

REPORT TO	DATE
Chief Executive, in Consultation with the Leader of the Council	25 th September 2020



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
Urgent Decision Under Section 35 of the Council's Constitution: Test and Trace Support Payment of £500	Leader	Director of Neighbourhoods and Development

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 for the payment of Test and Trace Support Payment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Chief Executive and S151 Officer of South Ribble Council be given delegated authority to approve payment of the COVID19 Test and Trace Support Payment in line with the government guidance and the council's own procedure.
3. That a budget of up to £50k is approved to bring in additional staffing if required to manage this scheme. This will be initially funded through the £1.3m Covid-19 grant fund but reimbursed when funding outlined in the Government guidance for the administration of the scheme is received.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

4. The scheme is in line with government requirements to administer grants to individuals who are affected by COVID19 and are unable to work during the self-isolation period.

CORPORATE OUTCOMES

5. The report relates to the following corporate outcomes:

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	✓
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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

6. In response to Coronavirus the Government announced there would be support for residents who are struggling to self-isolate as directed due to financial constraints. The support payment is to help ensure that people on low incomes self-isolate when they test positive or are identified as a contact, and to encourage more people to get tested.
7. The Government have provided information on the scheme, but we are still waiting for the final official guidance and eligibility criteria.
8. The cost of the scheme will be funded by way of a grant payment from government immediately to cover the cost of providing support payments to eligible individuals and all cost for running the scheme will be recoverable.
9. The council is administering and managing the schemes essentially on behalf of government and is responsible for the administration and payment of the grant monies. The additional costs involved in the administration of this scheme is intended to be reimbursed by the government using new burdens funding.

PROPOSALS (e.g. rationale, detail, finance, procurement)

10. Individuals who are required to self-isolate and who meet the benefits-linked eligibility criteria will be entitled to £500. This will be payable as a lump sum.
11. Provisional estimates of total grant payments will depend on the level of COVID-19 incidence in South Ribble. At current levels of incidence, the government estimate that 800 people per day across England will be eligible for the Test and Trace Support Payment. Therefore, based on this estimate we could expect two people per day to become eligible. It is expected at least double the number to account for unsuccessful applicants.
12. The Test and Trace Support Payment will come into effect on 28 September 2020. Local authorities are expected to have their systems in place by 12 October; individuals who are eligible prior to that date will be able to make a backdated claim. At the start of the scheme, local authorities should also be prepared for a backlog of cases to work through.

13. The process will involve residents making an online application (or a telephone application if they are digitally excluded) and submitting as supporting evidence:

- a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate (this will include a Unique ID number);
- a bank statement; and
- proof of employment, or, if they are self-employed, evidence of self-assessment returns, trading income and proof that their business delivers services which cannot be undertaken without social contact.

14. The process for administering these support payments is being developed and will be scrutinised by finance and internal audit. The process will be finalised once further government guidance has been received.

15. Any individual caught falsifying records to gain any support payments may face prosecution and will be required to pay the support monies back.

16. Central government will cover the payments to eligible applicants, as well as the administration of the scheme. Funding will be given immediately to get the scheme running.

CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

17. A dedicated email has been set up to deal with general enquiries from all residents requiring support.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

18. The Government have requested that Local Authorities roll out this grant scheme there are therefore no alternatives.

AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS

19. .None

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. The process is being developed and will be reviewed by Audit so that measures are in place to ensure fraudulent activity is minimised.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT

21. The support payments are available to all eligible residents.

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

22. Detailed Government guidance has not yet been released and therefore a process cannot be signed off at this stage. All relevant services within the council will create a final process to be signed off by the Director of Neighbourhoods and Development, S151 and Chief Executive, this will be checked by finance and audit.

23. The Government Q&A also suggests there will be a discretionary fund available to the local authority. This is likely, as was the case for the discretionary business grants, to require significant investment in council staff time to administer. In addition, the Government has released another business grants scheme (Local Restrictions Support Grant) that the council will have to administer. As such it is likely the council will have to bring in additional staffing resources to manage this Test and Trace Support scheme. This will be funded through Government grants.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

24. The payments proposed are in accordance with a Government scheme which is funded through Central Government grants and administered by the Council. Clearly as a responsible public authority we must act with speed to assist those affected residents covered by the scheme. It is also important of course that we have procedures in place to avoid fraud and/or abuse. Internal Audit have advised in this regard.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

None

Jennifer Mullin
Director Neighbourhoods and Development

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
Jennifer Mullin	01772 625329	25 th September 2020

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: 28 September 2020

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:

Chris Sinnott

Chris Sinnott
Deputy Chief Executive
(Agreed in the absence of Gary Hall,
Interim Chief Executive)

Dated: 28 September 2020



Councillor Paul Foster
Leader of the Council

Dated: 28 September 2020