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**Decision Session - Executive Member for  
Finance and Performance**

**7 October 2020**

Report of the Assistant Director, Customer & Digital Services

**Covid-19 – Self-Isolation Financial Support**

**Summary**

1. This paper provides the Executive Member for Finance & Performance with the relevant information on the Government's self-isolation financial support (also known as Test and Trace Support Payment) and the council's scheme for approval.

**Recommendations**

2. The Executive member is asked to:
  - a) Note the details of the self-isolation scheme.
  - b) Approve the council scheme and discretionary scheme attached at Annex A & Annex B.
  - c) Approve that decisions on discretionary payments are made by the service administering the council's discretionary welfare support.

*Reason: To provide financial support to financially vulnerable residents who have been formally asked to self-isolate through the Governments track and trace scheme.*

**Background**

3. The Government announced on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 that it is going to provide financial support for financially vulnerable customers who have to self-isolate due to covid-19 infection. Individuals who are required to self-isolate and who meet the benefits-linked eligibility criteria will be entitled to £500. This will be payable as a lump sum. This also includes the self-employed who cannot work from home

during the 14 day self-isolation period. The detailed guidance is attached to this paper at Annex C.

4. These changes came into effect on 28 September 2020, alongside the legal duty to self-isolate. Local authorities are expected to have their systems in place by 12 October; individuals who are eligible prior to that date will be able to make a backdated claim. The scheme will run until 31 January 2021. During this time, the government will continue to review the scheme, including the impact of COVID-19 incidence levels.

### **Self-isolation Scheme**

5. The council's scheme is prescribed by Government regulations. To be eligible for the Self-Isolation Support payment, an individual must:
  - have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace either because they've tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
  - be employed or self-employed;
  - be unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
  - be currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.
6. Residents will need to make an online application (or a telephone application if they are digitally excluded) and submit as supporting evidence:
  - a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate (this will include a Unique ID number);
  - a bank statement; and
  - proof of employment, or, if they are self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that their business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.
7. There is a discretionary fund (Annex B) for individuals who do not qualify for the Test and Trace Support Payment but require corresponding financial support to self-isolate. Payments under this element of the scheme will be made at the discretion of the council

and taking into account the resident's financial circumstances. The funding provided for this element of the scheme is a one off sum. If payments are made above the allocated amount on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 this will be a cost to the council not central government. This paper recommends that in these circumstances the decision is delegated to the service administering the council's current discretionary welfare support and is based upon Government guidance and the councils discretionary scheme (Annex B).

8. In making any payments the council will be required to undertake all proper checks in relation to applications including using the Government Searchlight facility, HMRC records and NHS test and trace data.
9. The scheme will be fully publicised and support provided to those residents who cannot make a digital application. Applications can be made through third parties such as support agencies but any payment is made directly into the qualifying customer's account.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

10. There financial implications associated with this paper is that the funding for discretionary payments is a one off payment through to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 any spend above this amount will be a cost to councils own budget. The funding for the core scheme is met in full by Central Government.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

The Government is providing new burdens funding to cover the cost of setting up this scheme including any staffing costs incurred by the council.

### **Equalities**

This report will impact on all communities equally.

### **Legal**

No implications

### **Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property**

No implications

### **Risk Management**

11. There key financial risks associated with this paper is that the discretionary funding is a one off payment to the end of the scheme period (31<sup>st</sup> January 2021). Any additional awards above the funding provided will be a cost to the council.

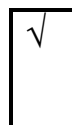
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**Chief Officer responsible for the report:**

Pauline Stuchfield  
Assistant Director Customer and Digital Services

**Report Approved**



**Date**  
01/10/20

**Specialist Implications Officer(s):**

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers: None**

**Annexes**

**Annex A – Council’s self-isolation scheme**

**Annex B – Councils discretionary self-isolation scheme**

**Annex C – Detailed government guidance**