



**EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD
Cabinet Member**

REF No: 068/23

A1 Service Area	Communities and Regulatory Services
A2 Title	Top Up of Discretionary Housing Payment Fund
A3 Decision Taken By	Cabinet Member
A4 Chief Officer	Please print name: Thomas Deery Please sign name: T. Deery (Approval by email 26/09/23)
A5 Leader / Deputy Leader	Please print name: Cllr Simon Slater Please sign name: S. Slater (Approval by email 26/09/23)
A6 Date of Decision	26 September 2023

Confidentiality

A7 Is this Decision confidential by containing exempt information as described in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972?	No
A7.1 If yes, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972.	NA

Conflict of Interest

Are there any conflicts of interest to declare? No

(If “Yes” please contact the Chief Executive before making the Decision. A note of dispensation should be attached).



Scrutiny

A8 Which Scrutiny Committee should this decision be submitted to? *(Please tick as appropriate)*

Scrutiny (Value for Money Council) Committee

Scrutiny (Regeneration Development and Market Hall) Committee

Scrutiny (Health and Wellbeing) Committee ✓

Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee

<p>B1 What is the Decision?</p>	<p>To place some homelessness funding received by DLUHC grant into the Discretionary Housing Payment funding pot in order to expand and maintain the operation of the same throughout 2023/24.</p>
<p>B2 What are the reasons for the Decision?</p>	<p>The Discretionary Housing Payment (hereafter DHP) fund is a vital tool in preventing homelessness. DHP's¹ are special payments paid from a separate fund and are not a form of Housing Benefit. They are a way of helping renters if the Housing Benefit they get is not enough to pay their rent which is an area of increasing demand at a time of rising rent in the private sector.²</p> <p>Typically the fund will be used to pay the shortfall between the Housing Benefit the applicant receives and their actual rent for a period of 13 weeks to address ongoing affordability. Applicants explain what they will be doing during this period that will improve affordability after the initial 13 week reprieve offered by receiving DHP support, e.g. entering employment, or moving house.</p> <p>DHPs can also be used in a variety of other circumstances, such as payments to secure new accommodation e.g. rent advance or a deposit.</p> <p>Once the fund has been spent in any financial year no more DHP's can be awarded. The fund is currently experiencing a high level of applications, as a result applicants who may otherwise have received an award are being rejected.</p> <p>The Council has been awarded a Homeless Prevention Grant to maximise prevention of homelessness activity and reduce reliance upon temporary accommodation (Appendix 2), with a top awarded in June 2023 (Appendix 3). Recent contact with the DLUHC specialist advisor confirms that this is a legitimate usage of the grant, and one that is implemented at other Local Authorities (Appendix 1).</p>
<p>B2 Alternative options considered and rejected?</p>	<p>This decision forms part of a package of measures, and hence is being taken forward alongside other options.</p>

B3 What are the contributions to Corporate Priorities?	Standing up for our communities
B4 What are the Human Rights considerations?	There are no Human Rights issues arising from this decision.

Financial Implications

B5 What are the financial implications?	<p>The main financial issues arising from this decision are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the central government contribution, English and Welsh LAs are able to top up DHP funding up to a maximum of two and a half times this figure using their own funds.³ • The DLUHC letter at Appendix 3 states that the Council will receive £140,739 to maximise support for the Ukrainian cohort into sustainable accommodation, but it may also be used to support with wider homelessness pressures. • Both grants are ring-fenced for 2023-24 and are to be spent in adherence with the principles set out in the letters at Appendices 2 and 3, by the 31st March 2024.
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Revenue	2023/24	2024/25
Homelessness Prevention Grant Top Up	(80,000.00)	Nil
Contribution to Discretionary Housing Payment Funding	£80,000.00	Nil
Impact on the MTFS	Nil	Nil

The finance section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit:	<p>Please print name: Anya Murray</p> <p>Please sign name: A. Murray (Approval by email 26/09/23)</p>
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¹ <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/housing-benefits/discretionary-housing-payments>

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-66824019>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-benefit-subsidy-circulars-2023/s12023-discretionary-housing-payment-government-contribution-for-english-and-welsh-local-authorities-for-financial-years-ending-march-2024-and-march>

Policy Framework

B6 Is the Decision wholly in accordance with the Council's policy framework?	Yes
B6.1 If No, does it fall within the urgency provisions (Part 3 of the Constitution)?	NA
B6.2 Has it got the appropriate approvals under those provisions?	Yes
B7 Is the Decision wholly in accordance with the Council's budget?	Yes
B7.1 If No, does it fall within the urgency provisions (Part 3 of the Constitution)?	NA
B7.2 Has it got the appropriate approvals under those provisions?	Yes

Equalities Implications

B8 What are the Equalities implications:
<p>B8.1 Positive (Opportunities/Benefits):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is able to support more East Staffordshire residents who have a low income.
<p>B8.2 Negative (Threats):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified.
B8.3 The subject of this decision is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality impact assessment is not required.
B8.4 NA

B8 What are the Equalities implications:

Risk Assessment

B9 What are the Risk Assessment implications:

B9.1 Positive (Opportunities/Benefits):

- The Council is able to increase the number of households with housing affordability problems who are assisted directly through the Housing Benefit system, potentially reducing future homelessness presentations.

B9.2 Negative (Threats)

- There is insufficient demand to fully expend the funds by the end of March 24. If there are excess funds in early February 24 we will approach large scale landlords to ensure tenants in difficulty are aware of the support available.

B9.3 The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

Legal Considerations

B10 What are the Legal Considerations:

B10.1 The main legal issues arising from this decision are as follows:

- Any payments from the DHP fund must be made in accordance with the conditions of funding as set out in the letter from DLUHC at Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team

Please print name: Glen McCusker – Locum Solicitor

Please sign name: G. McCusker (Approval by email 21/09/23)

Sustainability Implications

B11 What are the Sustainability implications:

B11.1 The proposal would not result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures). The positive/negative impacts are set out below (please refer to guidance notes).

B11 What are the Sustainability implications:
B11.2 NA
B11.3 NA

Health & Safety Implications

B12 What are the Health & Safety implications:
B12.1 A Risk Assessment has not been carried out and entered into Safety Media for all significant hazards and risks because there are no significant hazards or risks arising from this decision.
B12.2 Any financial implications to mitigate against these hazards and risks are considered above.
B12.3 NA
B12.3.1 NA
B12.3.2 NA

Key Decision

B13 Is this a Key Decision? No

Note: A Key Executive Decision is one where:

1. **REVENUE** – Any contract or proposal with an annual payment or saving of more than £100,000
2. **CAPITAL** – Any capital project with a value in excess of £150,000
3. **A decision which significantly affects communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.**

B13.1 If this is a Key Decision, is this an urgent decision such that a delay caused by use of the Call-in Procedure would <u>seriously</u> prejudice the public interest?	NA
B13.2 If yes, has the Mayor or in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor or in his/her absence the Chair of the relevant Scrutiny Committee agreed	NA

B13.1 If this is a Key Decision, is this an urgent decision such that a delay caused by use of the Call-in Procedure would <u>seriously</u> prejudice the public interest?	NA
that the decision will be exempt from Call-in?	

NOTE: If this decision is subject to the Call-in Procedure it will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of 3 working days after publication – unless 10 Members of the Council call in the decision.

Please send the original signed document to andrea.davies@eaststaffsbc.gov.uk