

Record of Decision taken by Executive Councillor

Decision title: URGENT - Emergency Fund for COVID Impact

Executive Councillor making the decision: Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Leader of the Council

Author Contact Details: Paul Fitzgerald, Strategic Finance Advisor and S151 Officer

Date of Decision: 31 March 2020

Details of decision:

The Government has launched a range of measures with associated funding for the Council's and other local authorities' response to COVID-19. It is evident that there is a need for up-front funding for a range of support measures being implemented by Somerset West and Taunton Council, and to mitigate increased demand for services and reductions in funding for vital local services.

It is therefore proposed to create a COVID Emergency Fund of £1,000,000 for General Fund services and a COVID Emergency Fund of £500,000 for Housing (HRA) services.

The Government has indicated that local authorities will receive additional funding to meet the costs of COVID-19 response. Therefore the Council will seek to recover these funds from Government during 2020/21. However, in the meantime it is proposed to underwrite the above sums by reprioritising £1,000,000 from New Homes Bonus grant reserve and £500,000 from the Housing Capital Debt Repayment budget.

Actual costs and funding requirement will be monitored throughout the year, with the full impact reported in due course.

Reasons for proposed decision:

The Government's funding package to date is very welcome, and amounts allocated to date are already fully allocated. It is vital that the Council can proceed with important spending decisions quickly and also manage the impact of a fall in funding for the Council's core services. Approving these funds will enable officers to quickly direct resources to the greatest areas of need.

Alternative funding options sourced:

Reimbursement of costs will be sought from Government. However, the Council proposes to reprioritise reserves and in-year budget allocations to underwrite these costs.

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted	N/A	

The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.


Finance implications	Included above	30/3/2020
Legal implications	No	30/3/2020
Links to corporate aims	No	30/3/2020
Climate and Sustainability implications	No	30/3/2020
Community Safety Implications	No	30/3/2020
Equalities Impact Safeguarding Implications	Funds will be directed to high risk vulnerable persons and businesses. To be considered with individual spend decisions.	30/3/2020
Risk management	Risk to be monitored and managed by SMT	30/3/2020
Partnership implications	Funding may be used in part to match or share funding with partners in response to COVID.	30/3/2020

Any conflicts of interest declared by Leader or Executive Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Chief Executive to grant dispensation for the Leader's / Executive Member's views to be considered.

Decision Maker

I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.

Signed:



Name: Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Leader of the Council

Date: 31 March 2020

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by Executive Councillors. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication and the period for any call-in has expired.

Note: A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team – governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk