

REPORT TO	DATE
Chief Executive, in Consultation with the Leader of the Council	04/05/20



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
Urgent Decision Under Section 35 of the Council's Constitution: Covid-19 Response Budget	Finance, Property and Assets	Deputy Director of Finance

Is this report a key decision? (i.e. more than £100,000 or a significant impact on more than 2 Borough wards)	Yes
Is this report confidential?	No

## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To seek approval of the establishment of a budget to support the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That Council approve the creation of the Covid-19 Response budget to the sum of £1.138m.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

3. Residents, businesses and the council require support as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The government has provided grant funding of £1.138m to support South Ribble Council. A budget will be created to provide this support.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the United Kingdom, affecting businesses, individuals and in particular the most vulnerable in society.
5. This Government have set out a suite of support measures including financial support. The Government has provided grant support totalling £3.2bn to local authorities across the country, £1.138m of which has been allocated to South Ribble Council.
6. This Council is already supporting its residents and businesses during this period and will continue to do so in the coming months. The proposed budget

will enable the Council to provide local support to ensure help is given to those residents and businesses that need it the most.

## **CORPORATE OUTCOMES**

7. The report relates to the following corporate outcomes:

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	✓
Health, Wellbeing and Leisure	✓
Place, Homes and Environment	✓

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

Our People and Communities	✓
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## **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

8. Covid-19 has had significant impacts for residents and businesses in the borough. The direction to stay at home and socially distance, the closure of shops and businesses which is a consequence of this directly effects the social, health and economic well-being all of society.
9. South Ribble Council recognise we are best placed to identify appropriate local levels of support. Support has already been provided to businesses and residents, the latter through its community hubs.
10. The council obligations to quickly support its community and businesses are apparent and in order to do this it is proposed to create a £1.138m Covid-19 Response Budget. This will be used to fund schemes and initiatives that support those residents and businesses where other forms of support are inadequate or do not exist.

## **PROPOSALS**

11. The Government has allocated £3.2bn to support local authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. South Ribble Council received £1.138m of this funding.
12. The council is already supporting its residents and businesses, incurring costs and lost income as a result of this. This funding will be used to create a Covid-19 response budget that will support current and future initiatives during this uncertain period.

13. Appendix 1 is a letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The grant is not ringfenced however the letter emphasises that this funding should be used as a priority to support:

*Social care - both adult and children's, public health services, shielding the most vulnerable, homelessness and rough sleeping, supporting the NHS and managing excess deaths.*

14. The letter however also recognises the impact that restrictions have had on the income that local authorities collect including council tax, business rates and fees and charges. As such, it is also proposed that this funding will also be used to mitigate the impact that this will have on South Ribble income budgets.
15. Expenditure against the budget will be managed using existing controls and financial procedures. However, the s151 officer will provide oversight of the budget including regular weekly monitoring to ensure all expenditure against the budget is managed appropriately. Any virements from the budget will also be managed within existing regulations.

## **CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**

16. There is no legal requirement to undertake formal consultation.

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

17. The Government have requested that local authorities administer this grant and so there are no other options considered.

## **AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

18. None

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

19. The grant will be spent in line with Government requirements

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT**

20. This budget will support those businesses and residents in most need including those on low incomes.

## **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

21. The grant funding from Government is not ringfenced but will be spent to support council residents, businesses and the council.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

22. There are no concerns with what is proposed here from a Monitoring officer/legal point of view. Ordinarily a decision to create a budget like this would be for full Council to make. However, clearly there are circumstances of genuine urgency – hence it is appropriate to utilise the Standing Order 35 procedure. This is all about the council being in the best position possible to support its residents and business through this challenging period.

## APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

### Appendix 1 - Covid-19 Funding Distribution - Letter to LA Leaders from SoS

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
James Thomson	01257 51 5025	01/05/20

## Approval of Urgent Decision

I confirm that I consider this decision is one of genuine urgency in accordance with section the Council's constitution:



Councillor David Howarth  
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

Dated: 19/05/20

Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of the report, I approve the recommendations contained in the report in accordance with the Council's constitution in consultation with the Leader of the Council:



Gary Hall  
Chief Executive

Dated: 19/05/20



Councillor Paul Foster  
Leader of the Council

Dated: 19/05/20