

(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 06 (2022/23)

## Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

### The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

**Subject:** Discretionary Fund (Council Tax Rebate)

#### Details of Decision taken

To confirm the allocation of the Discretionary Fund of £307,350

#### Reason for Decision

In February 2022 the government announced a package of support for rising energy costs.

This was a £15 billion package of support which included a £144 million discretionary funding for billing authorities to support any household in need, regardless of their council tax band, known as the Discretionary Fund.

Councils can determine locally how best to make use of the discretionary funding. This could include households living in property valued in bands E to H that are on income related benefits or those where the energy bills payers are not liable for council tax. Councils can also use the discretionary fund to offer targeted 'top-up' payments to the most vulnerable households in bands A to D (for example, those on means tested benefits), or to offer discretionary support exceeding £150 per household.

Sevenoaks District Council have been given £307,350 as part of the Discretionary Fund, this must be spent by 30 November 2022

The allocation will be spent as follows:

- £150 to all households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction in bands E to H on 1 April 2022. There are 502 households who fall into this bracket.
- £150 to all households with a disabled reduction in bands F to H on 1 April 2022. There are 117 households who meet this criteria.
- £150 to all households with a SMI disregard or with a SMI exemption in bands E to H on 1 April 2022. There are 251 households who meet this criteria.

This would utilise £130,500 of the allocation.

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The remaining allocation will be used as a £30 top-up to all those in bands A to D in receipt of Council Tax Reduction. There are 5,602 households that fall into this bracket. These households have already received £150 from the Council Tax Rebate mandatory scheme.

The balance of £8,790 would be held back for those in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Council Tax & Recovery Manager

**All Documents considered:**

The government guidance for the support for energy bills

Sevenoaks District Council Discretionary Scheme policy

**Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:**

**Financial implications**

The Council's discretionary funding allocation is £307,350. The proposals above would leave a balance of £8,790 which can be allocated to those in exceptional hardship.

The funding needs to be spent by 30 November 2022. Any remaining funding after this date will be required to be repaid to government.

**Legal Implications and Risk Assessment**

The Council is implementing this scheme in line with the government guidance and requirements

The Council needs to be alert to the threat of fraud and will therefore take appropriate steps to minimise the risk

**Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)**

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The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users


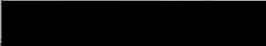
Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service Consulted

Chief Officer - Customer & Resources  
Council Tax & Recovery Manager

Details of any conflicts of interest

a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker

b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict

Decision taken by:	Councillor Matthew Dickens Finance & Investment Portfolio Holder
Signed by Portfolio Holder	
Date of Decision	3.10.22
Record made by:	
Date of record:	04/10/22

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