

Notice of a public

Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance

Meeting to be held in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods (for agenda item 4 Winter Grants Funding)

To: Councillor Ayre (Executive Member for Finance and Performance) and Cllr Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods)

Date: Monday, 15 February 2021

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Remote Meeting

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Post Decision Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item* on this agenda, notice must be given to Democratic Services by **4:00pm on Wednesday 17 February 2021**.

*With the exception of matters that have been the subject of a previous call in, require Full Council approval or are urgent which are not subject to the call-in provisions. Any items that are called in will be considered by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5:00pm on Thursday 11 February 2021**.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member is asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda.

2. **Minutes**

(Pages 1 - 6)

To approve and sign the minutes of the Decision Session held on 18 January 2021.

3. **Public Participation**

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee. The deadline for registering at this meeting is at **5.00pm on Thursday 11 February 2021.**

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill out an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting whose details can be found at the foot of the agenda.

Webcasting of Remote Public Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this remote public meeting will be webcast including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The remote public meeting can be viewed live and on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

During coronavirus, we've made some changes to how we're running council meetings. See our coronavirus updates (www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy) for more information on meetings and decisions.

4. Winter Grants Funding

(Pages 7 - 10)

This paper recommends to the Executive Member for Finance & Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safe Communities, that the funding shortfall in maintaining the winter grants scheme to 31st March 2021 is met through the extended York Financial Assistance (YFAS) scheme. This was supplemented in 2020/21 by £1m of council funds to support residents in hardship during the covid pandemic.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Name: Angela Bielby

Telephone: (01904) 552599

Email: a.bielby@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following, please contact the Democracy Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 (01904) 551550

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

| | |
|---------|---|
| Meeting | Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning (for agenda item 4 Urgent Business - Additional Restrictions Grant) and Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods (for agenda item 5 Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report) |
| Date | 18 January 2021 |
| Present | Councillors Ayre (Executive Member for Finance and Performance), Waller (Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning), and Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods) |

1. 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.

2. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 3 and 14 December be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member at a later date.

3. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak on agenda item 6 [Urgent Business - Additional Restrictions Grant] at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Martin Spencer noted that York York's business community is here to help CYC to get vital grant assistance to the maximum number of York's independent traders. They were grateful for the adjusting of the criteria for the ARG and supported the proposed amendments. He made a number of

suggestions with reference to market traders and noted that the suggested changes would help those traders to get the grants.

Kevin Tuohy gave thanks for the review of the ARG and hoped that the Shambles Market traders would be included in the scheme, particularly with tax returns needing to be made by 31 January. He noted that market traders were in a difficult position now that payment holidays had ended. He highlighted the benefits of the market and the diversity that local independent traders brought to the city.

4. Urgent Business - Additional Restrictions Grant

This was taken as the next item.

The Executive Members considered a report that presented the review of the criteria for the Additional Restriction Grants (ARG), as a number of businesses were ineligible under the criteria following the implementation of the scheme in November 2020.

The Interim Director of Place gave an update to the ARG report presented to the Executive Member at his Decision Session held 12 12 November 2020. She outlined the paper including the changes to the eligibility criteria. She noted that York was one of the fastest authorities to roll out the payment of the grant.

The Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning thanked officers for producing the report promptly and for ensuring the rapid payment of grants and business eligibility checks. He recognised that there was insufficient resources for some sector and he noted that a longer period of restrictions would heighten the need for the lifting of restrictions. He added that issues with the supply chain had been reported to the economic growth team, He thanked the Federation of Small Businesses, Chamber of Commerce, and other partners for their support. He supported the recommendations.

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods supported the additional funding coming forward. The Executive Members thanked officers and it was:

Resolved:

- a) That the criteria for ARG grants be extended to cover:
 - Eligible businesses trading at least 75% in York where the proprietor is not a York resident if support is not available the proprietor's Local Authority of residence.

- Accommodation businesses which are run outside of the NNDR regime, instead paying Council Tax, will be eligible for payments equivalent to the lowest level of grants for businesses in the rates system. This would provide grants of
- £1,334 per 28-day qualifying restriction period to such businesses
- In recognition of their strategic importance in enabling employment and the financial challenges that are currently being faced, nurseries will be eligible for payments at the higher level of £3000 per 28 day qualifying period. Other childcare businesses will be encouraged to apply under the existing criteria, with their sector added to the list of those eligible.
- Supply chain businesses which have not received mandatory rates-related grants, where they have lost at least 75% of their income due to closure of their customers, will be eligible for one-off top-up grants of £25k.

- b) Should any element of this scheme be changed by subsequent government guidance it is proposed that the Executive Member delegates the decision under this scheme to the Chief Finance Officer (s151) in consultation with the Executive Member Finance and Performance/Executive Member Economy & Strategic Planning, with changes approved retrospectively in public at the next available Executive Member decision session

Reason: To support to York businesses which are affected by the Lockdown and Tier 3 restrictions but not eligible for Local Restrictions Grant (Closed) funding.

5. Financial Inclusion/Welfare Benefits Update Report

The Executive Members considered a Financial/Welfare Benefits 2019/20 outturn report and the 2020/21 mid-term position. Annex A detailed Financial Inclusion projects funded to 31/3/20 and Annex B detailed Financial Inclusion projects funded for 2020/21. The report included:

- the ongoing impact of Coronavirus as well recent welfare benefits changes in York, including Universal Credit, and importantly the support available for residents in dealing with these challenges;
- an update on benefits statistics and performance as administered by the council including the York Financial Assistance Scheme;

- other financial inclusion (FI) activity during 2020/21 including delivery of FI grant schemes.

The Assistant Director Customer and Digital Services noted the support that the financial inclusion grants provided and she acknowledged the hard work of staff in the community hubs and welfare support schemes. She detailed support that was available and highlighted the work taking place for digital inclusion. She then gave a housing update noting the support that housing officers had given to tenants during the pandemic. She explained that the housing hardship fund had been set up to extend existing funding and that all landlords had been written to remind them of support available. She also noted the work of the financial inclusion group.

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods commented that the paper underlined how many people were in financial difficulty due to the pandemic, which the council was responding to. She gave recognition to the range of support available and commended partnership working. She urged people to contact the council and citizens advice as early as they could for support. The Executive Member for Finance and Performance welcomed the support available particularly in relation to free school meals and support for businesses. He noted that additional income had been brought in to support residents and noted the importance of digital inclusion.

It was then:

Resolved:

- a) That the report and the progress made in supporting residents who are financially vulnerable be noted.
- b) That the commencement of the 2021/22 Financial Inclusion grants scheme as described in paragraph 54 of the report be approved.

Reason: To ensure Councillors, residents and stakeholder groups are aware of the ongoing financial inclusion activity across the city and use of associated funding including covid-19 support and to be updated on welfare benefits changes and their impacts.

6. Health & Safety Update Report

The Executive Member considered a report that provided:

- the Health & Safety (H&S) 2019/20 outturn and the 2020/21 mid-term report from the Head of Health & Safety;

- an update on the action being taken to address the risks raised in the report;
- key areas of work for 2021;
- client overview of the performance of Health & Safety (H&S) shared service formed by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and City of York Council (CYC) which operates under a partnership agreement

The Assistant Director – Customer and Digital Services gave an update on the key areas of work and the Shared Head of Health and Safety outlined the CYC Annual Report 2019-20 which was included at Annex A of the report. He noted the impact of the pandemic, namely on schools as a result of changing guidance. He explained that health and safety themes remained regarding incident reporting, child aggression and physical and violence aggression. He noted the work to mitigate this and added that it was expected that all staff should be treated with respect. Aside the pandemic he noted that the biggest issue was the Fire Safety Bill for which fire risk assessments had been undertaken and control measures had been amended.

In response to questions from the Executive Member he explained that:

- It was thought that the increase in reporting child aggression was due to a willingness to report.
- The decrease in physical and verbal aggression was due to officers not going out because of the pandemic.
- With regard to officers health and safety working from home, the new Be Safe assessment had been rolled out. This allowed for early identification of chronic conditions. Additionally, the Joint Health and Safety Committee monitored the pandemic impacts, display screen assessments (DSEs). In terms of staff welling, this was through the results of the staff survey.
- It was hard to quantify the return for investment from the cost recovery schemes for capital projects.

It was then:

Resolved:

- a) That the report covering the 18 month period including the council's response to managing and responding to significant H&S risks including those relating to the pandemic ne noted;
- b) That the performance of the Shared H&S Service be noted;
- c) consider any areas of H&S risk management for further reporting at future decision sessions.

Reason: To ensure the Executive Member and residents are assured that H&S services are appropriately managed and resilient and the

council has proper arrangements in place for managing and responding to H&S risks.

Cllr Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.11 pm].



Executive Member for Finance & Performance

15th February 2021

Report of the Assistant Director, Customer & Digital Services

Winter Grants Scheme Funding

Summary

1. This paper recommends to the Executive Member for Finance & Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safe Communities, that the funding shortfall in maintaining the winter grants scheme to 31st March 2021 is met through the extended York Financial Assistance (YFAS) scheme. This was supplemented in 2020/21 by £1m of council funds to support residents in hardship during the covid pandemic.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve:
 - a) Funding the winter grants scheme through to 31st March 2021 through use of the extended YFAS funding at an estimated cost of £200k.

Reason: To provide financial support to the city's most financially vulnerable residents through the ongoing covid-19 pandemic.

Background

3. On Sunday 8 November 2020, the government announced a package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The COVID Winter Grant Scheme saw new funding issued to councils to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs.
4. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to the council, who has administered the scheme and provided direct

assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This has include some families who normally have access to free school meals (FSM) during term time. The funding allocation for York is £416,729.

5. Although the funding from the DWP was not specifically earmarked for free school meals, York along with many other authorities allocated an element of the budget (£200k) for this purpose as no further similar funding is due from the DfE until April 2021. Takeup of the element of the grant for food and bills has been high and without additional funding being found will need to close within the next few weeks and possibly by week ending 5th Feb 2021.

Winter Grant Expenditure

6. Table 1 below sets out the position of funding as at 5th February 2021.

Table 1

Winter Support Grants

05/02/2021

Households Helped =

739

Payments

| Household | Food | | Utilities | | Mobile and Phones | | Other | | Total | | split* |
|--------------|------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|------------|-------------|---------------------|--------|
| | No | £ | No | £ | No | £ | No | £ | No | £ | |
| Families | 572 | £ 114,680.00 | 471 | £ 52,637.07 | 96 | £ 1,880.01 | 0 | £ - | 1139 | £ 169,197.08 | 89% |
| Other | 113 | £ 12,790.00 | 81 | £ 7,029.73 | 8 | £ 319.99 | 0 | £ - | 202 | £ 20,139.72 | 11% |
| Total | 685 | £ 127,470.00 | 552 | £ 59,666.80 | 104 | £ 2,200.00 | 0 | £ - | 1341 | £ 189,336.80 | |
| Split** | 98.8% | | | | 1.2% | | | | | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|------|
| No of applications received | | 1248 |
| No of refused applications | | 167 |
| No of pending applications | | 122 |
| No of awarded applications | | 739 |
| No of outstanding applications | | 220 |

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Total Spend | £ 189,336.80 |
| Budget | £ 216,729.66 |
| % spent | 87% |

* split of household must be at least 80% in favour of Families

**split of expenditure must be at least 80% in favour of food and utilities

7. The payments and outstanding applications in the table reflect December and January and with 2 months remaining. The request in this paper is for an additional £200k which will ensure adequate funding to the end of the 2020/21 financial year. The existence of the Winter Grant has, in effect, diverted some of the pressure that would have resulted in more claims to YFAS and so it is considered to be the appropriate source of alternative funding at this time.

Recommendations

8. This paper recommends that the Executive Member for Finance & Performance approves the additional funding of £200k to maintain the scheme to 31st March 2021. Any unused funding at the end of the scheme will be returned to YFAS.

Consultation

9. This is a Central Government scheme and there was no consultation with City of York Council on its implementation. The council did consult with its third sector partners in the scheme's promotion and this has been effective in providing support to over 600 financially vulnerable families across the city.

Implications

10.

Financial

The financial impact of this decision is that it will reduce the remaining balance of approximately £625k in the extended YFAS scheme by £200k in the current financial year. The Winter Grant has in effect supplemented the support intended by the YFAS scheme and the remaining balance will be carried forward in 2021/22 to continue to provide financial support to those families in hardship.

Human Resources (HR)

There are no HR implications.

Equalities

This report will impact on all communities equally.

Legal

No implications

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

No implications

Risk Management

11. The key risk associated with this paper is that by providing this support there may be less money available in the 2021/22 financial year to continue supporting residents made financially vulnerable by the covid-19 pandemic.

Author responsible for the report:

Chief Officer responsible for the report:

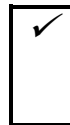
David Walker

Pauline Stuchfield

Head of Customer & Exchequer Services

Assistant Director Customer and Digital Services

Report Approved



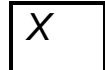
Date

5th February 2021

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:

[Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance on Thursday, 3 December 2020, 10.00 am \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

Annexes

None