

CABINET
29 OCTOBER 2020

**TEST AND TRACE STANDARD SUPPORT PAYMENTS AND
DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS SCHEMES POLICIES**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates Members on the new Test and Trace Support Payments and Discretionary Payments Schemes and matters ancillary thereto.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the implementation of measures by Government to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020, as a result of Test and Trace and if eligible, receive a payment, through either the Test and Trace Standard Support Payments Scheme or the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme, to assist with their finances, be noted.

2.2 That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (Internal Services) to agree the details of the Policies respectively, for the Test and Trace Standard Support Payments Scheme and the Test & Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme, as set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

2.3 That in-year amendments to the Policy for the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme, be delegated to the Strategic Director (Internal Services), in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3. Background and Discussion

3.1 As part of its COVID-19 response, the Government announced a package of legislative measures known as the Self-isolation Payment Scheme (under the Test and Trace Support Scheme), to ensure that those who are required to self-isolate (on or after 28 September 2020) receive a payment to assist their finances and to encourage compliance with the legislation.

3.2 Local authorities are required to set up their self-isolation support schemes to be in place by 12 October 2020. Those who start to self-isolate from 28 September, will receive backdated payments, once their local authority schemes are set up.

3.3 Individuals will be entitled to a payment of £500 from the Council if they meet *all* the following Test and Trace Standard Support Payments Scheme eligibility criteria:

- Make an application to the Council in the prescribed form and provide all the evidence and verification required;
- Are a resident in the Borough;
- Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they have tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive;
- Are employed or self-employed;
- Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
- Are currently receiving one of the following 'qualifying benefits':
 - Universal Credit;
 - Working Tax Credit;

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- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Housing Benefit; or
- Pension Credit.

- 3.4 Individuals who are not in receipt of a 'qualifying benefit' as referred to above, but meet all the other criteria, will be eligible for a £500 payment under the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme.
- 3.5 Individuals will not be entitled to apply for a payment under both the Schemes.
- 3.6 Both Schemes are available to all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria and are told to self-isolate on or after 28 September 2020.
- 3.7 At the present time, the Government has stated that both Schemes will be available until 31 January 2021.
- 3.8 The Government has confirmed that it will reimburse the Council for all payments made under the Test and Trace Standard Support Payments Scheme. An initial allocation of £48,000 has been made. The payments made will be reconciled so that any money overspent or underspent compared to the initial allocation will be topped up or repaid respectively.
- 3.9 The Council has been allocated a fixed amount of £28,869.01 from the Government for the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme. The Government has announced that no additional monies will be available. The Council therefore reserves the right to amend this Scheme at any time to ensure the funds go to those who face the most financial hardship. Any in-year amendments made to this Scheme will be agreed by the Strategic Director (Internal Services) in consultation with the Leader.
- 3.10 The Council has also been allocated a sum of £27,142.40 towards the costs of administering both Schemes.
- 3.11 The Policies respectively, for the Test and Trace Standard Support Payments Scheme and the Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme are as set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

4 Relationship to the Corporate Plan

N/A.

5 Financial, legal, staffing and other administrative implications and risk assessments

Financial Implications	As per paragraphs 3.8 to 3.10 of the report
Legal Implications	The Council has implemented both Schemes in line with Government requirements and guidance. All information and data provided by applicants will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, which have been published on the

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	<p>Council's website.</p> <p>A Data Sharing Agreement has been signed with the Department of Health & Social Care to enable the Council to check that an applicant has a valid NHS Test & Trace notification of the need to self-isolate.</p>
Staffing Implications	The Schemes will be administered by the Revenues & Benefits Service.
Admin Implications	The Schemes will be administered as set out in Appendices A and B. The Council has received a sum of £27,142.40 towards the costs of administering the Schemes.
Risk Assessment	The Council will need to be alert to the threat of fraud and will therefore take appropriate steps when reviewing the applications to minimise this risk.

6 Appendices

Appendix A: Test and Trace Standard Payments Scheme Policy

Appendix B: Test and Trace Discretionary Payments Scheme Policy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

<u>Documents consulted</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>File Ref</u>	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Section and Directorate</u>	<u>Exempt Information Category</u>
			Sarah Martin	Mgt. Team	N/A