
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance
Date	7 October 2020
Present	Councillor Ayre

22. Declarations of Interest

The Executive Member confirmed that he had no personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, nor any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, to declare in the business on the agenda.

23. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 24 September 2020 be approved, to be signed by the Executive Member at a later date.

24. Public Participation

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

25. Covid-19: Local Restrictions Support Grant

The Executive Member considered a report which outlined the financial support scheme for businesses required to close during any local lockdown restrictions put in place to manage coronavirus.

Under the government scheme, first announced on 9 September, the council would receive two elements of funding:

- a) Funding to meet the cost of payments to businesses with a rateable value (RV), based on an assessment of the number of eligible hereditaments and
- b) An additional 5% for discretionary grants to businesses with no rateable value, or those not required to close but severely affected by lockdown.

Payments of up to £1,500 could be made in each case for each three-week qualifying period. For discretionary payments, a fixed sum of £750 was recommended. Details of the council's scheme were set out in Annex A, with government guidance in Annex B.

In response to questions from the Executive Member, Officers confirmed that:

- The actual sum to be provided by government for discretionary grants was not known at this stage
- The amount of funding for businesses with RV was fixed and could only be challenged if there was a miscalculation.

The Executive Member commended the team for their quick response to the government announcement.

Resolved: (i) That the details of the government's scheme be noted.

(ii) That the council scheme and discretionary scheme attached at Annex A to the report be approved.

(iii) That the value of the discretionary payment (£750, as set out in paragraph 12 of the report) be approved.

Reason: To provide financial support to financially affected businesses in York during any local lockdown.

26. Covid-19: Self- Isolation Financial Support

The Executive Member considered a report which outlined the financial support scheme for financially vulnerable residents who had to isolate due to Covid-19 (Test and Trace Support Payment).

The government scheme to provide a £500 lump sum to those individuals required to self-isolate who met the benefits-linked eligibility criteria had come into effect on 28 September and would run to 31 January 2021. Detailed guidance was attached at Annex C to the report. Local authorities must have systems in place by 12 October. York's scheme, set out in Annex A, was prescribed by government regulations and included a discretionary fund (Annex B) for residents who did not qualify for the Test and Trace Support Payment but needed financial support to self-isolate. The scheme was designed for online applications, but support would be provided for applicants unable to apply online.

Officers at the meeting indicated that the council would receive £66k from government for the core scheme. To date, 34 applications had been received but these were yet to be checked against the eligibility criteria.

In response to questions from the Executive Member, officers confirmed that:

- The government allocation to the discretionary scheme was a one-off payment, with no additional funding available
- All applications would be given a unique reference number to ensure there was no duplication, and for audit purposes
- Arrangements would be made for residents who could not apply online to provide the required documentary evidence.

The Executive Member asked to be kept updated on the progress of the discretionary scheme.

Resolved: (i) That the details of the self-isolation scheme be noted.

(ii) That the council scheme attached at Annex A and the discretionary scheme at Annex B be approved.

(iii) That approval be given for decisions on discretionary payments to be 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 government's track and trace system.

Cllr N Ayre, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 1.00 pm and finished at 1.20 pm].