

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Major Projects
Date	24 March 2023
Present	Councillor Ayre and Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods) Pauline Stuchfield (Director, Customer and Communities) Paul Sanderson (Income Manager)

31. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that he might have had in respect of business on the agenda. They confirmed they had none.

32. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session of the Executive Member for Finance and Major Projects held on 13 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

33. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

34. Household Support Fund 4

The Executive Members considered a report detailing the Household Support Fund (HSF) scheme from April 2023 to March 2024.

The Director of Customer and Communities reported that this was the sixth scheme and was aimed at vulnerable households to prevent an escalation of problems during the cost of living crisis. The aim was to ensure that people were supported to make a claim and also that the underlying

causes would be investigated. She highlighted that the scheme details must be submitted to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) by 17 May 2023.

The details of the scheme were explained, as outlined in Table A of the report, and it was noted that payments would be made in both June and automatically in November, as the scheme now covered a 12 month period.

The Income Manager confirmed the application process and explained that all working age Council Tax Subsidy claimants would be sent a letter, with follow up reminders, to apply for support. A new application must be completed to confirm the claimant's bank details. The newly created adviser post would follow up on those not reapplying and investigate the underlying causes as mentioned above.

The delivery plan would be submitted by early May and would be monitored and reported through the six monthly welfare and financial inclusion report.

The Director thanked the staff teams that had enabled CYC (City of York Council) to get the support systems in place quickly, and across the city.

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods stated that she welcomed the funding and the significant improvements to the scheme, whilst she acknowledged that it was a relatively small amount available in comparison to need. She noted that it remained important to press central government for more financial support. She highlighted that capacity had been built into the scheme through working with partners in the charity and voluntary sector as well as the community hubs and advice centres. The support for those without digital access to services was also welcomed. She thanked the staff teams involved in the delivery of the schemes and confirmed she supported the officer recommendations.

The Executive Member for Finance and Major Projects supported the comments of the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods. He reflected that this was the sixth time the council was in receipt of the grant over the three year period, following the first incarnation when Members and Officers worked from home to ensure that support was put in place at the start of the pandemic. He highlighted that the payments were not a permanent measure and there was a need to consider the future impact once the support has ended. He noted the need to continue to work with central government to face the significant financial issues ahead.

The Executive Member placed on record his thanks to all the officers involved in administering the programme of support for businesses and individuals during the pandemic and cost of living crisis. He recognised the hard work involved in setting up the systems and implementing a rapid

response and noted that CYC had been among the first of the local authorities to make payments at the start of the pandemic.

He then;

Resolved: That;

- a) the council's HSF scheme April 2023 – March 24 (as detailed at Annex A of the published report) be approved.
- b) that any changes to the scheme that do not fundamentally alter the purpose be delegated to the Section 151 officer in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance & Major Projects.
- c) the discretion to pay claims made within the broader scope of the scheme guidance as set out by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (as detailed in Annex B of the published report) be delegated to the Head of Customer & Exchequer Services.

Reason: To provide financial support to the city's most financially vulnerable residents from April 2023 to March 2024 arising from the ongoing cost of living increases.

Cllr N Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 10.01 am and finished at 10.17 am].