

## For General Release

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Interim Corporate Director for Housing</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Distribution of Household Support Fund Grant</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>David Padfield, Interim Director of Housing</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Patricia Hay-Justice, Cabinet Member for Housing</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2020-2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>We will live within our means, balance the books and provide value for money for our residents.</i></li><li><i>We will focus on tackling ingrained inequality and poverty in the borough. We will follow the evidence to tackle the underlying causes of inequality and hardship, like structural racism, environmental injustice and economic injustice.</i></li><li><i>We will focus on providing the best quality core service we can afford. First and foremost, providing social care services that keep our most vulnerable residents safe and healthy. And to keep our streets clean and safe. To ensure we get full benefit from every pound we spend, other services in these areas will only be provided where they can be shown to have a direct benefit in keeping people safe and reducing demand.</i></li></ul> <p>The grant funding discussed in this report will make a direct contribution towards tackling ingrained inequality and poverty.</p>	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT</b> <p>This report concerns the distribution of £3,013,689.49. However this sum is entirely grant funded by the Department of Work &amp; Pensions (DWP) so has no direct impact on existing Council budgets.</p>	
<b>KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: 0321HOU</b> <p>This decision needs to be taken under SPECIAL URGENCY.</p> <b>REASON FOR SPECIAL URGENCY:</b> <p>This extra money was announced late and considerable work has been done to allocate it in a sensible and effective manner. Timelines have been further frustrated by the absence of key officers. Our plans require much of this money to be committed before Christmas and we are rapidly running out of time to do so. Not allocating the money in time would make our spend plans less effective and most likely result in some of the monies not being used, and therefore lost.</p>	

**The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Interim Corporate Director of Housing the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below:**

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Having carefully read and considered this report and the requirements of the Council's public sector equality duty in relation to the issues detailed in the body of the report, the Council's award of Household Support Grant funding will be distributed in line with Appendix A to this report.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Household Support Fund is for **£3,013,689.49** as allocated by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP). The fund is ring-fenced. However the DWP will pay the fund in arrears upon receiving financial returns in January & April 2022.
- 2.2 To mitigate financial risks to the Council and a robust monitoring and reporting system will be put in place. A cost code has been created for the Household Support Fund (C13803). All spend relating to the fund will be made against the cost centre to enable easier tracking of spend. Work will be done with Finance and monthly meetings will be set up so the cost centre and spend can be monitored, and issues can be highlighted and mitigated quickly.
- 2.3 Service will be responsible for recording and tracking their day to day spend from the fund. This will be to allow monitoring of what the fund is being spent on (DWP return) and how much is left in each areas budget. Work will be done with individual services to establish the best practice for reporting, based on how and what they are awarding.
- 2.4 Although all services will be responsible for tracking their own spend, they will need to supply monthly spend reports to the Single Point of Contact (SPOC). The SPOC will be responsible for over-seeing and monitoring the fund and it's spend as well as completing and returning sped information.
- 2.5 To help mitigate the risk of underspend the monitoring process will also identify underspending in services that can be used and other areas.
- 2.6 The above will ensure that:
- a) The data collected will be sufficient for the DWP MI returns to ensure the monies is paid back
  - b) There is no over spend
  - c) The fund is utilised to the fullest
  - d) The Council can track and report the number of residents supported and what support they received

### **3. DETAIL**

3.1 The apportionment of the fund will be as set out in Appendix A of this report.

### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 Appendix A was drawn up in consultation with all relevant departments. It has been discussed with all Corporate Directors and all Cabinet Members.

### **5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

5.1 The Household Support Fund will be made available to Local Authorities with the purpose of providing targeted financial support for vulnerable resident over the winter. Croydon has been awarded £3,013,689.49 to be used between 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. This is ring fenced grant income and there is no risk to the GF budgets of the Council.

#### **5.2 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations**

This is ring fenced grant income and there is no risk to the GF budgets of the Council

#### **5.3 The effect of the decision**

Appendix A sets out the planned areas of spend in order to meet the requirements of the grant.

#### **5.4 Risks**

Failure to spend the awarded funds could result in the requirement to return any unspent grant or for a reduction in future Homelessness Prevention Grant awarded

#### **5.5 Options**

Appendix A sets out the options for spend that meet the requirements of the grant.

#### **5.6 Future savings/efficiencies**

Not applicable, this is Grant income for specified usage within the current financial year

Approved by: Matthew Davies, Interim Director of Finance

### **6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The funding will be allocated and spent in accordance with the Household Support Fund guidance provided to Local Authorities by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Local authorities are required to provide two reports to DWP detailing how the funding has been distributed, approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

Approved by Doutimi Aseh, Interim Director of Legal Services & Interim Deputy

Monitoring Officer

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 7.1 The proposal provides for the recruitment of two temporary Grade 6 staff for 6 months in order to handle the associated workload. These staff will be recruited in line with the Council's recruitment procedure or internal agreed procedures. If any other issues should arise these will be managed under the Council's policies and procedures.

Approved by: Jennifer Sankar, Head of HR Housing Directorate, and Sustainable Communities, Regeneration and Economic Delivery Directorate, for and on behalf of Dean Shoemith, the Director of Human Resources

## **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 8.1 The distribution of these funds will benefit the most disadvantaged groups in the Borough. An EQIA has been prepared and is attached at Appendix B to this report.

Approved by: Denise McCausland, Equality Programme Manager

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 9.1 There is no identifiable environmental impact from this report.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 10.1 The alleviation of poverty is likely to have a positive impact on crime and disorder.

## **11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 11.1 The apportionment of the grant as set out in Appendix A has been subject to discussion with all relevant officers and is based on the Council's priorities, assessed demand, and our ability to distribute the grant in an effective manner.

## **12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 12.1 The Council could choose not to spend this grant. However, to do so would be detrimental to agreed priorities. Various distributions were considered, with the final choice being based on the criteria set out in 11.1 above.

## **13. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 **WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING**

**OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?**

No

**13.2 HAS A DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT (DPIA) BEEN COMPLETED?**

No

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**CONTACT OFFICER:** Natasha Jebbison, Gateway Technical Manager

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**  
Appendix A: The Agreed Distribution of LB Croydon's Household Support Grant  
Appendix B: Equality Impact Assessment

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None