimates. The financial forecast would be updated as and when further information was known. Appendix 1 therefore detailed the MTFS from

2022/23 – 2024/25 using a prudent estimate of the financial conditions over the course of the next three years. Appendix 2 presented the Reserves and Balances Strategy.

Reason for the Decision

To seek approval for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option of not maintaining a Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered. However, this would not follow good financial management practice, as the Medium Term Financial Strategy was a key element in informing the Council's financial planning and budget setting process.

Implementation Date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 would be implemented from 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2022/23 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and
- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2022/23 remains at the 2021/22 level of 21.55%

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB46 INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered the revenue budget proposals for 2022/23 as reported by the Operational Director – Finance.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecasted potential revenue budget funding gaps for the Council totalling £18.8m, over the next three years, with a gap of £12.0m for 2022/23. The forecast assumed that the Council would apply a general council tax increase of 1.99% in each year and would levy a 1% social care precept in 2022/23.

The initial set of savings proposals totalling £1.783m were listed in Appendix 1 and included an indication of

whether each saving proposal was permanent or temporary (one-off).

Members were advised that the Government would announce its Grant Settlement for Local Government in December, which would provide the detailed funding figures for 2022/23 for Halton. It was noted that a further set of budget savings proposals was currently being developed by the Budget Working Group, which would be recommended to Council on 2 March 2022, to deliver a balanced budget for 2022/23.

Reason for the Decision

To seek approval for the initial set of revenue budget proposals for 2022/23.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There was no alternative option, as failure to set a balanced budget would put the Council in breach of statutory requirements.

Implementation Date

The 2022/23 revenue budget would be implemented from 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the initial budget proposals for 2022/23 set out in Appendix 1.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB47 COUNCIL CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES (INCLUDES BREAD AND DAIRY)

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided a Preliminary Estimate and sought approval to commence a new procurement process for the supply of fruit and vegetables, and bread and dairy produce in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4. and using the ‘The University Caterers Organisation’ (TUCO) framework.

Details of the current contract were provided; this was due to expire on 31 December 2021. It was noted that annually the Council spent £500k on the supply of fresh fruit, vegetables, bread and dairy products across over 60 sites – this included the school meals service.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approves this

Strategic Director

Preliminary Estimated report in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4, to allow officers to undertake a call-off by mini competition in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.1 frameworks, as supported by the Council's Procurement Division, accessing the TUCO Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and Related Products Framework for a 2 year period, with the option to extend for a further two separate 12 month periods from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025, with an estimated total expenditure of £2m.

- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB48 AGENCY WORKER CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Executive Board received a Preliminary Estimate report which sought approval to commence a collaborative procurement process for the supply of Agency Workers in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4, as the estimated value was likely to exceed £1,000,000 per annum, across participating partners in the Liverpool City Region.

It was reported that since 2019 there had been a significant increase in the use and overall cost of agency workers in the Council for the reasons described in the report. It was imperative therefore that the Council sought to maintain access to a resourcing solution that met the needs of the organisation and delivered value for money. Continuing participation in a collaborative contract arrangement was the most effective way of achieving this. It was noted that a managed service ensured that the Council remained compliant with the prevailing legislation pertaining to the use of contingent resources (The Agency Worker Regulations) and the equity and safeguarding requirements of individual role types; this also allowed efficient call-off of workers through a single gateway.

The report provided Members with the spend across the current contract term, along with the savings achieved through use of the current contract.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the report; and
- 2) approves that Halton participate in the procurement of a new collaborative contract arrangement within the Liverpool City Region, to ensure that Council maximises purchasing power on a common category

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

of spend (supply of Agency Workers).

EXB49 DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT STATUTORY TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented a recommendation from the Regulatory Committee, for the Board to approve amendments to the current taxi licensing policies.

The Board was advised that in July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) published statutory guidance referred to as the ‘*Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards*’ (appendix A to the report). The focus within the standards was the protection of children and vulnerable adults and a number of recommendations were made. It was noted that the DfT expected these recommendations to be implemented by local authorities unless there was a compelling reason not to.

The report outlined the recommendations considered by the Regulatory Committee, the consultation process and the options available to them with regards to the guidance.

RESOLVED: That the following be adopted:

- 1) a requirement that all new applicants be checked against a central database prior to being licensed and that a National Register be updated with details of licence refusals and revocations;
- 2) a requirement for all licensed drivers to be registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service so that more frequent checks could be conducted; and
- 3) an amendment to the vehicle licensing policy requiring the display of a customer feedback notice in vehicles.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2021

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB55 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 2021 - 22

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Council's performance for the second quarter period – 1 July to 30 September 2021.

The Directorate Performance Overview Reports provided a strategic summary of the key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate and were aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. This information was central to the Council's performance arrangements and the Executive Board had a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

The information for each of the Council's Directorates, including the implementation of high-risk mitigation measures, were presented in the appendices: Appendix 1 – People Directorate (Adult Social Care) and Appendix 2 – Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the information contained in the reports and comments made in respect of these.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 25th January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. On 15th December 2020 the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group reviewed the current eligibility criteria for the Discretionary Support Scheme (The Scheme). This report provides details of that review and changes proposed to the Scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That;

- (i) The Topic Group's review of the Discretionary Support Scheme, be noted;**
- (ii) The criteria used to make awards under the Scheme, be amended as proposed in paragraph 3.4 below;**
- (iii) The Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources be recommended to exercise his delegated authority from Executive Board in liaison with the Executive Board Member – Corporate Services, with regard to recommendation (ii).**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On 15th December 2020 the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group received the report shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Topic Group reviewed the following areas relating to the Scheme;

- (i) Applicant eligibility criteria
- (ii) Needs which are not covered by the Scheme
- (iii) Applicants not eligible for awards
- (iv) Items currently awarded under the Scheme
- (v) Items awarded under the Scheme which have been temporarily relaxed given the availability of Covid Household Support grant funding

- 3.3 It was noted that where applicants are not eligible for awards under the Scheme, they will wherever possible be signposted to other agencies who may be able to assist them.
- 3.4 Following the review of the above areas, the Topic Group recommended the following changes to the Scheme Policy Document (see Appendix 2);
- (i) Section 8 – to provide for school meals where a decision is awaited following an application for free school meals
 - (ii) Section 8 - to exclude applications for non-emergency home repairs and improvements
- 3.5 The Topic Group also considered whether maintained schools will support families in hardship with the provision of uniforms. Children’s Services subsequently confirmed that this is the case. Schools either have spare or good quality returned uniforms they can provide or they will supply funds to buy uniforms. In terms of academy schools, they can access funding streams via their multi-academy trusts or the Department for Education should the need arise. Therefore, within the Scheme criteria it is proposed to continue with not providing school uniforms.
- 3.6 It was also agreed by the Topic Group to continue with claimants not being eligible for awards where benefit claims have been disqualified, disallowed or sanctioned.
- 3.7 The two changes proposed by the Topic Group in paragraph 3.4 above have been incorporated into the Scheme Policy Document, a draft of which is presented in Appendix 2.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The Scheme has the potential to affect all of the Council priorities.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 Awards made under the Scheme will continue to be monitored closely to ensure total expenditure remains within budget.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 The eligibility criteria and application process for the Scheme ensure that no particular groups of individuals are excluded.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

7.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix 1

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board Topic Group

DATE: 15th December 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Review of Discretionary Support Scheme

WARD(S): Borough-wide

5.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.2. At the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on 2nd November 2021 a report was received which presented the latest position regarding awards made under the Council's Discretionary Support Scheme (The Scheme). The Board asked that the Topic Group review the current eligibility criteria for the Scheme, as set out in this report.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Topic Group review the Discretionary Support Scheme and consider whether the Scheme's eligibility criteria require modifying.

7.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Discretionary Support Scheme (The Scheme)

3.1 The Scheme is now in its ninth year of operation. During this period the Scheme has been developed and amended where necessary by the Topic Group.

3.2 The attached appendices set out the following items;

Appendix A – applicant eligibility criteria for the Scheme

Appendix B – needs which are not covered by the Scheme

Appendix C – applicants not eligible for awards under the Scheme

Appendix D – items currently awarded under the Scheme

Appendix E – items awarded under the Scheme which have been temporarily relaxed given the availability of Covid Household Support grant funding

- 3.3 Where applicants are not eligible for awards under the Scheme, they will wherever possible be signposted to other agencies who may be able to assist them.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The Scheme has the potential to affect all of the Council priorities.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 Awards made under the Scheme will continue to be monitored closely to ensure total expenditure remains within budget.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 The eligibility criteria and application process for the Scheme ensure that no particular groups of individuals are excluded.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 7.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

Scheme Applicant Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for individuals applying to the Scheme are as follows;

Emergency Support

- Halton resident
- Aged 16+
- Have no alternative forms of help* **and**,
- Have not had 2 previous awards in the last 12 months **and the award is**,
- The only way of preventing risk to health or safety

Community Support

- Halton resident
- Aged 16 +
- In receipt or imminent receipt of an income-related benefit, or non-working Universal Credit **and**
- No funds to meet the need themselves **and**,
- There are no other alternative sources of help* **and**,
- Not have had 2 previous awards in the last 12 months **and the claimant is**
- Moving out of institutional or residential care **or**,
- Moving to more suitable accommodation **or**,
- Under exceptional pressure **or**,
- Setting up home as a part of a resettlement programme

Whilst the list of criteria above is not exhaustive there are some claimants who will not be eligible under the Scheme (see Appendix C).

** Where the customer is eligible under the Scheme policy, food and white goods may be provided prior to alternative sources. Alternatively if the customer is not eligible, the customer will be signposted to agencies that may be able to assist.*

Needs Which Are Not Covered By The Scheme

- A need which occurs outside the United Kingdom
- An educational or training need including clothing and tools
- A distinctive school uniform or sports clothes or equipment to be used at school
- Travelling expenses to or from school
- School meals
- Expenses in connection with legal proceedings such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses
- Removal or storage charges due to being re-housed due to a compulsory purchase order, a redevelopment or closing order, a compulsory exchange of tenancies
- Domestic assistance and respite care
- Any repair to council or housing trust property
- A medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service provided free of charge by NHS
- Work related expenses
- Debts to Government departments
- Purchase, installation, rental and call charges for a telephone
- Holidays
- A television or a radio, or a licence, aerial or rental charges for a television or a radio
- Garaging, parking, purchase, and running costs of any motor vehicle except where the payment is being considered for emergency travel expenses
- Housing costs including rent in advance payments or boarding charges
- Home repairs and improvements
- Council tax, water charges, arrears of community charge, collective community charge contributions or community water charges or shortfalls in rent
- Items which are covered on the claimants' home insurance

Claimants Who Are Not Eligible For Awards Under The Scheme

- Residents in care homes with no plans for discharge within 2 weeks
- Hospital in patients with no plans for discharge within 2 weeks
- People lawfully detained or on release on temporary licence
- Members of a religious order who are being fully maintained by it
- Certain students and people from abroad
- Benefit claim being disqualified, disallowed or sanctioned
- The claimant or their partner have received two awards within the last 12 months (unless good cause has been established)
- Claimants taking part in a strike
- Claimants in a situation caused by an overpayments due to fraud being recovered
- Claimants receiving hardship payments
- Claimant responsible for the emergency or situation
- Claimants who have home insurance which covers the need

Items Awarded From The Scheme**Food items**

Food Pack Type	Contents of food pack	Average spend per pack £
One Adult 1 - 2 Weeks (fp1)	Some fresh fruit apples, bananas, oranges, tinned fruit and veg, soup, bread, milk, sugar, tea/coffee, potatoes, beans, rice pudding, cordial, pasta, rice, cooking sauces, tinned meat such as steak and ham, soft cheese, tinned curry, gravy, instant mash, cereal, butter, eggs.	£40.00
Additional Adult (fp2)	Extra items from FP1 to top up shopping, such as extra tinned items, fruit, bread, milk, cereal etc. Things like potatoes, pasta, rice are not provided as these tend to be larger packs already in FP1	£20.00
Child Pack (fp3)	Extra items from FP1 to top up shopping, such as tinned veg and fruit, milk, plus jelly, sandwich paste, cordial, crackers, ravioli, tinned mac an cheese, noodles, pasta n sauce. Additional items such as baby food, wipes and nappies are added as required, this can increase the price substantially depending on what is required per request per child.	£15.00
2 Adult Pack (fp4)	Same as FP1, with a few items increased to quantity of 2.	£45.00
Toiletry Pack (fp5)	Toilet roll, toothpaste, shower gel/shampoo, washing up liquid, sanitary items, clothes washing powder, toothbrush, bleach, deodorant, bin bags.	£10.00
Vegetarian Pack (fp6)	Same as FP1 minus any meat items, extra vegetarian items provided instead such as vegan specific tinned goods plus extra fruit and veg.	£40.00
Gluten Free (fp7)	Same as FP1, anything with gluten is swapped for the gluten free version, such as free from pasta, free from corn flakes, free from butter, free from cooking sauces, free from bread and so on.	£50 (items more expensive)

Nut Allergy (fp8)	Same as FP1 with products containing nuts taken out.	£40.00
Cold Food Basket (fp9)	Tinned fish and meat, mug shots, tinned fruit, pancakes, mixed salad beans, sausage rolls, bread/wraps, jelly, butter, milk, crackers, cheese, all items ready to eat etc.	£40.00
Household Items (fp10)	Cutlery, plates, Tin opener	£10
Freezer Basket (fp11)	Various Veg, Meat, Mash, couple of ready meals, fish fingers, fruit, pies, chicken dippers, jacket potatoes, waffles, Quorn, vegan items and free from items	£40.00 standard £20.00 kids pack £50 gluten free £40 vegetarian

Other Items

Item number	Item
1	Bedding Only
2	Single Bed with bedding
3	Single Bed
4	Single Mattress
5	Single Bed Frame Only
6	Double Bed
7	Double Bed with bedding

8	Double Mattress
9	Double Bed Frame Only
10	Bunk Beds with Bedding
11	Bunk Bed
12	Cot with bedding
13	Sofa
14	Set of curtains
15	Cooker
16	Washing machine
17	Fridge
18	Kitchen equipment
19	Table and Chairs
20	Clothing
21	Toiletry Pack
22	Pram
23	Fuel
24	Removals
25	Cooker Connections

Relaxation Of Scheme Criteria Due To Household Support Grant Funding (6th October 2021 to 31st March 2022)

Item	Current award	New award
Help with gas and electricity	Single person £25 5 or more in the property £40	Single person £50 Couple £75 3 to 5 people £100 6 or more people £150
Food parcels	We do not award frozen items because of the risk of an applicant's electricity running out.	Provide frozen items in addition to long life items, but staff to ask applicant that they have enough electricity that ensures their fridge will not go off.
Provide replacements for broken items, such as mattresses, beds, cookers, fridges and washing machines.	We do not replace household items unless an extreme case is presented to us and the applicant has exhausted all other options.	Replace the broken item, this will allow the customer to have more of their money to support their household.
Customer on a fuel meter – with fuel debt	Normally we do not clear fuel debt.	Provide support (capped at £200) to clear energy debt and then make a fuel award based on the amount mentioned above.

<p>Help those paying for energy by direct debit to pay their bill or clear the energy debt.</p>	<p>Current criteria does not support customers who are paying for their energy by direct debit.</p>	<p>Relax the criteria to allow support for customers who pay by direct debit.</p>
<p>Customer has a form of income due to them in the next few days.</p>	<p>We would not pay in these circumstances, the customer would have to wait for their payment to come through.</p>	<p>Make an award, the customer would have earlier access to support.</p>
<p>Relax checking on household spend and go to a basic income and expenditure.</p>	<p>Current criteria would take into account all household spending.</p>	<p>Relax the income and expenditure, don't consider budgeting issues unless someone has spent unreasonable amounts on non-essentials.</p>

Discretionary Support Scheme

Appendix 2

Localised Support to Replace the Social Fund:

Discretionary Support Scheme

Discretionary Support Scheme

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Version	Amendments	Approved by	Updated
V1	Published	Members	March 2013
V2	Food priority. Point 4.1	Members	July 2013
V3	Fuel awards added. Point 3.3 & 6.3	Members	November 2013
V4	White goods priority. Point 4.1	Members	May 2014
V5	Inserted “non-working Universal Credit” into the table at section 4.1 & 5.12 of the eligibility criteria	Members	November 2014
	Appendix B - Amended wording to “ <i>The claimant or their partner have received two Discretionary Support awards within the last 12 months (unless good cause has been established)</i> ”	Members	November 2014
	Appendix B – Removed wording “ <i>People treated as in full-time relevant education</i> ”.	Members	November 2014
V6	Change to Fuel award. Point 3.3	Ed and Ian	19th October 2016

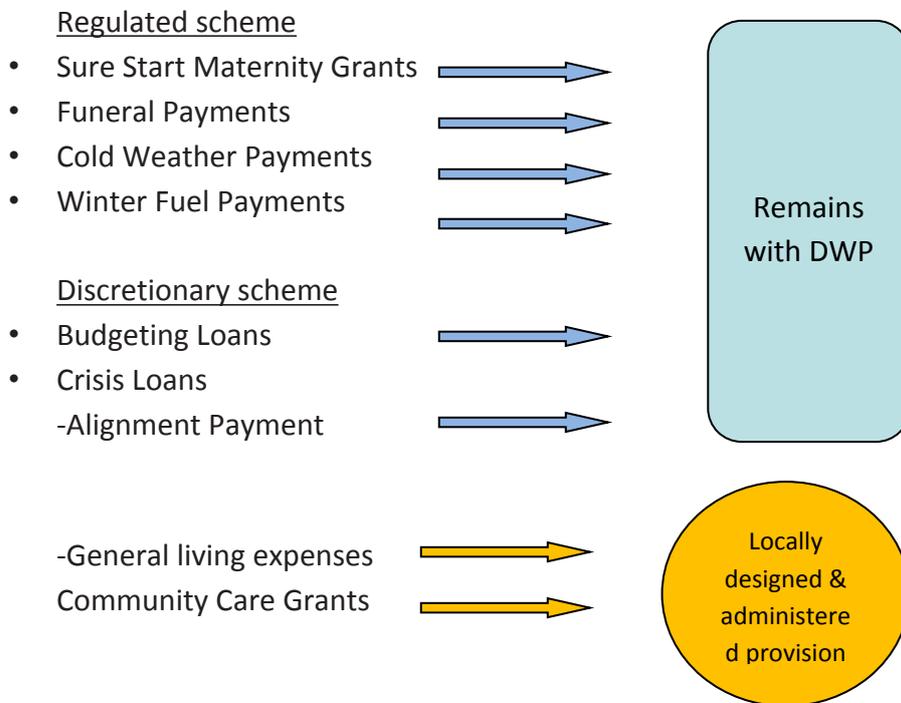
Discretionary Support Scheme

V7	Introduced Cash Payment Option Point 2.10 and removed signposting to foodbanks Point 4.1 COVID-19	Ed	20 th March 2020
V8	Appendix A – amended wording to two items to “School meals, except where a decision is awaited following an application for free school meals” and “non-emergency home repairs and improvements”	Ian	XXXXXXXX

Discretionary Support Scheme

1 Introduction

1.1 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolishes the discretionary Social Fund. Crisis Loans for general living expenses and Community Care Grants will be replaced by new discretionary local assistance schemes to be administered by local authorities from April 2013.



1.2 Current Department of Works & Pensions’ policy states that Crisis Loans are to meet immediate needs such as general living expenses or items needed following a disaster and entitlement is not dependent upon receipt of a benefit. Community Care Grants are non-repayable grants to enable vulnerable people to live in the community and are conditional upon receipt of an income related benefit.

1.3 This document sets out Halton Council’s proposed discretionary support scheme.

Discretionary Support Scheme

2 Discretionary Support Policy

- 2.1** The purpose of the proposed Discretionary Support Scheme is to provide a local solution to replace elements of the Social Fund which will no longer be administered by the Department of Works & Pensions, specifically Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans. The scheme will be administered by the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Service Division although it is anticipated that all services will be able to refer clients into the scheme.
- 2.2** The scheme will assist vulnerable people in meeting their needs for subsistence or financial support where they are unable to meet their immediate short term needs or where they require support to maintain their independence within the community.
- 2.3** The scheme will meet the particular needs of Halton's most vulnerable residents.
- 2.4** The scheme will ensure that there is high quality, consistent decision making including appropriate timescales.
- 2.5** The scheme will treat each applicant fairly and equitably.
- 2.6** The scheme will not cover those who are deemed to have sufficient income and savings.
- 2.7** The scheme will use alternative funding where appropriate e.g. Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989, Leaving Care Grants. This will help to protect the remaining funds for people who are in need.
- 2.8** The scheme will not cover needs which are more appropriately addressed by other discretionary funds or benefits. Specifically, it will not meet needs that should be addressed by Council Tax Reduction schemes, Discretionary Housing Payments or Department of Works and Pensions provision.
- 2.9** Consideration will be given to the nature, extent and urgency of the need in every individual case.

Discretionary Support Scheme

2.10 There will be no cash payments (unless there are no delivery/ click and collect options to the team).

3 Discretionary Support Scheme

3.1 The scheme will issue awards for two types of need: to people who require short term **Emergency Support** and to people who require **Community Support** to establish or maintain a home independently in the community.

3.2 Where applicants meet the relevant criteria and there are sufficient funds in the budget to make an award then awards may be made as follows.

3.3 Emergency Support

Awards may be made to assist with immediate short-term needs due to a circumstance that presents a serious risk to the health or safety of the claimant or their family **and** the award is the only way to prevent this. Awards will normally be made for **immediate** essential day to day living expenses only and will usually be made by way of a food parcel, or payment direct to supplier for items such as:

- Essential food items
- Essential toiletries
- Essential household items
- Essential Fuel Awards - *a maximum £15 (or £25 for a family of five or greater) top up in the summer (1st April to 31st October) and £25 (or £40 for a family of five or greater) top up in the winter (1st November to 31st March).*

3.4 There will normally be a limit on applications for the Discretionary Support Scheme to a maximum of two in any twelve month rolling period, although exceptions may apply.

Discretionary Support Scheme

3.5 Community Support

Awards may be made to assist vulnerable people in returning to or remaining in the community **or**,

to ease exceptional pressure on the family. Examples include:

- Moving out of institutional or residential care or,
- Moving to more suitable accommodation or,
- Under exceptional pressure or,
- Setting up home as a part of a resettlement programme **and**
- The disallowance of the Community Support award would significantly impede on the applicant's continued or potential independence in the community

3.6 Awards will normally be made by way of payment direct to supplier for items such as:

- Beds and Bedding
- Kitchen equipment
- Seating
- Removal expenses

3.7 Whilst the types of awards listed above are not exhaustive there are some forms of support that will not be provided. See Appendix A.

Discretionary Support Scheme

Criteria

4.1 Eligibility criteria for the scheme is:

Emergency Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton resident • Aged 16 + • Have no alternative forms of help* and, • Not have had 2 previous awards in the last 12 months and the award is, • The only way of preventing risk to health or safety
Community Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton resident • Aged 16 + • In receipt or imminent receipt of an income-related benefit, or non-working Universal Credit and • No funds to meet the need themselves and, • There are no other alternative sources of help* and, • Not have had 2 previous awards in the last 12 months and the claimant is • Moving out of institutional or residential care or, • Moving to more suitable accommodation or, • Under exceptional pressure or, • Setting up home as a part of a resettlement programme
<p>Whilst the list of criteria above is not exhaustive there are some claimants who will not be eligible to the Discretionary Support Scheme. See Appendix B</p>

** Where the customer is eligible under the Discretionary Support Scheme policy, food and white goods may be provided prior to alternative sources. Alternatively if the customer is not eligible, the customer will be signposted to agencies that may be able to assist.*

Discretionary Support Scheme

4.2 Priorities of the scheme

All requests for support will be considered on an individual basis with due account given to the vulnerability and personal circumstances of each customer. In the first instance priority will be given to those requiring emergency support

4.3 Other requests for help, which meet the relevant criteria, will be considered based on the level of impact that the award would have on the claimants' circumstances.

High: An award for the item requested will have a substantial and *immediate effect* in resolving or improving the circumstances of the applicant. e.g. a bed for a claimant taking up a first tenancy after leaving prison or a change of locks for claimant at risk of domestic violence

Medium: An award for the item requested will have a noticeable effect, although not substantial and immediate, in resolving or improving the applicant's circumstances. e.g. table and chairs for a care leaver taking up a first tenancy

Low: An award for the item requested will have only a minor effect in resolving or improving the applicant's circumstances. e.g. curtains for a claimant who wants to remain in the community

Discretionary Support Scheme

5. The Application Process

5.1 The application process will be clear, transparent and accessible and will be designed to provide consistent and fair decision making by gathering appropriate data and supporting information.

5.2 The application process will be flexible to avoid undue delays and reflect that some awards require more detailed information. Applications will be made via telephone for Emergency Support and via on line application and referral for Community Support.

5.3 Emergency Support:

A two stage application process will be established which will allow awards to be determined at the point of application.

Stage 1: Telephone eligibility check

5.4 Claimants will be asked to ring a dedicated Freephone number for an eligibility check. The phone line will be open Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am till 4.30pm. There will be no out of hours service

5.5 Details will be taken regarding the emergency and the financial circumstances of the claimant and their immediate family.

5.6 The initial check will establish if the claimant meets the broad criteria for Emergency Support. i.e. a risk to the health or safety of the claimant or family, an immediate and short term need, and alternative sources of help have been explored

5.7 Claimants who do not meet the above criteria will be sign posted to alternative agencies.

Stage 2: Telephone assessment

5.8 Claimants who meet the initial eligibility check will then be asked a series of more detailed questions.

5.9 A verification check will be undertaken to confirm the claimant's identification and financial circumstances. Where possible existing council records will be used.

5.10 A decision will usually be made at the time of the initial telephone call and the claimant verbally informed of the decision

Discretionary Support Scheme

5.11 Community Support:

Applications will be made via an online application which will be completed by a professional body such as Social Worker, Probation Officer or Housing Officer.

5.12 An eligibility check will be built into the on line process. The initial check will establish if the claimant meets the broad criteria for Community Support. i.e. a vulnerable person establishing or maintaining a home independently in the community or, a family under exceptional pressure, in receipt of an income related benefit or non-working Universal Credit and alternative sources of help have been explored

5.13 The initial eligibility check will allow those that do not meet the criteria to be informed instantly thereby avoiding the need for them to complete unnecessary applications. They will also be offered on line advice regarding alternative sources of support.

5.14 Claimants who meet the initial check requirements will then be asked a series of more detailed questions.

5.15 A verification check will be undertaken to confirm the claimants' identification and financial circumstances. Where possible existing Council records will be used. The verification of the claimants' personal circumstances will be confirmed by the fact that the application has been received from an authorised referring agency

5.16 Most awards will be determined within 14 days of application.

5.17 Notifications of awards will be made in writing to the referring agency

Discretionary Support Scheme

6. Methods of Payment

6.1 The scheme will provide appropriate methods of awarding support and allow the authority to decide to whom the award should be made based upon the individual circumstances of each applicant.

6.2 Cash payments will not be made.

6.3 Consideration will be given to making awards as follows:

Food / Fuel —————> Direct payment to supplier

White Goods —————> Direct payment to supplier

Household Goods —————> Direct payment to supplier

Discretionary Support Scheme

7. Rights of Review

~~7.1 The claimant or their authorised representative will have the right to request that the decision be reviewed.~~

7.2 Reasons for a review of a decision could include:

- Application refused
- Method of payment
- Value of award

When requesting a review of a decision, the applicant will be expected to give reasons why they feel the original decision should be reviewed and provide additional information to support the request if appropriate.

7.3 The review process has one stage:

Stage 1 – Officer Review

Senior Officer carries out a review of the initial decision and consideration will be given to the claimants' reasons for review.

There is no time limit in which to ask for a Review.

Emergency Support applications will be reviewed within 24 hours. All other requests within 5 working days

Discretionary Support Scheme

8. Appendix A

Excluded Needs not covered by the Discretionary Support Scheme

- A need which occurs outside the United Kingdom
- An educational or training need including clothing and tools
- A distinctive school uniform or sports clothes or equipment to be used at school
- Travelling expenses to or from school
- School meals, except where a decision is awaited following an application for free school meals
- Expenses in connection with legal proceedings such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses
- Removal or storage charges due to being re-housed due to a compulsory purchase order, a redevelopment or closing order, a compulsory exchange of tenancies
- Domestic assistance and respite care
- Any repair to council or housing trust property
- A medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service provided free of charge by NHS
- Work related expenses
- Debts to Government departments
- Purchase, installation, rental and call charges for a telephone
- Holidays
- A television or a radio, or a licence, aerial or rental charges for a television or a radio
- Garaging, parking, purchase, and running costs of any motor vehicle except where the payment is being considered for emergency travel expenses
- Housing costs including rent in advance payments or boarding charges
- Non-emergency home repairs and improvements
- Council tax, water charges, arrears of community charge, collective community charge contributions or community water charges or shortfalls in rent
- Items which are covered on the claimants' home insurance

Discretionary Support Scheme

9. Appendix B

Excluded claimants not eligible to awards of the Discretionary Support Scheme

- Residents in care homes with no plans for discharge within 2 weeks
- Hospital in patients with no plans for discharge within 2 weeks
- People lawfully detained or on release on temporary licence
- Members of a religious order who are being fully maintained by it
- Certain students and people from abroad
- Benefit claim being disqualified, disallowed or sanctioned
- *The claimant or their partner have received two Discretionary Support awards within the last 12 months (unless good cause has been established)*
- Claimants taking part in a strike
- Claimants in a situation caused by an overpayments due to fraud being recovered
- Claimants receiving hardship payments
- Claimant responsible for the emergency or situation
- Claimants who have home insurance which covers the need