

REPORT TO	DATE
Chief Executive, in Consultation with the Leader of the Council	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2020



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
<b>Urgent Decision Under Section 35 of the Council's Constitution: Test and Trace Support Payment of £500</b>	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)	<b>No</b>
Is this report confidential?	<b>No</b>

## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To seek approval to increase the budget for the Test and Trace Support Payment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That an additional budget of £75,000 is approved to make the payments. This additional funding will be allocated from the CV-19 funding.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

3. 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

4. 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

5. 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.
6. The Government have provided information on the scheme and have now provided several versions of the official guidance and eligibility criteria.
7. 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.
8. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November the Council received a grant determination letter from the Minister of State for the Department of Health and Social Care detailing the allocation of funds to pay for this scheme. Within the letter the distribution methodology for the allocation of funding to local government was set out. The funding allocated to South Ribble Borough Council:

Test and Trace Payment £38,000.00 = 76 claims

Admin costs of both schemes £25,654.40

Test and Trace Discretionary Payment £22,884.85 = 45 claims

9. As of the 18<sup>th</sup> November the Council has received 156 applications for the support payment and so far, 54 applications have been accepted with 46 Test and Trace payments and 8 Discretionary payments. The other claims either being rejected or awaiting verification.
10. As detailed above within the next two weeks the Council will have issued grants exceeding the grant allocation issued to the Council.

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

11. The provisional estimates of total grant payments were dependent on the level of COVID-19 incidence in South Ribble at the time of determination early September. As the current levels of incidence are significantly higher than in early September the grant issued to the Council does not cover the full cost of the scheme.
12. The guidance issued by the government does state that the UK government will provide funding to meet the full estimated costs of delivering the Test and Trace Support payment and the discretionary fund. This includes the set-up,

programme and administration cost. In the first guidance received it did state there will be a 'down-payment' based on expected programme costs with additional funding provided as necessary on a monthly basis.

13. In additional guidance received this statement has been removed and replaced with the programme costs will be subject to reconciliation and authorities may need a top up payment where they make payments that exceed their initial allocation. The discretionary payment is a fixed four-month envelop that will not be topped up or subject to a reconciliation.
14. The Council is close to reaching our initial allocation of 76 claims. The programme is not due to finish until the end of January 2021. Therefore, funding is requested of £75,000 which equates to a further 150 Test and Trace support payments.
15. The process for administering these support payments has been developed and has been scrutinised by finance and internal audit. The process is subject to change following any additional guidance.
16. Any individual caught falsifying records to gain any support payments may face prosecution and will be required to pay the support monies back.

## **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 has been developed and has been reviewed by Audit at every stage 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.** The budget of £75k will be initially funded through the unringfenced Covid-19 grant to SRBC totalling £1.5m. However, the Council will reclaim the cost of the support payments from Government through the reconciliation process outlined in the report.

## **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

**23.** 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:
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## **Approval of Urgent Decision**

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



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Councillor David Howarth  
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

Dated: 19 November 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:



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Gary Hall  
Chief Executive

Dated: 19 November 2020



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Councillor Paul Foster  
Leader of the Council

Dated: 19 November 2020